

Palesa Keswa - Sasolburg in the Free State

Name:

Palesa Keswa

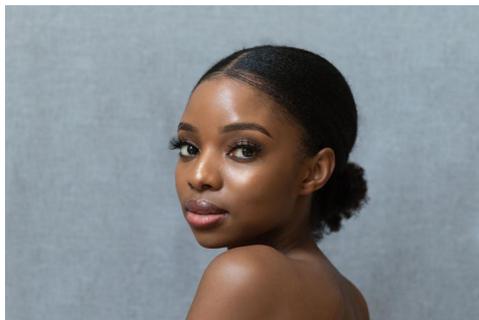
Region:

Sasolburg in the Free State.

Age: 23 (Born April 22, 1997)

Occupation:

I completed my undergraduate degree in economics and risk management in 2019, and I am currently pursuing my honours degree in economics at the North West University.



Previous beauty competitions/pageants won:

In 2017 I was crowned Miss North West University.

Why do you want to be Miss South Africa and what do you think you will be able to bring to the role?

The Miss South Africa platform is bigger than the winner. Over the years I have witnessed how young girls have stepped up and pursued their goals and dreams because they resonated with the winner or contestants. That is the type of organisation I would love to be a part of and contribute to. I have a burning desire to help those who have been marginalised.

How have you handled the lockdown due to the Covid 19?

I've mostly spent it conducting research for my year-end dissertation, attending my online classes and completing assignments. It has also afforded me the opportunity to reset and reevaluate my plans and goals for the future.

What has this time taught you?

This time made me realise that there will never be a perfect time or opportunity to start working towards becoming the person you know you've been called to be. Even in the midst of so many things being placed on hold, you essentially decide the trajectory of your life by controlling what you can under these circumstances.

2020 has been a tough year globally. Do you see any positives in what has happened in the past months and weeks?

There is no community or country that has not been affected by the events that have been taking place. I believe that it has made us realise that just because you aren't directly affected by something, if it is happening around you, it is essentially happening to you. We have all become more connected and compassionate towards each other globally.

What do you love about South Africa?

As an economist, I have been afforded the opportunity to learn about the current condition of our country's economic and social climate. We have a long way to go in terms of development and the correcting of the social issues we face but I have also realised that our country has so much richness and

potential. I love that people are hungry for change and they want to contribute to this change.

What is one thing you would like to change about South Africa?

I would love for there to be a wider scale for equal opportunities, especially for the marginalised. Every gender, race and ethnic group must be afforded equal opportunities - we have to close the gaps for the sake of the future of our country.

Who is a previous Miss South Africa who has inspired you?

Demi-Leigh (Nel-Peters) Tebow. She was always so transparent and firm in who she was and what she believed in. I will always respect her for never shying away from her faith and conducting herself so graciously. She reminded me that it was okay to be yourself regardless of what others say.

Who are your role models/who has inspired you?

I am inspired by Michelle Obama. I love how she not only stands for equality across all races and ethnicities but she's also a huge advocate for the youth staying in school, cultivating their talents and becoming innovators in a world that so needs fresh ideas. As a post-graduate student, I resonate with Mrs Obama's stance on self-development.

Tell us a bit more about your family:

I have been living with my older brother for the past 14 years. We lost our mother to chronic pneumonia when I was nine-year-old and my father passed away five years earlier. My brother was 21-years-old when he started raising me and he is now 35-years-old.

What do you do in your spare time?

I indulge in comedy films and reading.

Do you think beauty pageants are still relevant today?

I believe beauty pageants have always been relevant and they always will be. I believe they are more relevant today than they ever have been. They afford women from all walks of life to walk boldly in the issues they are passionate about whilst receiving opportunities for them to also control the narrative and success of their lives.

Name two of your female role models?

Trudi Makhaya is definitely a woman I look up to. She's an economist and entrepreneur and is part of President Cyril Ramaphosa's advisory council. Being part of the president's advisory council falls under my long-term goals. I also look up to Malala Yousafzai - the young Nobel Peace Prize winner and an activist for female education.

What is your message to young girls and young women in South Africa?

You essentially control the trajectory of your life. You might not get there in record time but there is nothing perseverance, resilience and the right crowd can't fix. Your voice and your story matter, so use it to not only change your life but the lives of everyone you meet.

If you won the Miss South Africa crown and was able to meet one person, who would it be?

Siya Kholisi. His story is the perfect example of how your past and circumstances don't have to determine where you end up.

What is the one thing people would be surprised to know about you?

I participated in numerous arts festivals in high school (acting and poetry) and I obtained full colours in my matric year.

What is the No 1 piece of advice that you would give to your younger self?

That dream wouldn't be on your heart if you didn't have the ability to see it come to pass. Don't be scared, don't doubt yourself and go for it.

Describe yourself in three words:

Passionate, smart, resilient.

What are you reading?

Lioness Arising by Lisa Bevere

What music are you listening to?

Anything from soul to R'n'B.

What are your favourite TV shows?

I love Modern Family and 90 Day Fiancé.

What is your favourite meal?

I am a sucker for lamb chops, mash and gravy.

Who's your local and international celeb crush?

My local celebrity crush is Maps Maponyane and my international celebrity crush is Michael B Jordan.

What's your guilty pleasure?

This might sound lame but I'm obsessed with fruit juice. What coffee is to others, fruit juice is to me.

Social media tags:

- Facebook: Palesa Keswa
- Instagram: _keswa
- Twitter: @palesa_keswa