



**Nelson Mandela** was one of the most loved and respected people in the world. For countless reasons he was and remains a huge hero. He was a person from whom we can all learn many lessons. He experienced many things in his nine decades, from being tortured to becoming president of the country he loved. After retiring, he continued to travel the world, helping people and raising awareness of global issues.

Nelson was born in 1918 into a South Africa that was divided along black and white racial lines. He said he had a wonderful childhood and was a keen runner and boxer. He learnt more of the terrible apartheid system when he studied to become a lawyer. This led to his campaigning for equal rights and his involvement in the African National Congress (ANC), which he later became the leader of.

The South African government did its best to keep Mandela from spreading his message of equality for blacks and racial unity. It put him in prison for 27 years. He became famous around the world as an icon of the struggle for freedom in South Africa. Rock stars, actors, politicians and ordinary people campaigned to free him and end apartheid. He was released from prison in 1990 and the world rejoiced.

Nelson Mandela's call for racial reconciliation won him the hearts of millions. He also won the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1993, and over 250 more awards. A year later, he became his country's first ever black president and served in office until 1999. In his retirement, he continued to tirelessly campaign for many global causes until old age slowed him down. He died on the 5th of December, 2013, aged 95.

Sources: <http://www.wikipedia.org/> and assorted biographies.



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