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THE WITNESS, TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2004

OUR READERS WRITE

Capital issue

OLIN Gardnerâ\200\231s piece is a classic example of electioneering propaganda. He offers the voter nothing. The best he can do is attempt to create fear and alarm, and then argue that the electorate should support the ANC to prevent this eventuality arising. Another party used to use the same tactics in the eighties â\200\224 who can forget the â\200\234swart gevaarâ\200\235 and â\200\234rooi gevaarâ\200\235 sloganeering of the P. W. Botha government? Gardner appears to have

â\200\230latched on to a new fear, namely, â\200\234Ulundi gevaarâ\200\235. |

Amazingly, however, at the end of his lengthy piece the author appears to have a crisis of honesty and admits: â\200\234I donâ\200\231t say that it (the IFP) would necessarily do so (proclaim Ulundi the capital). I have no insight into the partyâ\200\231s way of thinking.â\200\235

Gardner is saying voters must choose the ANC, not because of what it offers but because it might prevent a situation arising â\200\224 and he admits he has

no way of knowing whether it will or wonâ\200\231t arise. It â\200\234is asad day when this is all the ANC has to offer the voter.

Without getting into the substance of his argument, three further points need to be mentioned: Â¿ What would the cost be to make Pietermaritzburg the capital? Just moving the legislature to Pietermaritzburg has cost the taxpayer well over R20 million. The legislature, in terms of staff and

equipment needs, is among the smallest government institutions in the province. What would be the cost of moving the really large departments currently housed in Ulundi?

Â¢ Gardner tends to use the terms capital and seat of the legislature interchangeably. The reality is that

they are not the same thing. Two years ago, a vote took place in the legislature that made Pietermaritzburg the seat of the legislature. No decision was ever made to make Pietermaritzburg the sole capital of KwaZulu-Natal. The voter must not be fooled: the capital issue remains as it was before the vote Was taken susan is

Photo: STEPHEN COAN

David  
Rattray  
â\200\224 â\200\230No  
person  
is  
allowed  
to walk  
away  
from  
here  
thinking  
itâ\200\231s all  
â\200\230rah  
rahâ\200\231.â\200\231

MARGARET VON KLEMPERER

ACK in 1959 at the  
Bes Mission Hospital  
in Appelsbosch, a  
momentous meeting took place.  
The mission grounds manager,  
Michael Zondi, met the medical  
superintendent, Wolfgang  
Bodenstein, for the first time.  
They should have been  
worlds apart. Apartheid ruled:  
one man was black and one was  
white; Bodenstein was a doctor  
and Zondi's only qualification  
was as a carpenter from the  
Dundee Trade School, but he  
was an artist and the doctor  
was destined to become his  
patron. It was not a one-way  
relationship, as Zondi and the  
Bodensteins shared interests in  
more than art and, over the  
years, a deep and genuine  
friendship grew up. .  
Despite apartheid, Zondi  
became known as an important  
sculptor during the sixties, sev-  
enties and eighties. In 1965, he  
was only the second black  
artist to have a solo exhibition

at the Durban Art Gallery and ~

many of his pieces were bought  
by galleries and collectors,

both in South Africa and  
abroad, But in the years since  
1994, Zondi's status as a major

South African sculptor of the  
second half of the 20th century  
has somehow failed to gain the  
recognition it deserves.

That is now being put right.  
Kirsten Nieser, as part of the  
requirements for her Master's  
degree from the Centre for  
Visual Art on the Pietermar-

itzburg campus of the Univer-

sity of KwaZulu-Natal, is writ-  
ing her thesis on Zondi, and has  
put together an exhibition of

his wooden sculptures which  
will open in the Tatham Art  
Gallery on Thursday.

For. Nieser, the project means  
more than meeting degree  
requirements. Her father,  
Heinrich Schlaudraff, came to  
South Africa from Germany in  
1962 and met Zondi at his 1965  
exhibition. Schlaudraff was a  
professional photographer and  
photographed many of Zondi's  
works over the years, some on  
their own and some while the

artist was working on them.

Nieser grew up knowing Zondi  
and his work, and now owns a

priceless collection of her .

father's beautiful black-and-  
white photographs of. the  
pieces, some of which will be  
shown at the exhibition. f

She also has two Zondi sculp-  
tures - a head of a young man,

Photo: NASH NARRANDES

Above: Three of the Michael Zondi sculptures that will be |  
displayed at the exhibition opening at the Tatham Art  
Gallery on Thursday . . . (from left) Orpheus (1972);  
Reunion/Reconciliation (1964) and The Daughter Speaks |  
and the Father Listens (1983). Right: Sculptor Michael  
Zondi at work on a piece in the sixties. ab

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Photo: HEINRICH SCHLAUDRAFF

bought from a gallery, and a  
beautiful image of a flute  
player. She acquired the latter  
when she visited a long-time  
Zondi collector, now elderly  
and beginning to give his col-  
lection away. Nieser mentioned

that once she has completed her degree, she wants to settle down and turn her current research into a full-scale biography of the artist. As she left, the owner's daughter handed the flute player over to her, saying: "In return for a copy of the book, when you write it." Over the years, many of Zondi's works were collected by members of the medical profession, introduced to the artist by Wolfgang and Anges Bodenstein. Zondi often exhib-

ited at medical conferences |

and symposiums, and some of his works left the country from those events. One South African-based collector, was Pietermaritzburg doctor Kurt Strauss, whose Zondis have now been divided among his three children. Nieser will be showing seven of them in the Tatham exhibition, together with eight from Kay Nixon of Pietermaritzburg, 11 from the Bodenstein collection and some others.

made the leap from being a

he has not sculpted since a

When the Bodensteins left Appelsbosch for Durban, Zondi went with them, setting up a studio in their garage and working for the Department of Information. Then, in 1972, Bodenstein was sent to work at the Health Ministry in Pretoria and, again, Zondi made the move too. And at that point, he

part-time to a full-time artist. Zondi is still living, although

stroke in 1992. According to

Nieser, who has been in close

contact with him over the exhibition, his short-term memory is failing, but as soon as she mentions her father, Zondi can immediately tell her stories that Schlaudraff told him about the war years. She is hoping that he will be well enough to attend the opening of the exhibition, which is to be opened by

art historian Dr Elza Miles, an important figure in seeing that South Africa's black artists of the apartheid era are given the recognition they deserve. For many, this recognition has come too late. For Zondi, it will be in time. ~\*~

~\*~ The exhibition will be held in the Ceramics Room at the Tatham Art Gallery.