



NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD

New York City Chapter
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November 21, 1985

Mr. Nelson Mandela
c/o ANC
801 Second Avenue
New York, New York, 10017

Dear Mr. Mandela:

On Friday evening, March 7, 1986, the New York City Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild will hold its 49th Annual Dinner. On this occasion more than one thousand people will come together to celebrate five decades of Guild involvement in the international arena. Among those present will be Guild members who have played prominent roles in various international movements for human rights, peace, and justice in each of these decades. We would be greatly honored if you would permit us to take this opportunity to present you with an award in recognition of your efforts to eradicate South Africa's policy of racial separation, or apartheid.

The National Lawyers Guild was founded in 1937 as an antidote to the conservatism and racism of the American Bar Association. From its inception the Guild has had a tenacious internationalist perspective. We steadfastly adhered to the principles of the United Nations, even in the dog days of McCarthyism; vigorously opposed the war in Southeast Asia from its outset in the 1960's; and, now, aggressively defend the rights of Central American refugees against jingoist policies of prosecution and deportation. Finally, and long before such activity became fashionable, the Guild was deeply committed to the struggle against apartheid.

Your life's work in the service of the disenfranchised in your own country and, by extension, of all people everywhere who are abused as a matter of governmental policy has had a profound impact. As a people's lawyer devoted to justice and freedom, you have set the standard--worldwide--for more than a score of years. The strength of your conviction and the example of your courage have moved lawyers and laypeople everywhere. Even in South Africa, the morality and logic of your views have persuaded many; surely it is only a matter of time before these views prevail completely.

We in the Guild feel a particular sense of respect and admiration for your accomplishments. For us, you have eloquently personified the potentially powerful amalgam of law and politics that all progressive legal people strive to achieve. As we consider the first half century of Guild experience in the international community, we believe it especially appropriate to salute you, nonpareil lawyer and freedom fighter, as the symbolic embodiment of all that we have been and, as we ponder the next half century, wish to become.

With great esteem and affection,

Rosa Borenstein,
Vice-President, New York City Chapter,
National Lawyers Guild