

In one unruly black township outside Port Elizabeth, soldiers expressed concern for the safety of Sandy Stewart, a Black Sash member passing through their roadblock.

"The reason we're not afraid is that we don't come in carrying a gun," she snapped back.

"Why don't you try it?"
(*New York Times*,
25 December 1988)



periods of imprisonment without trial, or were tear-gassed and arrested and wounded. Black Sash members themselves were arrested, taken into detention, kept under surveillance and harassed," writes Mary Burton, Black Sash trustee.

In the 1980s, the world began to pay tribute to Sheena's work: in 1986, she received the Liberal International Prize for Freedom for her outstanding contribution to human rights and political freedom; in 1988 she was awarded the Order of Simon of Cyrene by the Anglican Church. Later, in 2006, she was made Grand Counsellor of the Order of the Baobab (in silver) for "her excellent contribution to the struggle for a non-sexist, just and democratic South Africa". Her expertise in law, gained at the coalface over the years, was acknowledged in the form of honorary doctorates in Law

from the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of Cape Town and the University of Natal.

Sheena was a highly impressive woman, but she wore her credentials and dignities lightly. She had very little ego and an enormous heart. She was wonderfully down-to-earth and human, with her love of a good sundowner (always accompanied by a cigarette) and a good laugh. I will always remember her for her throaty chuckle, which was often deployed, and the kindness in her eyes, which remained undimmed throughout her life.

The struggle continues

The Black Sash continues as a professional non-governmental organisation. "Our aim is to enable all, with an emphasis on women and children, to recognise and

exercise their human rights, particularly their social and economic rights. And to create a society that has effective laws and delivery systems, including comprehensive social protection for the most vulnerable.

"The Black Sash has seven regional offices – in Cape Town, Knysna, Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown, Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Johannesburg – and a national office near Parliament in Cape Town. We employ over 60 full-time professional staff. The Black Sash provides FREE advice and paralegal support. Over the past five years, we have assisted nearly 60 000 clients and their dependents. The Black Sash has helped secure more than R65 million in social grants and other financial provisions that were due to them."

Find out more – and help financially! – by going to www.blacksash.org.za. **SKY**