

"In time, we shall be in a position to bestow on South Africa the greatest possible gift - a more human face".

Steve Biko - [I Write What I Like](#) (1978)

I don't believe it was sheer coincidence that Ann passed from this world on the 12th September 2010 – the anniversary day of Steve Biko's death – a man whose character and philosophy she respected greatly, and indeed, espoused in her *own* life till the end.

From the youngest age, we knew that our 'Granny Annie' was NOT your like the rest (besides the fact that she insisted we omit the 'granny' part). At Taylor Christmas's I remember anxiously awaiting Ann's arrival so that we could open our presents. Ann was late every year, but she had a curious excuse. She had spent the morning visiting & giving presents to the children in jail. At five years old I really couldn't understand *why* children in prison – who had obviously been naughty to get themselves in there - got to open presents before we did? It wasn't long before Ann gave us our first lessons in political enlightenment. From that day forward, she never let pass an opportunity to do so. One is never *too* young to know!

Ann was a champion for Biko's teachings. She believed in the individual and self-actualization. She implored you to question, and loved nothing more than a fiery debate over freshly squeezed lemon or after 12 – a generous handed G&T.

Ann's fight for a free and fair South Africa was one that she never gave up on, but I'd like to touch on some of that indomitable spirit in other areas of her life. Ann might have been petite in stature, but this gran was able to give anyone a thorough whipping on the tennis court even into her 70's! She gave up the game long before she lost a match.

My father attributes his one and only Comrades medal, as an enormous effort to outrun his mother, who, barefoot in a skimpy tennis dress ran alongside him, almost all the way to Durban, shouting "Run Paulie darling, Run"

Ann loved a good party too. I remember at our 21sts, school leavers & wedding – Ann barefoot and bra-free was always one of the last standing on the dance floor! Clearly the toy-toying of her Black Sash marches gave her good practice & staying power.

Whilst Biko might have ‘written what he liked’, Ann *did* and *said* what she liked. Karen related a funny story of how recently Luke came to the table wearing nothing but boardshorts and was reprimanded by his father to put on some clothes before he came to dinner. Ann fervently came to Luke’s defense saying that she approved of his informal style and then added “Besides, I’m not wearing any underwear!” Not your average response from an 88 year old!

Ann adored her family and always said how lucky she was to have all her children, and grandchildren within close proximity. Ann was always in the highest spirits at Colvin Clan gatherings. The louder the pitch and more tempered the debate, the more Ann found her groove.

Ann had an amazing energy, but also a *discipline* in her life – which I believe is something we could all aspire to having more of. Even in her later years, Ann after reading political discourse late into the night, would set her alarm to wake up with the dawn of a new day. No M&G or Sunday Independent went unhighlighted, no radio debate left untuned.

Ann was always very modest of her achievements. I don’t think she fully appreciated just how many lives she touched. Ann, Gran, we thank-you for showing us how to live true to your values, and how to have the courage to stand up for your convictions. Your gutsy spirit will always be our lighthouse.

TRIBUTE FROM NIKKI COLVIN

Grannie Annie was never the cookie baking, jumper-knitting type of grandmother most people have. To us, she was so much more. She was a mentor for life. She lived her life with vigor and determination and an unyielding commitment to making this world a better place. And for that we are so grateful, an example of a life that was lived with purpose and passion! Some of my earliest memories of Annie, include her pottering around the garden, bare foot of course, in a sundress - no matter what the weather, toting a cane and coke in one hand and a Mail and Guardian in the other, as she admired the plants and flowers. She would always ask about how school was going and remind me just how lucky I am to have such a great education. Her quest for knowledge never ceased, and she would delight in

reading my History and Philosophy essays from University, sending back long emails with a detailed commentary.

Thank you Annie for being the most wonderful Grandmother to all of us, you were the embodiment of the spirit of the 'Colvin Clan' and I know that spirit will live on in your children and grandchildren. We all love you dearly, and you will be sorely missed.

TRIBUTE FROM JULIA COLVIN

As I sit here writing a eulogy 6000 miles away, the spirit of Granny Annie cannot feel closer. I am reminded of her funny idiosyncrasies, her non-plussed willingness to attend a formal dinner, bra-less in a crochet dress, much to the embarrassment of her grand children. She always made apparent her strong likes, and her very strong dislikes. Whilst she cut a fragile figure, she was no wall flower; her robust, fiercely independent nature magnified her stature. She taught me that strength does not come from the muscles on your bones, but the stamina of your conviction. In Annie's books, the physical took a back seat to the principles of human rights, equality and justice. As she always paraphrased, " Nobody wins in War, War is a mark of the failure of humanity rather than the triumph". These values she did not just vehemently believe in, but passionately acted upon. In the lofty hedonistic days of white privilege, when most of us would have sat on the fence enjoying the treats that a ruthless apartheid system handed to an elect few, maverick Annie challenged the status quo sacrificing so much of her life for the struggle. Like the life giving qualities of a human donor, her work saved the lives and dignity of so many others. Ann always said she would donate her body to science. Well Gran, in your lifetime you donated two vital organs: your compassionate heart and knowledge saturated brain. Not just to one anonymous recipient, but to all of us. For this, we are eternally grateful and honoured to be your grandchildren.