

## NOSIPHO MNGOMA

THIS week is set to be a literary feast for Durban as the 19th Time of the Writer Festival brings together lovers of the written word.

The theme this year, Decolonising the Book, is set to stimulate literary dialogue and the exchange of ideas as audiences engage with award-winning writers from a variety of political and social contexts, on the creative and technical processes and perspectives which shape their writing.

# Literary tourism to feature at Time of the Writer

Featured writers who have links to KwaZulu-Natal will be added onto the KZN Literary Tourism online archives.

Founder, Lindy Stiebel, said literary tourism took people to places linked to writers in one way or another.

“It can be an author who was born in KZN, lived, wrote or died here, or their book is set here. Someone who is interested in literature would like

visiting the Mazisi Kunene Manuscript Museum in Glenwood, for example.”

Stiebel, a professor emerita in English Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, started the initiative in 2002 as a research project.

“It was something new at the time, but literary tourism is well established in places like America and England. The response has been hugely posi-

tive,” she said. “People like the idea of being in a place where a writer lived, or wrote about. Tourists include tour groups, both local and foreign, who want to experience the literature side of cultural heritage.”

Stiebel, or an accredited tour guide she trained, conducts these tours. She believed their archive “remains skewed towards writers that are male, white and older”.

“Furthermore, the majority of the written works reflected in our archive are English. While KZN Literary Tourism is proud of the writers we have archived thus far, we realise that this is not a complete representation of the diverse literary talent linked to our province.”

They therefore appealed for publishers and the public to suggest writers who were

either Black, Indian or Coloured, female, had produced works of fiction in other languages besides English, or were contemporary authors.

“Time of the Writer 2016 has opened up a dialogue on decolonising literature and including marginalised voices.

“In the spirit of the festival, the project calls on mainstream publishing houses and their fiction writers (who are

the linked to the province) to come forward. We’re looking to include profiles on KZN-linked writers,” said Stiebel.

All Time of the Writer events are free to library or student card-holders, and the public is urged to donate books to the Festival Book Drive, supported by Independent Newspapers and Gcina Mhlophe’s Nozincwadi: Mother of Books Project.

With the goal of promoting a culture of reading, the drive will award the donated books to a rural school.