

Umhlobo Wenene mourns the passing of two radio legends

Umhlobo Wenene FM has announced the passing of two of the station's veteran stars, Nomathamsanqa Rweqana and Sonwabo Yawa, who both passed away on 6 February 2024.



Nomathamsanqa Rweqana has passed away. Source: SABC.

Beacon of comfort

Rweqana, affectionately known as "Reverend Rweqana," graced the airwaves of Umhlobo Wenene FM from 2008 until her retirement on 31 March 2022, where she passionately served as a presenter for religious programmes. Her dedication to ministry extended beyond the microphone, as she took on additional administrative responsibilities, including the recording of devotions, prologues, sermons, and Imvuselelo.

Rweqana's shows included the now *Ngenan Emasangweni Ngendumiso*, a religious show that airs on Thursdays between 09:00am and 12:00pm and the iconic *Ndingu Yehova iGqirha Lakho*, where her midnight knocks and her trademark phrase "Nkqo, nkqo, nkqo, ndikwakho" were endeared by her listeners from 03:00 – 05:30. She had been a beacon of comfort and healing for many, and was inducted into the Hall of Fame at the Liberty Radio Awards in 2017.



Andy Rice, a true legend in our industry, passes away

Danette Breitenbach 7 Feb 2024





Sonwabo Yawa has passed away. Source: SABC.

Yawa, the brilliant mind behind the award-winning drama series *Ithini Na Lento* and a 2008 drama series that focused on reducing the fatalities of initiates caused during circumcision entitled *Konakele phi?*. He started with the station when it was still radio Transkei in 1995, where he published *Ingalo Yomthetho Inde*, a book that was adapted into a radio drama for Umhlobo Wenene FM by the former drama producer Zolisile Mapipa, and saw him winning the accolade of Young Radio Drama Award.

He later migrated to Umhlobo Wenene FM in 2007 as a freelance writer, where in 2010, he led a young group of writers that started the drama series *Ubomi yinzulu yolwandle* under the guidance of Thozamile 'Sir Thoz' Nyakatya and

Ntombethemba 'Tofee' Zitshu. In 2024, the name was changed to what is now the popular drama series *Ithini na Lento?* in order to accommodate an evolving youth and storyline.

Void

Outside of being a drama writer on Umhlobo Wenene FM, he was a published novelist for school-adapted books and magazines, one of his poems *A man died long time ago* was read on *Morning Live* by the late Vuyo Mbuli for the show's Women's Day celebrations in 2008. He also translated a play that was commissioned on Ukhozi FM for Umhlobo Wenene FM. Sonwabo's creativity and dedication to storytelling, captivated audiences nationwide and extended beyond the airwaves, earning the series numerous accolades, including the prestigious MTN Radio Award for Best Drama Series in South Africa in 2014.

Business manager for the Eastern Combo radio stations, Loyiso Bala stated that "The loss of Reverend Nomathamsanqa Rwegana and Sonwabo Yawa leaves a void in the Umhlobo Wenene FM family and the South African broadcasting community. Their legacies will forever be remembered, and their contributions cherished. Our deepest condolences go out to their families, friends, and colleagues during this difficult time".

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