

Problems of apartheid endure

Winnie Mandela urges activism before Rider audience

By Brian J. Kelley
Special Writer

Amid heightened security, Winnie Mandela told an audience at Rider University that tomorrow's economic leaders must put their responsibilities to humanity ahead of personal gain and power.

Ms. Mandela, 60, the former wife of South African President Nelson Mandela, spoke in the university's Cavalla Room inside the student center, April 17. She currently is undertaking a lecture tour to college and university audiences across the United States in hopes of spreading her message to the youth of today.

"I have come here to exchange ideas with the youth at this university," she said. "I am greatly inspired by the enthusiasm of the youth movement."

She added that she has recently

spoken to universities in Illinois, New Orleans, and Dallas, along with an engagement at American University in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Mandela began her speech with a brief overview of the struggle she went through living as a woman then married to one of the most powerful black leaders in South Africa and fighting to bring down the injustices of apartheid.

"A lot of blood was spilled and a lot of lives were lost," she said. "I was forbidden by the state to have a job, my husband was in prison, I was poor and my children were starving," she added.

Although the African National Congress (headed by her ex-husband) gained a foothold in government three years ago, the division between the white minority in South Africa and the overwhelming number of

blacks in the country is still a deep concern to her people, she said.

"The enemy we were fighting yesterday is sharing parliament with us today," she added. "The ANC is in government, but we're not in power. As long as they (whites) are in government there will be no peace in South Africa."

The "deal" the ANC struck with the whites to gain a seat in government allows those who once were in control to keep the upper hand, especially when it comes to private ownership, she said.

"We have to buy back that which was stolen from us. How do we buy back that land without the means?" she asked.

Ms. Mandela was also very vocal about her fight for human rights, especially those of women and children. "Women still have their own struggle to wage," she said. She added that women must liberate themselves in order for a society to be totally free and said one of her goals is the "full emancipation of women and children."

One of her more pointed criticisms was directed towards the United States, saying that since the ANC took hold in South Africa, her coun-

try has taken great strides to become a "non-racist, non-sexist" country.

"In the United States, you have more serious problems," she said. "Your democracy is over 200 years old, we should be taking notes from you."

Then, relating her feelings about racism in this country to the lecture she was giving, Ms. Mandela asked, "Why are so many questions coming from black students?"

"I will not take another question from a black student," she added, as she approached the end of the program.

Although the United States is the oldest democracy in the world, she questioned whether minorities enjoy the same freedoms as whites.

"Are you really free?" she asked the audience. "Is there total liberty, if in the oldest democracy you cannot do what you please?"

She did thank the United States, however, for its role in ending apartheid.

"The United States is the policeman of the world and we would not have won over our oppressors without your help," she said.

Brian Kelley is a journalism major at Rider.