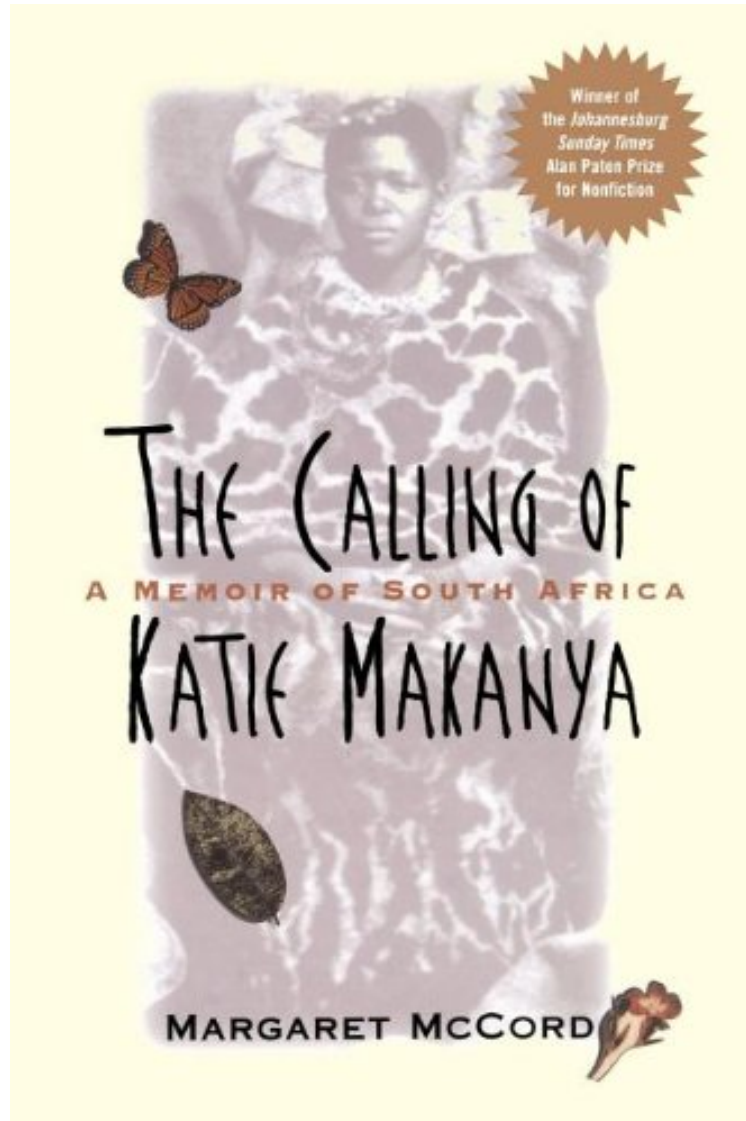


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The Calling of Katie Makanya: A Memoir of South Africa

Margaret McCord

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The winner of South Africa's prestigious Sunday Times/Alan Paton prize, this moving, illuminating memoir chronicles the life of an extraordinary woman in South Africa who was born in 1873 in colonial South Africa and lived through the early years of apartheid to her death in 1955. The story of Katie Makanya opens a window to a side of South African life seldom recorded, examining South Africa's patriarchal culture, customs, community traditions, poverty and hardships. Spanning two centuries and set in South Africa's major cities and towns, this memoir encompasses epoch-making events from the Boer War to the World Wars to the transition from colonialism to apartheid.

.com Margaret McCord makes brilliant use of telling details drawn from the vivid recollections of Makanya (1873-1954) to create a rich tapestry of black South African life as it uneasily adapted to (and sometimes adopted) white European ways during the years of colonization and the establishment of apartheid. Makanya declined the offer of a singing career in England to return home, choosing hard work and poverty among her own people. She offers perceptive descriptions of complex individual and social relationships that work by an accumulation of particulars to damningly indict injustice.From Library JournalBorn in the latter part of the 19th century, Makanya lived a remarkable life. In her mid-teens, she and her elder sister (destined to be the first South African black women to attain B.A.s) spent two years in England as part of a choir, performing before Queen Victoria. After returning to South Africa to marriage and motherhood, Makanya worked for a white missionary doctor in Durban for 40 years and organized emerging political organizations. Her story is ably written by McCord, who is the youngest daughter of the doctor Makanya worked beside for so long. The work results from tape recordings McCord made with Makanya in the mid-1950s shortly before her death. Highly recommended as a testament to one woman's character, intelligence, and faith.?Don R. Brusha, Sebring P.L., Fla.Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.From BooklistWhere antiapartheid activism was significant or interest in South Africa is strong, this moving story of the life of a South African black woman (1873^1954) will have appeal. Makanya worked for years for McCord's father, an American medical missionary, as translator and assistant; she was a surrogate mother to the author. Makanya wanted her story told, so McCord taped her reminiscences shortly before Makanya's death; now, 40 years later, she tells that story in a biography that has won several South African literary awards. From years before the Boer War through the early days of apartheid, *Calling* examines the life of a feisty, relatively educated Christian South African woman who toured England and met the queen in the 1890s as a singer with the African Native Choir, married and raised a family in Johannesburg, and played a vital role in making health care available to her impoverished neighbors. Fascinating in itself, Makanya's life also lends depth to the readers' grasp of daily life of black South Africans before the fight to end apartheid drew the world's attention. Mary Carroll