

FINAL TRIP REPORT

Grand Sire Archon International Getaway



South Africa (Sept/Oct 2019)

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Blacks in the Diaspora Series: Culture, History, & the Arts South Africa

FINAL TRIP REPORT: GRAND SIRE ARCHON INTERNATIONAL GETAWAY (SOUTH AFRICA)

Mission: Establish the International Presence of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity

Introduction:

The below is a daily account of the inaugural Grand Sire Archon International Getaway. This is the cornerstone event of the international strategy in that it combines historical and cultural exploration with relationship building with local influencers and among archons and Archousai, themselves. Additionally, the getaway provides a platform from which the fraternity can raise its profile, as per the strategic plan, while simultaneously pursuing its core values of *getting to know the best of one another* and *engaging in concerted action designed to achieve that which cannot be accomplished by individual effort*.

This program was administered by the Grand Boule' International Committee with the professional assistance of Arrangements Abroad, a tour company management company that provides curated travel solutions to some of the nation's preeminent museums, cultural organizations and alumni associations. The getaway included the below-listed components:

- Johannesburg & Cape Town/Stellenbosch, South Africa Excursions
- Local Influencer Engagement (Former S.A. Presidents, Business Leaders, Leading Academics, etc.)
- Business & Investment Community Relationship Building
- Social Action Partner Engagement (Room to Read Literacy Program)
- Historical Site Visits
 - Apartheid Museum Hector Pieterse Memorial and Mandela House (Soweto)
 - Union Buildings, Church Square, Kruger House, and City Hall (Pretoria)
 - Mandela Foundation
 - Robben Island (World Heritage Site)
- Various Cultural Gatherings
 - Indigenous Art Excursion
 - Exclusive advance screening of a first run film ("*Singleholic*")
 - Wine tastings and curated meals
 - Jazz Concerts with Archon Wynton Marsalis and the JALC Orchestra
 - Theme Dinners (All White Dinner/Reception, African Garb Farewell Dinner)
 - Indigenous vocal, dance and music presentations
 - Sunset cocktails in the African Bush
- Sightseeing
 - Victoria Falls; Livingstone, Zambia (Optional Prelude)
 - Table Mountain (7th Natural Wonder of the World)
 - Cape Point (Southernmost point on the African Continent)
 - Victoria & Albert Waterfront
 - Kapama Private Game Reserve Luxury Safari (Optional Postlude)
- Featured Speakers
 - Archon Wynton Marsalis (Managing & Artistic Director, Jazz at Lincoln Center)
 - Milan Selassie (Filmmaker, Producer)
 - Kweku Mandela (Trustee, Mandela Foundation, Grandson, President Nelson Mandela)
 - Christo Brand (Former Prison Guard, Author, *Mandela: My Prisoner, My Friend*)
 - Seaton Hawkins (JALC Director, Public Programs and Education)
 - Archon Ted McDaniel (Boule' National Jazz Coordinator, Emeritus Faculty)
 - Amadou Gallo Fall (CEO, Basketball Africa League and Managing Director, NBA Africa)

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Over 70 travelers (65 Archons/Archousai plus staff) from across the country, the Bahamas, and the UK participated in this inaugural international getaway. All 5 regions were represented and hailed from 28 cities and 14 states. The delegation included Grand Officers, Regional Officers, former and current Boule' Sire Archons/Member Boule' Officers, Archousai (widowed and current), new Archons and longer tenured Archons. Age and Occupational diversity of the group was consistent with that of the entire Boule' organization.

The above comprehensive program accomplished two of the three stated objectives in the strategic plan and laid the foundation for continued relationship building and constructive engagement in South Africa and the rest of the African continent. Program participants expressed deep and broad satisfaction with the journey and desired strongly to participate in the London/Paris segment in the ***Blacks in the Diaspora*** Series. In an unexpected twist, tour staff, local influencers, local black hotel and winery staff and service providers all expressed being enriched by our presence and by intimate interactions with our group. All were previously unaware of Sigma Pi Phi's existence and thus afforded us the opportunity create and propagate our own narrative with these groups.

The below report will cover the main trip (Johannesburg, Cape Town, & Stellenbosch), only. Details regarding the pre and postlude trips will be furnished upon request.

Day 1/2 (Johannesburg, South Africa): Day of Arrival & Bridge Building

As Chairman of the Grand Boule' International Committee and getaway host on behalf of Grand Sire Archon Vincent, I arrived on Sept 23rd to oversee final preparations for the group's arrival. Additionally, I attended the welcome dinner hosted for Archon Marsalis and the JALC Orchestra by the U.S. Diplomatic Mission to South Africa. Local dignitaries, musicians, diplomatic staff were in attendance in extending a warm welcome to the Jazz at Lincoln Center Organization. While there, I made the acquaintance of (**Minister Counsel Craig Dicker for Public Affairs, US Embassy**) and explained my dual role as JALC Board Member and Chairman of the Grand Boule' International Committee. Minister Dicker was intrigued by our mission and offered assistance as our South African program develops, going forward.

On Sept 24th, Grand Sire Archon Vincent, Sire Archon Ian Greenstreet (Epsilon Xi Boule'), and I had lunch and afternoon tea with major South African influencers from business, academia, and media at the exclusive Saxon Hotel. We discussed the purpose of our visit, the history and core values of the Boule', and the history and current challenges of similar affinity group/fraternal efforts among the South African influencer class. Lunch attendees included:

1. Saki Macozoma
 - a. Executive Chairman, Safika Holdings, Tshipi é Ntle, and Ntsimbintle Mining
 - b. Director of Volkswagen South Africa
 - c. Deputy Chairman, Vodacom Group Limited
 - d. Chairman, Kwazulu–Natal Philharmonic Orchestra
 - e. Served as president of Business Leadership South Africa
 - f. Served a member of the G20 Business Council
2. Mutle Mogase
 - a. Executive Chairman, Vantage Capital
 - b. Non Executive Chairman of African Bank Investments Limited
 - c. Past Chairman, Southern African Venture Capital and Private Equity Association
 - d. Past Chairman, Micro Finance Regulatory council (MFRC).
3. Ms Nonkululeko "Nku" Nyembezi-Heita
 - a. President/ Chairperson of the board of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange

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- b. Chair of the boards of various listed companies.
- c. Board Member of the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra.
- 4. Prof Mcebisi Ndletyana
 - a. Department of Political Science, the University of Johannesburg
 - b. Well known and respected TV and other media political commentator on South African politics and current affairs.

Following the luncheon, Sire Archon Ian Greenstreet, who had been in Johannesburg on unrelated business, returned to London. Grand Sire Archon Vincent and I proceeded to our next appointment with noted filmmaker Milan Selassie and David Adomakoh, Chairman of Tiso Investment Holdings (Pty) Limited, a co-founder of Tiso Group. He also serves as a Director of Aker Energy, non-executive director of Nedbank Limited and Nedbank Group Limited, founder trustee of the Tiso Foundation, and a World Fellow of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.



Day 3 (Johannesburg, South Africa): Group Arrivals and Official Start GSA International Getaway

Sixty three Archons and Archousai attended along with 10 staff members, not including embedded security personnel arrived at the luxurious Michelangelo Hotel located in Mandela Square. Travelers were greeted with an expedited check in process and welcome drinks. As excursion host, I personally greeted every traveler with a warm welcome and introductions to the attending staff assigned for their convenience. After a day of rest, travelers were treated to an elegant All White Reception in the hotel's atrium and Dinner Party in the ball room. Special guests included Kweku Mandela, Grandson to Nelson Mandela; Milan Selassie, Filmmaker and Producer; Dr. Reuel Khoza, chairperson of the Public Investment Corporation (South Africa's Largest Pension Fund), academic, author and farmer who happens to be the second largest exporter of avocados in South Africa.

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Archons Marsalis welcomed the group with his characteristic eloquence and explained his views on the state of Jazz music and the importance of the Boule's support of the idiom. Additional welcome remarks were made by Kweku Mandela and Milan Selassie who delivered a deeply spiritual assessment of what our presence meant to him and resulted in a standing ovation.



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Day 4 (Pretoria, South Africa): Social Action Day

The South Africa Room to Read Social Action initiative was an unqualified success. The group got to witness school aged children learning in collaboration with their teachers. There were 3 stations of live sessions where phonics, reading

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comprehension, and public speaking were emphasized. Smaller groups rotated to each session so as to get a comprehensive look at the types of instruction that the Foundation’s donation facilitates. Pictured below is an example of local language book that was published using proceeds from the grant. The inscription reads “This book is published in honor of the Boule’ Foundation and is dedicated to the children of South Africa so that the joy of reading may enrich their lives.” Additionally, we were treated to a performance of dance and song that thrilled the hearts of all that attended. Reaction from the group was touching to say the least. The day visit resulted in \$18,000 in donations, on the spot with additional commitments forthcoming. The South Africa Room to Read Social Action initiative was an unqualified success.



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Opening night with Archon Marsalis and the JALC Orchestra featured VIP access for our group where we got to witness the artistry of up and coming South African Artists and the impeccable sounds of the ZAR Orchestra. Jazz at Lincoln Center treated us to a post-concert Champagne Reception where we got to meet the remaining members of the JALC Orchestra, prominent members of the ZAR Orchestra, and several of the South African up and coming Artists featured in the performance. The engagement allows us to get to know the artists as well as expose them to the Boulé. The black performers, especially, seem to feel a sense of pride in our attendance having come from the US and from newly found knowledge that such a distinguished group of black men and women existed.



After the concert, I was able to arranged for Grand Sire Archon Vincent to meet former South African Presidents Thabo Mbeki (1999-2008) and Kgalema Motlanthe (2008-2009) (pictured below). Warm greetings were extended to us and President Mbeki was delighted to hear of our fraternity, our journey and mission of bringing together the descendants of the African Diaspora. President Mbeki offered to meet with our delegation over lunch; unfortunately, schedule constraints did not allow it as we were headed to Cape Town when he was available.

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Days 5 & 6 (Soweto, Johannesburg, & Maboneng Township, South Africa): Historical & Cultural Exploration

Days 5 and 6 were dedicated to exploring South African history and culture. The day started with a visit to the Apartheid Museum (in Soweto) where we were immersed in the history of the brutality and oppression of Apartheid. Upon arrival to the museum, we were randomly separated into groups of “whites” and “blacks” and made to enter the museum through separate entrances. From the very start of the visitor’s museum tour, one is made to experience the humiliation of the apartheid regime.



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Visiting the Apartheid Museum is an intensely emotional experience. The systems of South Africa apartheid and American Jim Crow, in America, have a lot in common and the brutality with which each was implemented and enforced makes it easy to empathize with the South African struggle for equality.

Lunch was an authentic South African buffet lunch at Soweto’s Chez Alina, a small but growing family business owned and operated by Alina. One of Soweto's most vibrant and unstoppable entrepreneurs, she started out as a tourist guide years ago and realized that there was no authentic way to share the Township's food with the travelers she met. So, she covered the alleyway between her house and her neighbors’, put out tables and chairs, and started to cook. The restaurant is in the middle of a regular neighborhood where the entire family works together in the family home. Next destination was the Hector Pieterse Memorial and Museum.



The museum is built at ground zero of the 1976 Soweto uprising where Hector Pieterse and anywhere from 176 to 600 of his fellow were killed. The last stop of the day was the Nelson Mandela National Museum (Mandela House), Mandela’s residence from 1946 to 1964 and a short walk up the street from Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. Mandela returned to this home after leaving prison, in 1990, only to move out again eleven days later.



"In judging our progress as individuals, we tend to concentrate on external factors such as one's social position, influence and popularity, wealth and standard of education...but internal factors may be even more crucial in assessing one's development as a human being: humility, purity, generosity, absence of vanity, readiness to serve your fellow men – qualities within the reach of every human soul."

Nelson Mandela in a letter to Winnie Madikizela Mandela, 1977

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Day 6 began with an art filled visit to Maboneng, a township named after the Sesotho word for “a place of lights.” Through a national public initiative, this unique township has turned numerous homes into galleries and improved outdoor spaces to exhibit art. A walking tour of Alexandra township featured graffiti-painted walls and works by local and international artists and art exhibitions in homes of some of the locals. We visited with Olie, a local art teacher with a wonderful program called Art Flava, which teaches art to children as a means of engaging their young minds and imaginations. He also has a biennial art show in the neighborhood called Art Affair which focuses on local artists and exhibits their work. He was deeply touched when the group presented him with a large cache of free art supplies to supplement his program. The suppliers will help teach 25 to 50 children that meet at his studio every day to learn about painting. Olie could easily just focus on his own art; instead, he is as much community activist and art teacher as he is an artist.



As with the Room to Read visit, the group felt very good about the Boule´ being associated with giving back to our less fortunate brethren. Please see the attached link for more information (<https://www.facebook.com/ArtistMxolisi/>)

The basketball encounter took place in an area called The Three Squares. There was a large soccer field, basketball courts, and a skateboarding park. There were two parts to the encounter. Perhaps, ten Boule men and their wives participated in a free throw exercise to the cheers of Archons and Archousai on the sidelines. That challenge escalated into a half court game to salvage reputations with the two mixed teams (Archons and locals) playing 5 on 5. We felt sorry for the guy trying to cover Johnny Newman, former NBA Player who had a somewhat of a height and skill advantage. It was a fun game on all sides and yet another encounter that created goodwill among everyone involved.

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The afternoon consisted of a visit to the Mandela Foundation where we were greeted and formally welcomed by Kweku Mandela, grandson of Nelson Mandela and trustee of the Mandela Foundation. The Nelson Mandela Foundation is a non-profit organization focused on memory, dialogue and legacy work, founded by Nelson Mandela, in 1999. It serves as the custodian of his life and time, a committed facilitator of the ongoing work to promote his vision of freedom and equality for all. Part of the preservation and advancement of Mandela's legacy is to make it available to the world through the display of its extensive archive of materials. Although Mandela's archival record is vast, fragmented and scattered throughout the world, both geographically and institutionally, the foundation's imperative is to document this vast resource, facilitate access to it, and promote its preservation and use. See the adjacent link for more information. (<https://www.nelsonmandela.org>)



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Our last night in Johannesburg consisted of a dinner at one of the city's top steak restaurants, located on Mandela Square. Our honored guest was Amadou Gallo Fall, CEO of the Basketball Africa League. He gave a few remarks about his excitement at the prospect of working with the Boule' in shaping the development of the league and the ecosystem that will support it. He also described his commitment to social action through the NBA's Basketball Without Borders, and his very own SEED Program (Sports for Education & Economic Development). He has invited us to participate in the league's March 2020 launch by curating an economic and business summit that would be part of the league's itinerary of high profile events.

After dinner, members were transferred to a local cinema for an exclusive private screening of *Singleholic*, a romantic-comedy produced by Milan Selassie. Prior to its screening, Milan introduced the film and talked about how it came to life. He took questions from the group after the screening. The film will be released in theaters in America on Valentine's Day 2020.

Days 7-9 (Cape Town & Stellenbosch, South Africa): Wine and Culinary Tour

After a fairly intense couple of days, the group was flown to Cape Town and Stellenbosch for a full immersion in the epicurean delights of South Africa. Immediately upon landing, we visited Stellenbosch's Spier Winery for a buffet lunch and wine tasting. The sommelier and all of the staff were black men and women. The professionalism and warmth they displayed were greatly appreciated by members of the group. <https://www.spier.co.za>

After a brief respite at the hotel (Belmond Mt Nelson), the group was surprised with an elegant champagne toast while being escorted into one of a fleet of chauffeur-driven vintage cars. The fleet included vintage Mercedes Benzes, Bentleys, Fords, and other more current and discontinued brands. With champagne flutes in hand and topped off for the ride, Archons and Archousai embarked on a chauffeur-driven scenic sunset drive to the idyllic nearby wine region of Constantia for dinner at Buitenverwachting Estate Winery. Upon arrival, more champagne and cocktails were poured during a pre-dinner reception. Reception entertainment was provided by the South Africa Youth Choir that sang uplifting traditional South African songs along with recognizable American compositions. Dinner guests were touched by the beauty of their voices and the warmth and joy displayed while singing. A candlelight dinner was served, curated meal with wines chosen by Gregory Mutambe, noted sommelier and member of the Black Cellar Club. He introduced the wines he had chosen specially chose to pair up with dinner courses.



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Table Mountain and Cape Point (southernmost point in Africa)

The final day of our journey explored the narrative of Nelson Mandela as a political prisoner. Our group was treated to an insider's look into Robben Island's notorious history in South Africa's political and cultural evolution. The visit to Robben Island, a World Heritage site, was an interesting experience in contrasts. The beauty of the island views of Cape Town and the bay belies the brutality of the penal system represented by the prison. During apartheid many Black people were kept on Robben Island as political prisoners. Former President Nelson Mandela (prison cell pictured below) spent 18 of his 27 years in prison having arrived there in 1964. When apartheid ended and the political prisoners of the apartheid regime were released, Robben Island, infamous for its harsh conditions, became a symbol of the strength of the human spirit. It was declared a World Heritage site because the buildings on the island are at once a reminder of its sad history, the will to freedom, and the victory of democracy over oppression. The prison's inhumane treatment of political prisoners ultimately failed to contain the dignity and fighting spirit of the black South African. Our tour guide, a former prisoner himself, gave a vivid account of what life was like in the prison and the dehumanization experienced by those that were imprisoned there. Robben island was reserved for political prisoners, who were incarcerated without any semblance of due process because they dared to challenge the established social order that disenfranchised blacks in every aspect of life. We toured the group cells and prison courtyard where Mandela and his fellow prisoners were forced into hard labor. Also, we paid special visit to Nelson Mandela's cell (pictured below) where he spent 18 years of his life. After leaving the prison grounds, we toured the rest of the island. The stunning vistas must have served only to further taunt the many men that were held captive there while being able to see freedom in the distance yet knowing they, like so many of their comrades, might die there never to have tasted freedom again.

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We finished the day's tours with visits to Cape Point (Africa's southernmost point) and Table Mountain.

Robben Island



Cape Point and Cable Mountain

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Farewell Dinner:

Farewell dinner was held in traditional African attire and began with a township music welcome from a live band that escorted us to an elegant candlelight dinner atop one of Cape town's exclusive rooftop restaurants. During dinner, the group was treated to a very personal presentation by Christo Brand, Nelson Mandela's jailer and eventual friend

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and employee. Each traveler was presented with a signed copy of his book **Doing Life with Mandela, My Prisoner, My Friend**



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Conclusion:

The inaugural Grand Sire Archon International Getaway was an unqualified success. Feedback from the travelers was universally positive regarding the organization, execution, and content of the excursions. Most importantly, many travelers expressed that the experience was “transformative” as we thoroughly immersed our group in the sights, sounds, flavors and culture of South Africa with the elegance, intellectual stimulation, social action and epicurean

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experiences befitting a journey that of “Boule’ Quality.” We’ll send out a survey in a few days to gain more systematic feedback to be used during the postmortem that we’ll conduct with our tour staff.

Almost everyone expressed interest in attending the next installment of the ***Blacks in the Diaspora*** series which will occur on May 30- June 5, 2020 (London/Paris). Realizing that the 55th Grand Boule’ occurs in late June 2020, we are confident of minimal cannibalization of likely participants of either event. With fewer than 70 travelers and the excursion’s proximity to the school year end and graduation season, the target demographics are likely to be quite different. To accommodate a larger number of participants, we’re investigating the possibility of adding a day excursion, in Paris, as an a la carte option, .

Through sustained and consistent action, we will successfully build upon the relationships that we started with the South African influencer community. Now that we’ve gotten their attention, we simply need to execute follow-up actions to maintain momentum and credibility. As a result of our trip, the Boule’ has been invited to curate an economic summit to coincide with the launch of the NBA Africa league, in March 2020. Additionally, our trip has facilitated other engagement opportunities that we’ll need to evaluate. As importantly, several influencers expressed an interest in attending our London/Paris activities as a means of meeting more Archons and Archousai.

As mentioned in a previous trip report, these trips provide the fraternity access to valuable relationship building opportunities as we grow our international presence, as per the Grand Boule’ Strategic Plan. With trips to Senegal, Ghana, and South Africa behind us, we will now focus on the European segment of the diaspora. We will wrap up the current biennium with a convening of all newly established relationships in London and Paris where we will retrace the steps of the Pan African Congress. Once again, the trip will be built around Archon Marsalis’s European tour and will include a business development component consistent with our core value of engaging in coordinated action.