

## 21 ICONS - Zanele Situ

Zanele Situ: "I feel happy and proud of myself that if I want something I push myself to do it, if I fall, I stand up again, this is how life is, there will be many times when you fall and you have to get up again."

This week 21 ICONS shines the spotlight on the eighteenth icon of its second season: Zanele Situ, a Paralympic athlete who exemplifies an inspiration to all South Africans, she conquered setbacks and adversity and became the first black athlete to win a Paralympic gold medal.

In an intimate conversation, Situ talks about her life as a Paralympic athlete. Born in Matatiele, Eastern Cape in 1971 she became paralysed in 1982 at the young age of 12. Contracting a TB infection from her fourth vertebra down her spinal cord her whole life changed overnight. Confined to a wheelchair she was determined not to be held back by the challenges posed by her disability and she took up athletics in 1985, and turned professional three years later. She said she never allowed her paralysed body to stop her from being a top athlete in South Africa. She said that there is no reason to not participate in sport just because you are disabled.

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