

# NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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## **NELSON MANDELA PRISON CONFIDANTE DISCUSSES *MEMOIRS***

PHILADELPHIA, PA (October 11, 2005) — Ex-political prisoner Ahmed Kathrada will speak at the National Constitution Center to debut his autobiography, *Memoirs*. The program, co-sponsored by International House Philadelphia, will be held in the Kirby Auditorium on Thursday, October 27, 2005 at 6:30 p.m. A book signing will follow. Tickets are free, but reservations are required at 215-409-6700.

Born a shopkeeper's son in a small rural town, Ahmed Kathrada became the trusted confidante of some of the most prominent political figures in South Africa's history, among them Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu. Politically active at the age of 10, Kathrada devoted his life to the freedom struggle in South Africa. He was persecuted, driven underground and sentenced to life in prison at the Rivonia Trial. Arrested and charged with treason in South Africa, Ahmed Kathrada spent nearly 27 years imprisoned on Robben Island with Nelson Mandela. On Robben Island, in his tiny garden patch, Kathrada buried the original draft of Mandela's autobiography, until it could be smuggled to London for publication.

After Kathrada's release from prison on October 15, 1989, he served as an advisor to former President Nelson Mandela. He is now the chairperson of the Robben Island Museum Council and of the Ex-Political Prisoner's Committee. His new book, *Memoirs*, is truly a collection of memories and accounts. Kathrada affords us rare glimpses into his and other activists' lives during the struggle and imprisonment, and sketches poignant cameos of those who would become South Africa's post-apartheid leaders.

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## ADD ONE/MANDELA CONFIDANTE

Oliver Franklin will make remarks preceding the program and Richard Stengel, President & CEO of the National Constitution Center, will moderate the discussion.

Located at 525 Arch Street on Philadelphia's historic Independence Mall, the National Constitution Center is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and its relevance to Americans' daily lives. Opened on July 4, 2003, the museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising". From June 10 through November 4, the museum is also featuring its first new traveling exhibition, *Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War*. The Center is open seven days a week, and admission is \$9 for adults and \$7 for seniors ages 62 and up, children ages 4-12, and active military personnel. Children ages 3 and under are free. Group rates are also available.

The National Constitution Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education and debates, and as a home for visiting scholars. Also, serving as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional debate, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6600 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

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