



Current position

Spokesperson of the South African National Traders' Retail Alliance (SANTRA)
Working as a street trader (books) in inner city Johannesburg

Bio details

Born: 1945 in Hillbrow, Johannesburg
Family Status: Divorced, 3 children (US)
Lives in Yeoville: Since 1992
Current job: Street trader (books) in Johannesburg inner city



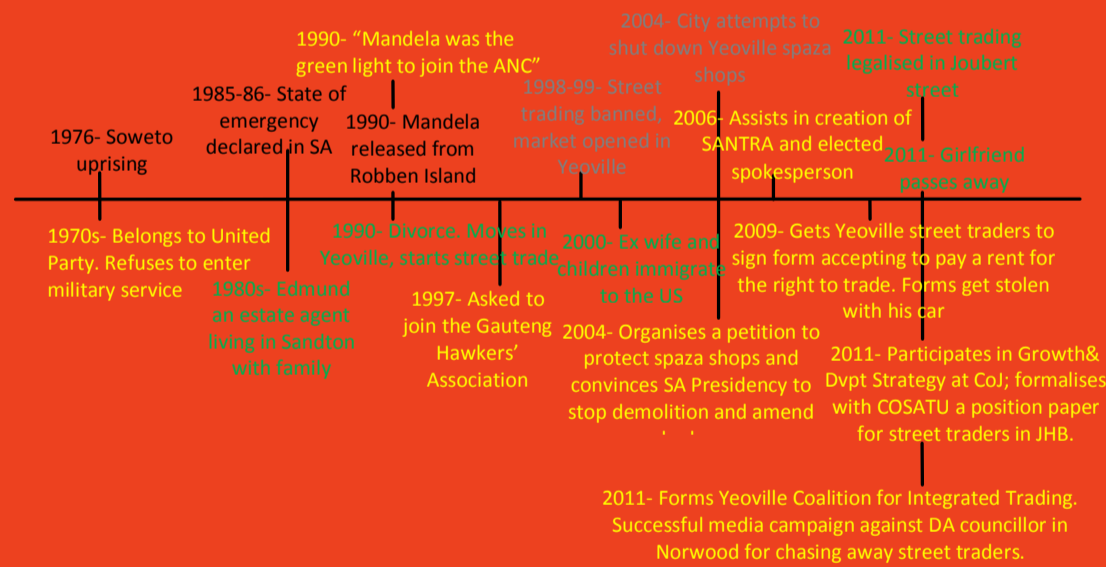
© James 2011. Edmund part-takes in a street traders' meeting in Yeoville. Here with Angelina Motsepe, Yeoville block leader.

“It's the people's economy that we are talking about! Not that economy you read about, and how much did Pick 'n Pay make. It's the ordinary people's economy. It involves about 6 millions people. If you sit here long enough, you will see people walking past selling stuff and they all make out.”



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Edmund's trajectory



Sacrifices

“I just finished paying off my debt – I was 6 months in arrears with my rent, and was taken to court. Each day I am not here impacts on me.”

One month in Edmund's life

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Sept	12	13	14 Informal Trading Forum chaired by DED (CoJ), to prepare traders' input into the GDS (Metro Civic center)	15	16
	19 COSATU mtg with street traders leaders: presentation SALGA position and GDS process (COSATU house)	20 COSATU mtg with 6 key leaders and Yeoville Studio – finalizing position paper for GDS (COSATU House).	21	22	23 COSATU presents position paper to street traders – focus group discussion (Metro Civic center).
Oct	26	27 GDS at the City Council. (Metro Civic center)	28	29 Mtg with YSF & YBCDT chairs, facilitated by Yeoville Studio, to form Yeoville Coalition for Integrated Trading. (Claire's house)	30
	3	4	5	6	7 YCIT - meeting chaired by COSATU (COSATU House)
	10	11	12 YCIT mtg with street and market trader reps., chaired by COSATU (Yeoville Recreation Centre).	13	14

A key support for Yeoville traders

“The City came and chased Yeoville street traders away, five years ago, and we took action. We got 5000 signatures in one morning on the streets of Yeoville from the public. We went to the president's office and we petitioned the president Thabo Mbeki. And the ban on street traders and spaza shops was ended. And it's still there today because of that action.

We fought a good battle for the rights to trade from a house in Yeoville. The bulldozers were there, demolishing the spaza shops. And our argument was why are they not allowed in Yeoville, but they are allowed in the townships?
And what we discovered was that Johannesburg has still two laws. The Town planning scheme of 1979 applied to the previously white areas and didn't apply to the townships. They then amended the town planning scheme to facilitate what they call consent use, where spaza shop operators will apply for consent use.

And we didn't need an NGO, we didn't need donor funding for that, we just needed something to be done. Passionate people.”

Edmund's vision

“Our vision is to have organised street trading in Yeoville, where people pay monthly rent, and that money collected pays for services and for monitoring, so that things are kept orderly. And perhaps some sort of traders-owned company so that if there is a profit, the profit can be shared amongst micro-traders. Once you have a more formalised structure, you will have training and opportunities and social benefits. That is our vision to create a pilot project in Yeoville.”

Why Yeoville?

“We would like to use Yeoville as a pilot project – if we get it right in Yeoville we can show it to the national and provincial level... I happen to live in Yeoville and I focus on the basic needs of ordinary people, many of whom are Yeoville residents. I haven't really been over active in Yeoville community affairs. I've focused more on the bigger picture. Where there has been a problem in Yeoville I've dealt with it. Like now, we have a problem with the street traders, who are being chased by the Metro police and nobody's doing anything about it but us.”