THE PASSING AWAY OF PROFESSOR PHILLIP VALLENTINE TOBIAS (1925 – 2012)

It was with great sadness that the Faculty and the University confirmed the passing of Professor Phillip Vallentine Tobias, a stalwart of the University and a world-renowned scientist, who died on the morning of 7 June 2012 in Johannesburg after a long illness.

A Witsie through and through, having obtained his BSc (1946), BSc Hons (1947), MBBCch (1950), PhD (1953) and DSc (1967), at Wits, Professor Tobias had a long and illustrious career of over 60 years at Wits and inspired generations of medical and science students. He was internationally renowned for his scholarship and dedication to a better understanding of the origin, behaviour and survival of humanity; for his many major scholarly contributions to palaeoanthropology, anatomy, human biology, cultural anthropology, the evolution of the brain, cytogenetics and the history and philosophy of science.

Phillip Tobias displayed a high regard for humanity and fought dearly for those things which he thought were correct and steadfastly opposed the ideas of the Apartheid regime. He was renowned for his sustained campaign against racism and for upholding and fighting for human rights and freedoms. In recent years he publicly protested against xenophobia, government’s initial HIV/AIDS policies and government’s delay in granting the Dalai Lama a visa to enter South Africa.

His achievements have been recognised internationally and he was the recipient of many awards and honours. He received a lifetime achievement award from the National Research Foundation in September 2010 and was also a recipient of the Order of the Southern Cross Class II in 1999, a National Order from the Presidency.

In his time at Wits, he served as Professor of Anatomy and Human Biology, as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Honorary Professor of Palaeoanthropology and Professor of Zoology and finally was made Professor Emeritus of Anatomy and Human Biology and Honorary Professorial Research Fellow in Anatomical Sciences. He was visiting professor at several overseas universities and as a world authority in palaeoanthropology he authored over 1 130 publications.

His name is synonymous with the initiation of the research and excavation of the Sterkfontein caves where over a third of all known early hominid fossils has been found. The site is now a World Heritage Site.

He will be sorely missed in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Wits, but his passing will also leave a deep wound in the country and the scientific community around the world. While he was a Witsie at heart, he was also a son of South Africa.

Professor Emeritus Phillip Tobias will be remembered as an outstanding teacher, a renowned scientist, a dedicated Witsie and a gentle, caring person. The Faculty and the University mourn this great loss.

Professor Tobias will be buried on Sunday 10 June, 2012 at 10:45 at West Park Jewish Cemetery. The Faculty and University will be holding a memorial service for Professor Tobias. Details will be announced.
RECENT EVENTS

HEALTH SCIENCE WEEK, SCI-BONO DISCOVERY CENTRE, NEWTOWN

The Adler Museum of Medicine and the School of Oral Health Sciences were invited to take part in Health Science Week at the Sci-Bono Discovery Centre in Newtown from 7 to 11 May 2012. The week was a great success offering educational programmes consisting of presentations, workshops and exhibitions in order to raise awareness around and increase public understanding of topics such as personal hygiene, nutrition and environmental health.

The event provided schools with a quality interactive experience to inspire both teachers and learners to the applications of science, mathematics, engineering and technology and also showcased career opportunities in health sciences. The Adler Museum exhibited its History of Tuberculosis exhibition and provided talks, interactive worksheets and information on TB as well as promoting the Faculty of Health Sciences at Wits. The School of Oral Health Sciences provided presentations on the importance of oral hygiene and an interactive display offered information and career choices in the oral health sciences. A total of 4 411 learners from primary and high schools and 119 teachers attended the event.

Photograph: Sepeke David Sekgwele, Collections Officer at the Adler Museum, with school learners

WITS UNIVERSITY INFORMATION DAY

Report and photographs by Professor Kumaran Chetty

Photographs: (left): Professor Kumaran Chetty with the Department of Nursing Education team, winners of the clinical division. It is the second time that they have won! (Right): Professors Thérësa Coetzer and Chetty with students from the Department of Molecular Medicine and Haematology, winners of the preclinical division. The display was arranged by two postgraduate students, Michelle and Taf.

12 May 2012 saw Old Mutual Sports Hall invaded by the Faculty of Health Sciences. After seeing off the Karatekas and fitness fanatics, the various units got to the serious business of tackling the notice boards, tables and chairs in earnest to claim their allotted space and to start organising their displays. With the lovely weather that we experienced, Wits Information Day attracted in excess of 15 000 students. The participating Schools and Divisions were as follows: School of Therapeutic Sciences (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Nursing Education, Pharmacy and Pharmacology and the Centre for Exercise Science), School of Pathology (Molecular Medicine and Chemical Pathology), the Schools of Physiology, Anatomical Sciences and Oral Health Sciences, the Centre for Health Science Education and representatives of the Faculty.
A welcome addition this year was the division of Forensic Medicine. Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) programmes on TV had this Division and Molecular Medicine swamped with CSI wannabees. As last year, the criteria used for the judging of the various displays were based on interest, staff/student representation and presentation. The judges were Professors Alan Rothberg, Ahmed Wadee and myself. In the clinical division the finalists were Occupational Therapy and Nursing Education. The winner was Nursing Education which was also celebrating International Nursing Day. In the preclinical division the finalists were Molecular Medicine and Haematology and Chemical Pathology. The winner was Molecular Medicine and Haematology.

I would like to thank my assistants (all students): Justin Hean (sound), Varada Shukla, Kershia Perumal, Cleopatra Rakgantsho, Michelle Bryant, Masego Moloke, Khanya Cind and Nomlingo Nhlapo. Finally, to all staff members who worked so hard and for their efforts in putting up their displays, well done!

Photographs: (left): Professor Chetty with staff and students from the Department of Occupational Therapy, runners up in the clinical division – for the second time in a row! We hope it will be 3rd time lucky for them! (Right): Professor Chetty with Elize and Henda, stalwarts of the Faculty’s participation and display

TOWARD MALARIA ERADICATION – MYTH OR REALITY

Photographs (left): Professors Ahmed Wadee, Maureen Coetzee, Lucille Blumberg, Ms Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Professors Thérèsa Coetzer and Bev Kramer; (Right): Professor Wadee, the Vice-Chancellor of Wits Professor Loyiso Nongxa and Professor Stephen Tollman

The Faculty of Health Sciences Research Office hosted the lecture Towards Malaria eradication: Myth or reality? by Professors Thérèsa Coetzer, Head: Plasmodium Molecular Research Unit and Red Cell Membrane Research Unit, and Maureen Coetzee, DST/NRF South African Research Chair and Director: Malaria Entomology Research Unit, on 17 May 2012.

This well attended and interesting lecture was the seventh in the Prestigious Research Lecture Series. The guest commentary was by Professor Lucille Blumberg, Deputy Director for the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, a division of the National Health Laboratory Service. Special guest Yvonne Chaka Chaka, President of the Princess of African Foundation, Roll Back Malaria and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and world-renowned recording artist and dedicated humanitarian, closed the evening’s proceedings with a short talk and an inspirational song.
Professor Muhammad H Zaman, a researcher in Biomedical Engineering at Boston University, presented a seminar entitled *Robust Approaches to High Value Biomedical Challenges in the Developing Word* in the Adler Museum of Medicine at Medical School on 24 May 2012.

Professor Zaman was hosted by the Biomedical Engineering Research Group in the School of Electrical & Information Engineering. In his informative talk, Professor Zaman presented the research which is being done in his laboratory, including the development of novel biomaterials and computer simulation aimed at understanding fundamental questions in cancer progression and metastasis. Professor Zaman’s laboratory also works on the development of robust, cost-effective solutions to medical diagnostics including point-of-care systems for developing countries. He hopes to forge an association with researchers doing similar work at Wits.

Photograph: Professors David Rubin and Muhammad Zaman

Professor Angela Woodiwiss, ad hominem Professor of Physiology, Head of the Molecular and Cellular Laboratory of the Cardiovascular Pathophysiology and Genomics Research Unit (CPGRU) and co-director of CPGRU in the School of Physiology, delivered her inaugural lecture entitled *Functional Implications of a Big Heart: Controversies Resolved?*, on 31 May 2012. Although the clinical implications of a big heart are not in dispute, controversies still abound regarding the functional implications thereof. In her lecture, she shed some light on important functional changes (and the mechanisms thereof) which are due to an enlarged heart. These answers are largely based upon conclusions reached in her research over the past 20 years.

Her research interests are in understanding the mechanisms of cardiovascular disease, primarily hypertension and heart failure. Her research uses epidemiological and genetic approaches in human subjects, as well as animal models. In her research, Professor Woodiwiss has unraveled the critical role of the non-cross-linked collagen and excluded other factors as mechanisms of cardiac dilatation in heart failure. Together with Professor Gavin Norton she established the African Program on Genes in Hypertension in 2003, the first large family-based cross-sectional and prospective population study ever conducted in Africa to identify the factors that determine all conventional and novel cardiovascular risk factors in groups of African ancestry.

Photograph: Professors David Gray, Head of the School of Physiology, Yunus Ballim, DVC (Academic), Angela Woodiwiss and Ahmed Wadee, Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences

On behalf of the Faculty, we announce with regret the death of Professor Fanie Cronje on 14 May 2012. Professor Cronje graduated MBChB from Pretoria in 1971, and obtained his MMed (Thoracic Surgery) in 1978. From University of Pretoria, he joined Medunsa in 1983 as Head of Cardiothoracic Surgery, and Head of the Multi-Disciplinary Intensive Care Department until 1989. He joined Wits in 1989 as Head of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, a post he retired from on 31 August 2008. Professor Cronje was active in all aspects of Cardiothoracic Surgery. He was a member of the Faculty of the Cardiothoracic Surgeons of the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa and on the editorial Board of the *Cardiovascular Journal of Southern Africa for Paediatric Cardiac Surgery*.

He is survived by his four children, Charel, Mariette, Stephanus and Abraham, as well as two sisters, Mara and Anita. Our condolences go to his family.
The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, has been awarded a SARChI Research Chair in the field of Bioinformatics of African Populations as part of the South African Chairs Initiative (SARChI). This initiative is funded by the SA Department of Science Technology (DST) and the National Research Foundation (NRF) to develop and promote research in South Africa.

The University seeks a candidate for this Chair which will be based in the University's Sydney Brenner Institute for Molecular Bioscience (SBIMB). The SBIMB is one of six major new transdisciplinary Research Institutes being set up by the University as a strategic contribution to the challenges faced by South African and African societies in the 21st Century.

The successful applicant will be expected to lead a research programme in the bioinformatics of African populations and provide academic and strategic leadership of bioinformatics. The funding of the research chair provides generous support for the incumbent (e.g. to fund students or postdoctoral fellows) on top of the salary package. An award condition does not permit the incumbent to spend more than 5% of their time on undergraduate teaching. Although this post comes with generous funding, the incumbent will be expected to participate and initiate other funding applications.

The University has an active research and teaching programme in bioinformatics, which works in closely with researchers in the Faculties of Science and Health Sciences. There will be opportunity to join existing or new collaborations, with access to novel data sets. The university has excellent research in the fields of genetics, medicine, and human evolution, and strong mathematical and computational science departments. We are actively engaged in the Human Heredity and Health in Africa initiative (H3A) of the National Institutes of Health. We have a research computing cluster and access to the national supercomputing facility.

Requirements: A PhD in relevant discipline; excellent publication record in bioinformatics, with emphasis on population studies; record of postgraduate supervision and attracting independent funding.

We shall start considering applications from 12 June 2012. Applicants should send their CV, the names and contact details of at least three referees, and a one page research statement to Ms Noxolo Mavundla Noxolo.Mavundla@wits.ac.za Informal enquiries may be made to Professor Scott Hazelhurst Scott.Hazelhurst@wits.ac.za

This post may be filled either at the Professorial or Associate Professorial level depending on the candidate's seniority. While the chair has been awarded to the University, the choice of candidate and the tier of the post will be subject to ratification by the DST/NRF after independent scientific review. The University's choice of applicant will work with Wits to submit a full proposal to the NRF.

For more information:

Wits http://www.wits.ac.za
Wits Bioinformatics http://www.bioinf.wits.ac.za
DST/NRF SARChI: http://www.nrf.ac.za/funding_overview.php?fid=117
Wits’ SBIMB http://www.wits.ac.za/sbimb
INVITATIONS and COURSES

HEALTH SCIENCES RESEARCH DAY AND POSTGRADUATE EXPO 2012: REMINDER!

Get ready for the biennial Health Sciences Research Day and Postgraduate Symposium taking place on 19 September 2012. This one-day meeting showcases new and groundbreaking research produced by staff and students of the Faculty. Under the slogan Excellence, Relevance, Determination: Transforming Life Through Research Excellence, oral and poster presentations will be selected to highlight research in Diseases of Lifestyle; Education, Policy and Systems; Clinical Research and Therapeutics for Health; Infectious Diseases; and Molecular and Comparative Biosciences. Entrance is free, and all aspiring participants and delegates should pre-register at www.witsresearchday.co.za

2012 PHYSICIANS’ UPDATE

The 2012 Physicians’ Update, organised by the Wits Department of Internal Medicine will be held on 13 and 14 July 2012 at the Pharmaceutical Society Conference Centre in Glenhove Road, Houghton, Johannesburg. The programme will focus on current and topical issues in various subspecialties of Internal Medicine including Critical Care, Cardiology, Pulmonology, Neurology, Gastroenterology, Infectious Diseases, Diabetes and Endocrinology, Rheumatology, Dermatology, Nephrology, Haematology, Oncology, Geriatrics and Medical Ethics. In addition, we host the prestigious Arthur Landau Memorial Lecture of the College of Medicine of South Africa. This meeting is the premier event in the academic calendar of the Department and precedes the prestigious Arthur Landau Memorial Lecture of the College of Medicine of South Africa. CPD points will be awarded. For bookings and payment details contact (011) 783 2605 or maevevinj@gmail.com. Early registration closes on Friday, 6 July 2012 at 17:00.

CONGRESS ORGANISERS

Londocor Event Management
Tel: +27 11 768 4355
Fax: +27 11 768 1174
Email: sonja@londocor.co.za or yvonne@londocor.co.za or stacey@londocor.co.za

Please remember to register, early bird registration closes on the 31st of May!

To view the programme please click here
3D-Visualization Techniques for Forensic Scientists, Craniofacial Biologists and Health Care Professionals 15-19 October 2012

Presented by:

Wits School of Anatomical Sciences Morphological Anatomy & Biological Anthropology Divisions
Miss Erin Hutchinson: Associate Lecturer/PhD Student; Mr Jason Hemingway: Lecturer/ PhD Student, Dr Andrew Gallagher: Lecturer

Institute for Human Evolution: Paleosciences Centre
Dr Kristian Carlson: Senior Researcher & Director Wits microfocus CT facility

Charité - Campus Benjamin Franklin, Freie Universität Berlin, Department of Craniofacial Developmental Biology Centre for Dental and Craniofacial Sciences
Professor Ralf Radlanski: Head of Department

Hosted by:

In partnership with

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Hosted by:

In partnership with

Aim

The field of Geometric Morphometrics is continuously evolving to include new and advanced technologies, which may be applied to a wide variety of scientific disciplines. This five-day workshop presented by the School of Anatomical Sciences and its partners, details various areas including: Geometric Morphometrics, Elliptical Fourier Analysis, Micro-CT Analysis and Craniofacial Reconstruction techniques. The workshop aims to provide participants with both the theoretical knowledge and practical experience, required to perform analysis on raw data sets. Classroom lectures are supplemented with hands-on practical work that provides participants with the opportunity to process and analyse data sets using a variety of 3D visualisation techniques.

Registration: Closing date for registration: 14 September 2012

Course Fee: R2 000 per delegate: Wits Staff/Students: Please enquire about staff rates

Venues: School of Anatomical Sciences, Wits Medical School and Paleosciences Centre, Wits Main Campus

Enquiries regarding course content:
Miss EF Hutchinson, School of Anatomical Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, Tel: (011) 717 2420; Fax: (011) 717 2422; Email: erin.hutchinson@wits.ac.za

Registration:
Mrs Jeanine Phigeland, Health Sciences Research Office, Faculty of Health Sciences, Email: jeanine.phigeland@wits.ac.za
EXTENDED APPLICATION DEADLINE:

Research Methods Course in Sexual and Reproductive Health; HIV and Gender Based Violence (GBV)

The objectives of the course is to strengthen the research capabilities of participants and through this to increase research capacity in the African region; provide skills in research methodology allowing participants to initiate research, participate in research and to critically appraise research findings; familiarize participants with the major SRH/HIV issues affecting the African Region; create a network of alumni to facilitate information exchange and research collaboration in the African region.

The course will run from the 13th – 30th August 2012 in Johannesburg. Daily attendance is compulsory.

The minimum criteria to apply:
- A medical degree as a minimum level of acceptance or relevant other first degree, at good honours level
- Experience in the field of sexual and reproductive health/HIV
- Applicant is conducting research or planning to conduct research in the area of sexual and reproductive health/HIV
- Willingness and ability to apply their knowledge in their current work situation and future career

Applicants in possession of a Masters in Public Health are considered to be overqualified and therefore not eligible to apply.

Extended closing date for applications: 20th June 2012

The Research Methods Course is offered annually since its inception in 1997. The course is organized by the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute, the Medical Research Council and the Population Council. WRHI is a World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre.

Please contact the course coordinator for more the application form, information on eligibility and course fees: researchmethodscourse@wrhi.ac.za

And finally ... IT’S YOUR WORLD Photographs of rain drops. Can you believe that these are pictures of raindrops? These macro photographs of water drops were taken from plants just after a rain. Beautiful!


Email: adler.museum@wits.ac.za