



ernest

Ernest Oppenheimer Hall of Residence



A journey through
FIVE DECADES OF EXCELLENCE

Author: Dr Brendon Matthews



Brendon Matthews

Recalling the past. Affirming the present

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Special thanks

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Foreword

Brendon Matthews

In their first meeting of the year on Monday, 20 February 1989, the newly elected House Committee, under Matters Arising, noted that “EOH has a rich tradition, but nobody has yet made an effort to retrace the history”. Until now. The Ernest Oppenheimer Hall (EOH) has been home to thousands of Wits students over a period of more than 50 years, many of whom have gone on to become great and successful men academically, intellectually and socially, both on the national and international scene. It would be a great tragedy if the history of this House of Excellence be forgotten, or rather, neglected by us, the 21st Century generation. We all want to leave a legacy, but what would that legacy be worth if it were only remembered by your immediate peers? If any of us were, at any one time, asked to tell about our family’s origins, history, settlement and constituents, we would all proudly speak at length about our familial belonging. In the same way, just as much as what we proclaim to be proud of EOH, we need to be able to tell others about the beginnings of our family of Ernestmen, our traditions and our culture and the seminal role EOH played in the transition to a free and democratic society.

I hope that this book will awaken that inner yearning and pride in knowledge which lies dormant within us. I also aim to have this sense of belonging instilled in the first-years and all those who are to come after them, as they are the future seniors and leaders of the House of Excellence. This publication aims to alert those better able than I am to compile this record that, despite its brevity, EOH has a deep, rich and interesting history. I am an Ernestman, and I owe the holistic university experience I have had thus far to the kinship and brotherhood that exists in the Ernest Oppenheimer Hall of residence.

Preface

Nazime Randera (Assistant Registrar, Parktown Cluster)

Ernest Oppenheimer Hall, fondly known as EOH, by the generations of staff and students that have walked through this remarkable and exceptional Wits University residence.

At an academic awards evening in 2002, Professor Colin Bundy (Vice-Chancellor of the University at the time) started his speech with the following comment:

‘If Wits University is the best university in Africa, than undoubtedly EOH must be the best residence in Africa’.

These words have come to personify the character and value of this remarkable residence and the motto that was adopted by the EOH house committees as the “House of Excellence” which is evidently expressed by the academic excellence displayed by its residents. This is displayed at the annual academic awards evenings each year.

From its inception in 1967, EOH has been managed by exceptional individuals like Radford Jordan (Registrar of the University), Professor D Freer; Professor Noel Cameron, Tertia Myers and Nazime Randera. Each of these individuals together with the rest of the team of staff and in partnership with the outstanding house committee leaders have made it their goal to ensure that ethos of critical engagement; constructive dialogue and service delivery to the body of young men in EOH takes centre stage in their academic and extra-curricular development.

The calibre of graduates that have emerged out of this house of excellence speaks volumes with academic professors; specialist health professionals; CEO’s of private sector companies; project engineers, entrepreneurs, chartered accountants; attorneys; etc. extending their skills both nationally and internationally. We strongly believe that the years that they spent in residence during their years at University contributed immensely to the well rounded graduates that they ultimately became.

One of the key annual programmes that have remarkably expressed itself in this house of intellectualism is the Speaker series events. These sharp and interactive engagements that have taken place within the residence provide young fertile minds the opportunity to listen to leaders in the different fields and empower themselves through this process.

The strength of this residence lies in the community that occupies the inner soul of the bricks and mortar and words of wisdom; acts of defiance; sporting rivalry and brotherhood characterises what goes on behind the walls that make up EOH. The residents take great pride in being part of EOH and it manifests itself in their academic performance and also in events like the All Residence Council Sports day or the Residence Debating tournaments; the internal sporting leagues (soccer; cricket and basketball) and at the student leadership level where members of the community have occupied leadership positions in the SRC; ARC; Student faculty councils; clubs and societies. The spirit of brotherhood that is inculcated during the orientation week plays a critical role in character building and loyalty towards the residence.

The annual social awards evening is a gathering that many Ernestmen look forward to and it is a laugh a minute as fellow residents confer hilarious awards upon one another. The termly general house meetings highlights the characteristics of accountability that residents expect from their representatives and I recall a meeting that began at 19h30 and had to be suspended at 05h00 the next morning as members of the house called on their representatives to account for activities that had been hosted.

I have witnessed the incredible sense of selflessness that is demonstrated by senior residents who volunteer to assist their younger “brothers” in their academic pursuits and also in guiding them through challenges that they encounter during their time in the residence. Lively conversations can be heard in the dining halls and the residence parties are events that are keenly anticipated because the residence has built the reputation of hosting the best residence parties- a view that is shared by many other residences.

My family and I have proudly been part of this fabulous EOH extended family and we treasure all the wonderful years spent in the dining halls; at the special events; on the sports fields and in the corridors of this house of excellence. I personally look fondly on the many times that graduates have seen me in shopping centres; at functions; in far flung towns and cities and never hesitated to come up and warmly embrace me as having been part of their journey of life. It is truly a privilege to be associated with the students and staff of this beautiful residence and it is an honour to witness the growth of individuals physically, emotionally and intellectually as they transported themselves over the years to the completion of their studies.

EOH is truly a “HOUSE OF EXCELLENCE” at multiple levels- humanity; academic achievements; sporting stars; community engagement; and leadership. It will continue to contribute in producing outstanding graduates who may shape the future in the country at large; in the public and private sector and also in the communities and their own homes. EOH residents will continue to add value to the mission of the University as an institution of teaching, learning and research and be at the cutting edge of generating new knowledge and be leaders in industry and the government sector.

Tracing our ancestry: Cottesloe Residence

The origins of EOH, surprisingly, go further back than the 50 years we acknowledge today. Although this might sound odd, we may have World War II to thank for initiating the need for our current place of residence.

With the outbreak of World War II, the need for another military hospital in the Johannesburg area was realised. The Johannesburg City was thus commissioned in 1941 by the then government to build a military hospital in the suburb of Cottesloe. This military hospital was never meant to be used forever - for the duration of the War. It thus only remained in operation until its abandonment early in 1946.

In 1946, many ex-servicemen returning from war saw the need to further their education. At the same time, the government too felt that it owed the country's servicemen a little something in return for their efforts and thus made bursaries available to all ex-servicemen. These bursaries enabled study in the fields of medicine and engineering. The large influx of soldiers now wanting to study resulted in almost all of them being admitted to Wits University. The University had to now find a way to cope with these numbers, as College House and Dalrymple House (Men's Res) and Knockando were unable to accommodate these students. The Vice-Chancellor, Dr HR Raikes, arranged to take over the abandoned military hospital at Cottesloe as a residence for the ex-servicemen.

*A delightful
village community*

Cottesloe Residence welcomed its first tenants in January 1947. Many of the residents of Cottesloe were married men, some with children. This setup, as described by Professor GR Bozzoli, gave the residence a "delightful village community" type of atmosphere. The residence accommodated 400 single students in the hospital wards turned into and divided into rooms, and about 30 married couples in old Nissen army huts.

Cottesloe Residence differed from the other residences at Wits in that women were allowed on the premises at any time, whether in rooms or common areas, and it was the norm for wives to join their husbands in the dining hall. (Without selling out too much to management, I must say that, unofficially, Ernestmen can attest to the fact that this setup is eerily similar to the situation at EOH today. I may be wrong, but it was probably the case at EOH from as early as 1967 as well).



1951 Cottesloe Residence House Committee

One of the rules for first years at Cottesloe was that they always wear a large yellow bowtie and greet the members of the House Committee by name if they pass them. One notable tradition was that if the chairperson of the House Committee of any previous year graduated, he would be painted black all down one side of his body, including his head and genitals. For laughs, freshmen were often held down by seniors and also stained down one half of their body as a 'side show' to the main event. It seems Cottesloe too embraced the black and white colours that we do now at EOH. The last of the ex-servicemen graduated in 1958. In light of poor and difficult maintenance but recognising the need for student accommodation, the University Council planned to acquire the ground from the City Council and build a larger and permanent men's residence at Cottesloe.

Notable Residents of Cottesloe:

- **Guerino R Bozzoli**, Dean, 1947 - 1963, and Vice-Chancellor, Wits University
- **Phillip V Tobias**, world renowned paleo-anthropologist and Professor Emeritus at Wits University
- **Tim Jeal**, novelist and Victorian biographer
- **Wits Engineering Class of 1948**, part of and responsible for the rapid growth in the building of infrastructure and towns in and around Gauteng after WWII, and being a part of the booming mining industry and greatly upholding the country's economy.

The Cottesloe Consultation

The date was 21 March 1960. Sixty-nine people lay dead outside a police station in Sharpeville, mercilessly gunned down in what was to become known as the Sharpeville Massacre. It was this disturbing act of murder which was the impetus for what was called The Cottesloe Consultation.

The Cottesloe Consultation was a meeting between eight churches in South Africa and representatives of the World Council of Churches internationally. This meeting took place from 7 to 14 December 1960 at the Cottesloe Residence, where the 80 delegates also lived for that week. The main themes were:

1. An evaluation of the situation in South Africa at the time
2. The Christian interpretation of the Gospel in terms of race relations
3. The interpretation of South Africa's history from a Christian perspective
4. The impact of the state of Emergency in South Africa (a state of Emergency was declared in 1960 when, soon after the Sharpeville Massacre, an assassin unsuccessfully shot Prime Minister HF Verwoerd)
5. The churches' duty in terms of justice, mission and ecumenical co-operation.

Eighty delegates took part including eighteen Blacks, at most 55 Whites and at most six of other races.

Notable delegates at this consultation were:

1. Bishop Alpheus Zulu, President of the World Council of Churches and National Chairman of Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)
2. Professor Zachariah K Matthews, academic, envoy to the UN, National Executive Committee member of the African National Congress (ANC)
3. Dr Beyers Naudé, theologian, leading Afrikaner anti-apartheid activist
4. Dr Franklin Fry, renowned American Lutheran clergyman and Chairman of the Cottesloe Consultation.

The resolutions, signed by all present were published as the Cottesloe Declaration and stated that:

- No one who believes in Jesus Christ may be excluded from any church based on colour or race
- There is no basis in the Bible for the prohibition of mixed marriages

- The system of migrant labour and its disintegrating effects on African life is condemned
- Any man, regardless of colour or race, should be allowed to vote for a government, own, and be a part of the land in which he lives
- No one may be punished without standing trial in a public courtroom.

The declaration had a great impact worldwide. President Verwoerd labelled the Consultation a farce and rejected its Declaration outright. So too did the Dutch Reformed Church, which allegedly victimised its delegates for having signed the Declaration. Even so, ZK Matthews, in his book “*Freedom for my People*” called the Cottesloe Consultation “too successful”. Their time at the residence had them sharing beds, linen, cutlery and toilets with people of different races, and demonstrated to the country that White and Black can live together. Matthews writes further that, “people began to change, (and) that is why the (Cottesloe) Resolutions were not officially accepted”.

Plans for a new Cottesloe Residence, having been under the Deanship of Professor Guerino Renzo Bozzoli for 15 years, eventually closed its doors at the end of 1963. The University Council agreed to rebuild the old hospital into a permanent residence, but all plans were stopped when the University was served with an order to stop construction by the provincial authorities, who had decided to use the site for a new Afrikaans teacher training college (which would later become the University of Johannesburg’s Bunting Road campus). Things now looked gloomy for the endurance of the legend of Cottesloe Residence, but the University wasted no time in searching for another site. In 1965, the City Council once again granted the University land. This land was in Parktown and was known as The Oval, an undeveloped park surrounded by several Randlord mansions, these being: North Lodge, Trematon House, Outeniqua (at Wits Business School) and Eikenlaan (Mike’s Kitchen). After purchasing some of these homes and having almost exhausted the available capital, the University made an appeal for funds to aid the building of the new men’s residence. A very generous and substantial gift of money, recorded to be “just over R600 000” (over R37 million in 2014), was received from the Transvaal and Orange Free State Chamber of Mines enabling the University to proceed with the construction of the new Cottesloe.

*Black and
white can live
together*

Ernest Oppenheimer Hall

The new residence was to be named Ernest Oppenheimer Hall – EOH. The Chamber of Mines suggested the name in memory of Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, who, besides his mining and philanthropy, also had a great interest in Wits University. William G McIntosh, a nationally renowned and greatly decorated architect, was responsible for the design of the new residence.

Construction of the first stage of the Ernest Oppenheimer Hall, the East Wing, began in 1965. According to McIntosh, the plan in the design of EOH was to emulate Oxford and Cambridge University's 'staircase' system as well as retain the openness of the one story complex, both of which were also present in the original Cottesloe. The staircases are the focus features of EOH and form the basis of its design. In the games room and the dining hall, thick timber columns curve into beams that support the roof structure. These unique features were to add value to EOH in terms of its architecture. The new site on which EOH now stands was, and is, conveniently close to the Medical School. The environment and structure of this site turned out to be much more satisfactory than a new residence on the original Cottesloe site would have been. Being kicked out of Cottesloe by the provincial government was actually a blessing in disguise.

By the end of 1966, construction of the East Wing of EOH was almost completed and applications for prospective residents opened in September. Mr R J P Jordan, a senior researcher in the department of Political Studies, was appointed Dean of EOH. In February 1967 the building contractors handed over Ernest Oppenheimer Hall, just before the students arrived for the first term. The residence opened for accommodation to 133 students in 1967, most of them engineering students.

EOH was officially opened by Dr Harry F Oppenheimer, son of Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, at a small ceremony on the 18th of September 1967. It was at this official opening that Mr H Oppenheimer announced that he and his wife would be donating a squash court to the residence. In addition to the squash court, the residence boasted other new facilities including a billiards room, two dining halls, a pub, a canteen and a soccer field at The Oval (the land where Parktown Village Residence now stands). EOH was also the first residence in South Africa to get slot-type laundry machines and spin drying machines in 1973. Residents could get up to two weeks' washing done at a time at a cost of 40c per load (approximately R15 today). Before then, residents would screw their windows open as wide as possible, tie a heavy-duty rope in between their and their neighbour's window, and hang their laundry over it to dry. Quite an ingenious idea if you ask me.

Plans to advance the second stage of the Ernest Oppenheimer Hall were always in place, but it wasn't until more than ten years later that the West Wing of EOH was completed. This new wing housed 200 more students, taking the total number of residents at EOH to 333. All rooms were single rooms back then. Today though, with the continuous increase in the need for University accommodation and the conversion of many larger rooms into double rooms for use by 'freshers', EOH now houses 406 students.

The floor plans of the West Wing of EOH are a mirror opposite to the main East Wing building. The West Wing was officially opened by Mr Nicholas Oppenheimer, grandson of Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, on the 22nd of August 1979, continuing the long association between the family and the residence.

Over the past four decades, changes have come about concerning the room allocations. With the introduction of the self-catering option at the residence in 1999, it was decided that the East Wing become self-catering only and the West Wing for catered students. As per University rules, no first-year is allowed to live as a self-catering student. This resulted in under-utilisation of the East Wing dining hall, since most of the students living there no longer had meals booked at the kitchen and had to cook their own meals in kitchens provided in the corridors of the East Wing. The East Wing dining hall is now used as the games room.

Most of the large rooms at North Lodge, originally reserved for House Committee members and senior residents, have since been made into double rooms to accommodate first-year residents. For many years students looked forward to one day being able to have a room at North Lodge, and those who were able to attain a room there were envied by the rest of the House. Today though, living at North Lodge is not seen as something to be happy about, and students are sometimes playfully teased about their loneliness over at the annexe, which seems to be amplified by the fact that the house is also the residence of the Dean.

*EOH's design
was to
emulate Oxford
and Cambridge
University's
staircase*

EOH Today

EOH is a residence to be admired. In terms of its architecture, natural surroundings and site, EOH remains the most imposing and beautiful residence at Wits University. Being an off-campus residence, it is a community on its own. As one approaches EOH, there are many large lush, green trees that surround the buildings. These give the buildings scale and grandeur. These trees were all planted over 47 years ago during the building of EOH and today provide the residence with a calm and free type of environment; a place one looks forward to coming back to after a stressful day in the lecture hall. The green courtyard spaces also give the residence a calming ambience; a place to sit back, admire and reflect.

The majority of EHO's 405 students are in the Health Sciences but also include students in Education, Sciences and Engineering. The residents of EOH refer to each other as Ernestmen. These are men who take pride in their association with the premier residence at Wits University and, arguably, the best residence in Africa. 'Ernestmen', incidentally, was an expression communicated by Professor Colin Bundy (Vice-Chancellor of the University at the time) in 2001 at an academic awards function hosted in the residence.

*EOH remains
the most imposing
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Wits
University*

The Gentleman's Residence

According to the residents of 1967, as well as Professor Noel Cameron, it was rumoured that EOH was actually built because the University Council was concerned about the standard of behaviour at Men's Res and "EOH was to be the residence for gentlemen." In my mind, as well as the mind of present and past EOH residents, there is no doubt that this aim was achieved and that Men's Res (and Knockando), to this day, maintain their unenviable reputations.

The tradition of being the "gentleman's residence" was adopted at the advent of the residence's existence and endures today. Whether it is on the sports field, at public gatherings, or formal events, the men from EOH have always maintained an esteemed level of dignity and respectability. The way an Ernestman carries himself in society has been instilled in every generation of freshmen since 1967. The Orientation Week programme, as conducted by the House Committee each year, is based on three values that we hold dear: Excellence, brotherhood and being a gentleman.

If anything, these three values sum up what it means to be an Ernestman. When Ernestmen are subjected to endless streams of swearing on the sports field from Men's Res, the Ernestmen in black and white choose not to bring the Hall into disrepute but instead strengthen their vocal support for their team on the field. When Knockandians dress in a rowdy fashion at formal dinners and subject our fellow sister residences to streams of howling, it is the Ernestmen, uniformly dressed in suit and tie, who enter in silence and offer a kind gesture to the fairer sex. This demeanour is not just meant to be portrayed while in the residence, but goes a long way in moulding a man into someone society will deem respectable and honourable. It is this demeanour that has played a part in so many EOH Old Boys becoming great men in the world today – from respected academics, doctors and businessmen, to world renowned and award-winning sportsmen, engineers, lawyers and judges.

It is true that many in the residence structures see Ernestmen as being "less of a man", scared and not "hard enough". It is always said that gentleness is often mistaken for weakness. It then comes as no surprise to me that EOH adopted the griffin as its official animal on our crest, since I have personally seen and read about many occasions where, as a griffin is described, Ernestmen have brought about vengeance and ferocity, especially when aggravated or invoked for selfish reasons.

*A gentelman's
residence*

Sir Ernest Oppenheimer



Ernest Oppenheimer

Ernest Oppenheimer was born on 22 May 1880 in Friedberg, Germany. He began his working life at the age of 17 by working for Dunkelsbuhler & Co., a diamond brokerage in London. His efforts impressed his employer and at the age of 22, he was sent to South Africa to represent the company as a buyer in Kimberley. Unfortunately for his employers, Oppenheimer had no interest in representing anyone but himself. On 19 June 1906 he married Mary Lina Pollock, with whom he had two sons. Oppenheimer became active in civil life and is described as “astute, enthusiastic and amiable”. In 1908 he joined the Kimberly City Council.

In 1912, at the age of 32, he became the mayor of Kimberley. By 1938 Oppenheimer had retired from politics and, after steadily building up his interests in the diamond world, had managed to wrest control of the De Beers empire. Along the way to building his own empire, Sir Oppenheimer picked up a lot of praise and even more criticism. We cannot deny that he used the resources at his disposal to their full extent and that he got “down and dirty” in getting to the top. That was the game of the day. That was business. It should also be realised though that companies and corporations in the early 1900s were not expected to have any social responsibility. Even so, Sir Oppenheimer’s philanthropy extended from the Cape to Oxford. Universities all across South Africa received new buildings, departments, scholarships and bursaries. Oppenheimer was also known for insisting on better housing and medical care for his mineworkers. TIME magazine, in 1951, recorded that he spent £70 million in the 1940s to ensure that a new model village be built to house miners in the Free State and therefore “wipe out the disgrace of South Africa’s mining kraals where Bantu workers live like prisoners”. During the forced removals, Oppenheimer visited Orlando in 1950. He was appalled by the living conditions of the people and soon after provided R6 million as capital to build new houses in Orlando and ensured that at least 24 000 homes were built. Oppenheimer’s health began deteriorating in 1956 and eventually failed him. He died at his home in Parktown, Johannesburg in 1957.

Open Time



Dr Harry Oppenheimer signs the visitors’ book in the Cottesloe Room whilst Mr Rex van Schalkwyk, Chairman of the 1967 House Committee, looks on. It was on the 18th of September 1967 that the official opening ceremony of the Ernest Oppenheimer Hall took place. The plaque, also pictured above, certifying the dates on which the different wings of EOH were opened. It is nailed to the wall at the entrance to the West Wing.

The EOH Crest

In the first EOH General House meeting held on 19 March 1967, the House Committee called upon the members of the House to come up with designs for a House crest. After several submissions of various designs, the House at large voted in favour of the design of Mr T Poole. Today it is the same crest with which all Ernestmen associate themselves.



Addition to the House Crest

Motion 1/2016 proposed that *“the House discusses having a motto for EOH that will be included in the space below the current EOH crest. It is proposed that Ernestmen be allowed to submit various prospective mottos to the House Committee and these be deliberated upon and one (1) be chosen at the next General House Meeting.”*

In the second EOH General House Meeting held on the 26th of April 2016, the motivation behind proposing an EOH motto, “House of Excellence, was to formalise it. The motion proposing that “House of Excellence” be placed beneath the emblem of Ernest Oppenheimer Hall was voted on and carried.

Components of the EOH Crest



An **open book** represents learning and knowledge.



The **cogwheel** represents industry, and hard, but successful work.



The Griffin, being half lion and half eagle, is the lord of the air united with the king of beasts and lord of the earth. Griffins are a symbol of the sun, wisdom, strength, and salvation. The griffin's other qualities include nobility, gentleness, and justice. Aggravated or invoked for selfish reasons, the griffin brings about vengeance and ferocity.

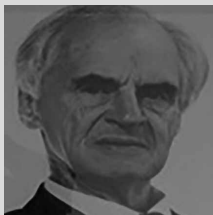


This wooden griffin sculpture hangs on the wall in the Cottesloe Room. Donated at the 1982 EOH Senior Dinner, it is a constant reminder of all the attributes stated above to which we should constantly strive.

The words, ‘House of Excellence.’

Deans of EOH

Mr R J P Jordan, 1967 - 1980



Radford Jordan was born in 1917. After completing his schooling, Jordan won a Bishops Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University in 1937. During World War II he worked in the Ministry of Economic Warfare and completed his BA LLB degree at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. After the war, Jordan returned to South Africa and worked as an attorney for Rose-Innes & Jordan in Cape Town and later for Mackintosh, Cross & Farquharson in Pretoria. At Wits he was appointed to research local government and was soon recruited to lecture in the Department of Political Science. In 1966 the then Vice Chancellor, Prof. Bozzoli appointed Jordan to Ernest Oppenheimer Hall, where he spent 15 years as Dean of EOH. Jordan was known amongst the students as a strict disciplinarian who did not go back on his word. I would think that the House Committees had a tough time working with him. After his retirement from Wits at the end of 1980, he spent a further 15 years writing book reviews for the *Financial Mail*, and then worked as a part-time conveyancer. Radford Jordan died in 2007 at the age of 90.

Professor D Freer, 1981 - 1986



Not much information is available about Professor Freer except that he was a man of large stature and once also the Dean of the School of Education at the former Johannesburg College of Education. It was during his tenure at EOH that Black students were accepted into the residence for the first time.

Professor N Cameron, 1987 - 1996



Professor Noël Cameron was educated at the Universities of Nottingham, Loughborough and London. He obtained his PhD (Medicine) in 1977 at London University's Institute of Child Health. In 1984 he came to South Africa and became a member of the Department of Anatomy at the Wits Medical School. In 1987 he was appointed Dean of EOH, taking over from Professor Freer. Professor Cameron was very active on the student scene at EOH and his loyalty and zest for EOH I personally

can only compare to that of Nazime Randera. This is evident in Cameron's correspondence with students, presence at sporting events and his evident dislike for Men's Res. He was a true Ernestman at heart. He played a great role in facilitating the post-apartheid transition at EOH. He admits that, although very interesting, his time at EOH was very challenging as well. It was with Professor Cameron that the residents of 1991 created a legacy in the form of successfully amending the constitution of EOH into its current post-apartheid form. Along with his deanship at EOH, Cameron also became Head of the Department of Anatomy and Human Biology at the Medical School from 1994 to 1995. With even greener pastures waiting abroad, Cameron parted ways with EOH and returned to the Department of Human Sciences at Loughborough University in the UK as Professor of Human Biology in August 1997. Professor Cameron has published widely in the international press on the subjects of normal and abnormal growth and development of children. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Society for the Study of Human Biology and of the Executive Committee of the Human Biology Association. He is Editor-in-Chief of *Annals of Human Biology*, a professor in the Department of Paediatrics at Wits Medical School, and a visiting professor at Princeton University. He is currently working as a researcher at Loughborough University, UK.

Opening remarks by Prof. Noël Cameron at EOH's 21st Anniversary Ball, 1988: "Ernest Oppenheimer Hall of Residence was built in 1966 to accommodate 170 male students. Rumour has it that the hall was actually built because the University authorities were concerned about the standard of behaviour at College and Dalrymple Houses (Men's Res)! EOH was to be the residence for gentlemen. There is, of course, no doubt in the mind of present

and past EOH students that this aim was achieved and that Men's Res still maintains its unenviable reputation"....

Address to EOH Residents before the 1991 Phineas Sports Day:

"To those who will form the basis of support please ensure that your behaviour does not bring the name of the Hall into disrepute. Encourage the EOH teams with singing and other vocal support but do not reduce your songs and chants to an endless stream of swearing at Men's Res! Such behaviour only gives credence to the Wits students' derogatory labels of 'rough and ready rugger buggers' and 'campus barbarians' as they are already known! If we purport to the Gentlemen's Residence, let's make sure we behave like gentlemen."

Ms T Myers, 1997 - 2001



Prior to working at the University, Tertia Myers worked as a teacher in the former homeland of Lebowa for three years. This sparked her love for working with students within the field of education. Her first position at Wits was as the warden of Esselen Residence in 1993 and then she went on to become the warden of Parktown Villages I & II. When the residence programme underwent further change, she was appointed assistant registrar of Parktown Cluster of Residences. Motivated by the awareness of the growing need for psychological

interventions for students, Ms Myers decided to leave the position of assistant registrar to continue her studies. She completed her Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology *cum laude* in 2004. At present, Ms Myers has a private clinical psychology practice and is pursuing a PhD in Psychology.

Mr Nazime Randera, 2001 -



Nazime Randera matriculated at Nirvana High School in Lenasia, Johannesburg and he holds an honours degree from Birmingham University, England. Mr Randera's working association with Wits University began in 1984, when he worked as a senior technician in the Chemistry department. Randera's active involvement in anti-apartheid civic structures and in the University union led to a natural progression from a technical into an administrative working space, which provided a direct service to students. The early 1990s were a tumultuous and vibrant period at the University because of the national changes inevitably impacting Wits. Under

the leadership of Dr Ron Carter, then Dean of Students, Randera became Head of the Office of Residence Life and played a key role in the restructuring the residence programme. The vision was to promote residences as "living-learning" centres and the application of a student development model in managing student residences. Randera held the post from 1994 to July 2000. He resigned from the University in July 2000, but returned after a year as the manager of the Parktown cluster, lured by working with university students. He remains passionately committed to working closely with the students of EOH through the House Committee and continues to encourage and promote excellence in every aspect of student life, be it academic, sporting, cultural, or intellectual. Now being the longest serving resident of North Lodge, he is seen by many as 'our father' as well as a 'fellow comrade'.

Mr Randera has always been committed to the well-being of residents at EOH. He is known, too, amongst students for shouting loudly and in a commanding voice when in disagreement with us. Even so, he is ever present at large sporting events and never misses joining in the song and dance, even when the chanting is directed at the Knockandians, who often accuse him of favouritism towards EOH. He remains a larger than life presence at EOH together with his young son and a dog named Spiderman, both of whom are unofficial mascots of EOH.

The House in Pictures

1st House Photo (1967)



1st House Committee



The first House Committee of EOH was formed by 6 students offering their services. In 1966 Mr Rex Van Schalkwyk, a law student at the time, was chosen by Mr Jordan to be the Chairman when the residence opened in 1967. At the first House Committee meeting, the rest of the members elected themselves to posts by secret ballot. That House Committee consisted of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and two others known as 'Member of the House Committee'. It was also Mr R Van Schalkwyk who, together with the treasurer (Mr A Lombard), drew up the first and original constitution of EOH which was then adopted by the House.

House Committee, 2014



House Photo, 2014



Chairman, Rex van Schalk



1967



2015

Chosen to be the first Chairman of EOH in 1966, Rex van Schalkwyk lived at EOH for the final two years of his LLB studies. It was under his leadership that EOH kick started its rise to being the best residence in Africa. Most notable is that it was largely he who wrote up the very first EOH Constitution and then presented it to the House for adoption. Although greatly amended over the years, some of

the clauses penned by him can still be found in the EOH Constitution used today. In 1968, Van Schalkwyk was re-elected as Chairman of the House Committee and today remains one of only four chairmen, namely L Dibden (1975 - 1976), P Zinn (1986 - 1987) and T Sikhwivhilu (2009 - 2010), to have been re-elected to the seat. Mr Van Schalkwyk graduated at the end of 1968 with an LLB degree.

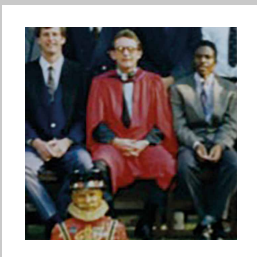
In 1970 he joined the Johannesburg Bar of Advocates and was also an active member of anti-apartheid activist Helen Suzman's Progressive Party (now the Democratic Alliance). In 1978 he was elected to the Johannesburg Bar Council. In January 1987, Van Schalkwyk became a Judge in the Supreme Court of South Africa. At the time he was the youngest person to be elevated to that position. In 1994, with the introduction of the constitutional order, he was designated to deal with constitutional matters that arose within the division. He remained a Judge in the Supreme Court until his retirement in 1996.

Judge Van Schalkwyk is also the author of three books:

1. *Enigma's diary. A philosophical/political novel*
2. *One Miracle is not enough. A factual economic, social and political assessment of the new South Africa*
3. *Panic for Democracy. An analysis of Joseph Schumpeter's thesis on the "democratic bribe".*

Today Mr Van Schalkwyk passes his time by running (he has completed the Comrades Marathon three times), cycling (completed The Argus three times), exploring remote places and is, by his own account, a compulsive cultivator and planter of trees.

Peter Tshisevhe



Peter Tshisevhe seated on the right, 1992



Peter Tshisevhe, 2015

Peter Tshisevhe, the son of a farm worker and a domestic worker, was born in the village of Tshakuma in rural Venda. He grew up in poverty, attending primary school under a tree and living barefoot for 16 years. Through this, he worked hard and managed to attain a high school bursary. It was through this bursary that he bought his first pair of shoes at the age of 16. Having told himself that “this poverty shall pass (and) I am not going to live like this”, he left home for Johannesburg in 1986 to look for work after having completed his matric. Living in a shack with his brother in Dobsonville, Soweto, he

found a job at a Pick n Pay in Brixton as a cleaner and packer. He was determined to study Law at Wits University and saved hard to be able to one day attend Law School. He eventually enrolled at Wits University for a BProc degree in 1990 at the age of 23. He was accepted at EOH at that time and very soon got involved with the happenings within the residence. Peter continued working part-time at Pick n Pay as a cashier, sending money home and supporting himself. In 1992 he was able to buy his first car, a grey Toyota Corolla. In that same year, he aimed to break the long chain of Whites only leaders. The first Black House Committee member had been elected into office in 1985. He was a Coloured man by the name of Mr Koopman. With the release of Nelson Mandela from prison and the imminent fall of apartheid, Peter took the stand and ran for Chairperson in the 1992 EOH House Committee elections. In 1993 he became the first Black Chairperson of EOH. Being at Wits and EOH was a “liberating experience on many levels. Mandela had just been released from prison and the politics of the time were changing the course of people’s lives,” he said.

After having graduated and left EOH, Peter joined the Wits Law Clinic in 1996, winning several cases against police for brutality and torture. He joined Werksmans Attorneys in 1997, pursuing his interest in commercial and corporate law. In 2000 he moved to Africa’s biggest corporate law firm, Edward Nathan Sonnenbergs (ENS). There he performed so well that he skipped levels to become a Director of the firm. He was also a part-time lecturer at Wits for twelve years. In 2011 he and two other commercial lawyers opened their own firm called TGR Incorporated. Today the boy who grew up impoverished with no shoes in Venda is one of the best lawyers in the world.

Recognition Boards

ERNEST OPPENHEIMER HALL					
DEANS		ASSISTANT DEAN	HOUSE DORMITORY CHAIRMAN	RES. HALL COORDINATOR	
1996-1998	M. JORDAN	1987-1996	B. SUGLIER	2000-2001	RES. HALL COORDINATOR
1998-1999	Patricia M. TEER	1996-1997	S. DEL	1999-2000	RES. HALL COORDINATOR
1999-2000	W. T. CANNON	1997-1998	S. WILLIAMS	2000-2001	A. HENRY
1997-2000	Ms. T. MYERS	1998-1999	S. CARLSON	2001-2002	A. KIRCHOFF
2001-	N. PANDEYA	1999-2000	C. AHN	2002-2003	M. MONTEN
		2000-2001	A. KANAK	2003-2004	M. MONTEN
		1999-2000	M. MILLER	2004-2005	M. MONTEN
		2000-2001	S. MONTEN	2005-2006	M. MONTEN
		2001-2002	M. MONTEN	2006-2007	M. MONTEN
		2002-2003	M. MONTEN	2007-2008	M. MONTEN
		2003-2004	M. MONTEN	2008-2009	M. MONTEN
		2004-2005	M. MONTEN	2009-2010	M. MONTEN
		2005-2006	M. MONTEN	2010-2011	M. MONTEN
		2006-2007	M. MONTEN	2011-2012	M. MONTEN
		2007-2008	M. MONTEN	2012-2013	M. MONTEN
		2008-2009	M. MONTEN	2013-2014	M. MONTEN
		2009-2010	M. MONTEN	2014-2015	M. MONTEN
		2010-2011	M. MONTEN	2015-2016	M. MONTEN
		2011-2012	M. MONTEN	2016-2017	M. MONTEN
		2012-2013	M. MONTEN	2017-2018	M. MONTEN
		2013-2014	M. MONTEN	2018-2019	M. MONTEN
		2014-2015	M. MONTEN	2019-2020	M. MONTEN
		2015-2016	M. MONTEN	2020-2021	M. MONTEN
		2016-2017	M. MONTEN	2021-2022	M. MONTEN
		2017-2018	M. MONTEN	2022-2023	M. MONTEN
		2018-2019	M. MONTEN	2023-2024	M. MONTEN
		2019-2020	M. MONTEN	2024-2025	M. MONTEN
		2020-2021	M. MONTEN	2025-2026	M. MONTEN
		2021-2022	M. MONTEN	2026-2027	M. MONTEN
		2022-2023	M. MONTEN	2027-2028	M. MONTEN
		2023-2024	M. MONTEN	2028-2029	M. MONTEN
		2024-2025	M. MONTEN	2029-2030	M. MONTEN
		2025-2026	M. MONTEN	2030-2031	M. MONTEN
		2026-2027	M. MONTEN	2031-2032	M. MONTEN
		2027-2028	M. MONTEN	2032-2033	M. MONTEN
		2028-2029	M. MONTEN	2033-2034	M. MONTEN
		2029-2030	M. MONTEN	2034-2035	M. MONTEN
		2030-2031	M. MONTEN	2035-2036	M. MONTEN
		2031-2032	M. MONTEN	2036-2037	M. MONTEN
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		2044-2045	M. MONTEN	2049-2050	M. MONTEN
		2045-2046	M. MONTEN	2050-2051	M. MONTEN
		2046-2047	M. MONTEN	2051-2052	M. MONTEN
		2047-2048	M. MONTEN	2052-2053	M. MONTEN
		2048-2049	M. MONTEN	2053-2054	M. MONTEN
		2049-2050	M. MONTEN	2054-2055	M. MONTEN
		2050-2051	M. MONTEN	2055-2056	M. MONTEN
		2051-2052			

ERNEST OPPENHEIMER HALL ACADEMIC ACHIEVER					
YEAR	FULL NAME	YEAR	FULL NAME	YEAR	FULL NAME
2000	Mothapo R	2015	Z. Kachirani		
2001		2016	L. Kiria		
2002	Khumalo B / Tsote H				
2003	Tante H				
2004	Musigirimi S				
2005	Musigirimi S				
2006	Djau D				
2007	Gopei H				
2008	Z. Khan				
2009	K. Sateke				
2010	M. Syeda				
2011	N. Netchishazwanu				
2012	L. Malima				
2013	T. Chikando				
2014	E. Mpal				

ERNEST OPPENHEIMER HALL			
SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR			
1952	C. HARRIS	1953	D. MARLA
1954	D. HARRIS	1954	P. GAMLA
1955	C. HARRIS	1955	M. GAMILLA
1956	E. HARRIS	1956	A. MAGIELLA
1957	D. HARRIS	1957	C. LAKHIANE
1958	P. HARRIS	1958	R. NACHARI
1959	P. HARRIS	1959	M. SEITTELLA
1960	P. HARRIS	1960	M. SEITTELLA
1961	P. HARRIS	1961	C. MAGAMETRA
1962	C. HARRIS	1962	C. MAGAMETRA
1963	C. HARRIS	1963	C. MAGAMETRA
1964	C. HARRIS	1964	M. NAFRANGA
1965	C. HARRIS	1965	M. NAFRANGA
1966	C. HARRIS	1966	M. NAFRANGA
1967	C. HARRIS	1967	M. NAFRANGA
1968	C. HARRIS	1968	M. NAFRANGA
1969	C. HARRIS	1969	M. NAFRANGA
1970	C. HARRIS	1970	M. NAFRANGA
1971	C. HARRIS	1971	M. NAFRANGA
1972	C. HARRIS	1972	M. NAFRANGA
1973	C. HARRIS	1973	M. NAFRANGA
1974	C. HARRIS	1974	M. NAFRANGA
1975	C. HARRIS	1975	M. NAFRANGA
1976	C. HARRIS	1976	M. NAFRANGA
1977	C. HARRIS	1977	M. NAFRANGA
1978	C. HARRIS	1978	M. NAFRANGA
1979	C. HARRIS	1979	M. NAFRANGA
1980	C. HARRIS	1980	M. NAFRANGA
1981	C. HARRIS	1981	M. NAFRANGA
1982	C. HARRIS	1982	M. NAFRANGA
1983	C. HARRIS	1983	M. NAFRANGA
1984	C. HARRIS	1984	M. NAFRANGA
1985	C. HARRIS	1985	M. NAFRANGA
1986	C. HARRIS	1986	M. NAFRANGA
1987	C. HARRIS	1987	M. NAFRANGA
1988	C. HARRIS	1988	M. NAFRANGA
1989	C. HARRIS	1989	M. NAFRANGA
1990	C. HARRIS	1990	M. NAFRANGA
1991	C. HARRIS	1991	M. NAFRANGA
1992	C. HARRIS	1992	M. NAFRANGA
1993	C. HARRIS	1993	M. NAFRANGA
1994	C. HARRIS	1994	M. NAFRANGA
1995	C. HARRIS	1995	M. NAFRANGA
1996	C. HARRIS	1996	M. NAFRANGA
1997	C. HARRIS	1997	M. NAFRANGA
1998	C. HARRIS	1998	M. NAFRANGA
1999	C. HARRIS	1999	M. NAFRANGA
2000	C. HARRIS	2000	M. NAFRANGA
2001	C. HARRIS	2001	M. NAFRANGA
2002	C. HARRIS	2002	M. NAFRANGA
2003	C. HARRIS	2003	M. NAFRANGA
2004	C. HARRIS	2004	M. NAFRANGA
2005	C. HARRIS	2005	M. NAFRANGA
2006	C. HARRIS	2006	M. NAFRANGA
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2009	C. HARRIS	2009	M. NAFRANGA
2010	C. HARRIS	2010	M. NAFRANGA
2011	C. HARRIS	2011	M. NAFRANGA
2012	C. HARRIS	2012	M. NAFRANGA
2013	C. HARRIS	2013	M. NAFRANGA
2014	C. HARRIS	2014	M. NAFRANGA
2015	C. HARRIS	2015	M. NAFRANGA
2016	C. HARRIS	2016	M. NAFRANGA
2017	C. HARRIS	2017	M. NAFRANGA
2018	C. HARRIS	2018	M. NAFRANGA
2019	C. HARRIS	2019	M. NAFRANGA
2020	C. HARRIS	2020	M. NAFRANGA
2021	C. HARRIS	2021	M. NAFRANGA
2022	C. HARRIS	2022	M. NAFRANGA
2023	C. HARRIS	2023	M. NAFRANGA
2024	C. HARRIS	2024	M. NAFRANGA
2025	C. HARRIS	2025	M. NAFRANGA

Ernest Oppenheimer Hall, 1967



*Radford Jordan standing in
front of the newly built
Ernest Oppenheimer Hall,
1967*



Ernest Oppenheimer Hall, 2014



North Lodge



North Lodge is an architectural fantasy, often referred to as Parktown's most romantic. Over the years there were several changes in its ownership and function – from being a school, then a boarding house, and later a private hotel before being bought by Wits University in 1964. North Lodge became part of EOH in 1967 and since then the Dean and his family have lived on the ground floor with senior students on the first floor. Being well over 100 years old, the house has become a national monument and is a protected site.

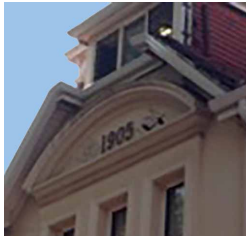


*Parktown's
most romantic*

The original main entrance to North Lodge was on St David's Place. It was one of the main entrances into EOH. The signs on the pillars read: North Lodge and University of the Witwatersrand Students Residence.



North Lodge was designed by JH Aldwynle and was built in 1905 for Henry S Wilson, a British produce merchant. It is said that Henry Wilson built North Lodge on the profits from supplying the British army with fodder for its horses.



Vlakplaas

The Cottage



The Cottage was built in 1905 as an annexe or “out building” to North Lodge. It is a house on its own with a kitchen, bathroom, common room and two bedrooms. Senior residents, selected on House Points, lived in the Cottage, two at a time. Being an exclusive home, living in the Cottage was the envy of every other resident. In the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, the Black residents at EOH gave the Cottage the nickname ‘Vlakplaas’, which was the name of the farm used by the South African Police Counterinsurgency Unit as its headquarters during that time. The reason for this nickname was because it was seemingly only White residents who were afforded the exclusivity of living in the Cottage. Although plans to rebuild and refurbish the Cottage are in place today, its structural deterioration over the years has resulted in it no longer being used to house residents. The name ‘Vlakplaas’ has since fallen away and the Cottage is now used as a storeroom.

Trematon House



*Sharpness
is our motto*

Now a National Heritage site, Trematon House was first built as a small modest home for E Holmes in 1902. In 1910 the house was rebuilt and extended as a boarding house with extra bedrooms, a dining hall, kitchen, communal bathroom and toilets, for the Parktown Preparatory School (PTPS).

This foundation stone, which can be found at the front entrance to Trematon House, was laid by Sir Lionel Phillips on the 27th of September 1913. The new building project was completed in 1914, after which the House was used as a boarding house for students of PTPS for many years. In 1963, Wits University bought the House along with North Lodge. The PTPS building was demolished in 1965 to make way for the building of EOH.

Today Trematon House is used to house visitors or new Wits University staff still in the process of finding permanent or alternative accommodation. Residents at Trematon House are only allowed to live there for three months at a time.

“In line with the new Naming Policy, the revitalised Institutional Naming Committee, with extended representation from a range of stakeholders, has been active in renaming Wits places and spaces”. Amongst other identified places, 1 Trematon Place has been renamed to Afrika House and its users and students are still to yet be acclimatised to the name change.



The inscription on the foundation stone was the motto of the PTPS and is a Latin phrase which reads: ACUMEN EST DICTUM NOSTRUM which, in English, means SHARPNESS IS OUR MOTTO.

Main Entrances



Entrance to the East Wing of EOH



The West Wing entrance foyer. The foyer and staircase were built as a mirror image of those at East Wing.

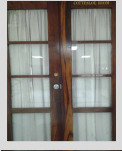


The staircase, with the Cottesloe Room in the centre, on the East Wing leading up and out towards the residents' rooms.



Mirror images

The Cottesloe Room



The Cottesloe Room was so named by the House Committee of 1967. It was named after the old Cottesloe Residence. Upon hearing about the naming of the room after 'Cotts', Professor G R Bozzoli, who was Dean of 'Cotts' for 15 years, as well as Vice Chancellor of Wits University after that, sent a letter to the then EOH House Committee expressing his great appreciation and happiness – 'Cotts' and thus EOH, was a place of which he had been very fond. The Cottesloe Room is tastefully furnished with the pleasantly intimate atmosphere of a small club. Its use is reserved for the House Committee of EOH for the duration of their period in office and it is where the House Committee over the years has its meetings and social gatherings.

A very small peak into the Cotts.

The Lounge

The Lounge has been used for several years by Ernestmen for meetings ranging from different organisational, school councils and advocate projects. On the walls of the lounge are pictures of previous house committees and of paramount importance the halls as of 2015 now hold placards where we honour previous Hall Coordinators and Grounds man who have contributed significantly to the Residence.

Motion 2/2016 proposed that "Lounge or Games Room be named after Mr Nazime Randera."

In the second EOH General House Meeting held on the 26th of April 2016, the motivation behind proposing the name change was that, Mr Nazime Randera has had a lot



of impact on residents during his 15 years as cluster manager, which is the longest time period of any cluster manager in the residence's history. The motion was changed to "the Lounge being

renamed the Nazime Randera Room and be unveiled on the 50th anniversary of the residence", The amended motion voted on and carried.

The Radford Jordan Room



Named after the first Dean of EOH, the Radford Jordan room is mostly used by Ernestmen as a study room. Due to its better lighting and ventilation, it is now preferred above the study area in the EOH library. 'RJ', as the room is commonly referred to, is also used for

other student development gatherings as well as accommodating Ernestmen as a tutorial teaching room. A plaque above the entrance marks the official opening of the Radford Jordan Room in early 1982, after the Dean's retirement a year earlier.

Dining hall and Games Room



When EOH was opened in 1967, it had two dining halls. Originally, the hall on the East Wing was the dining hall for all students living in the East Wing and the hall on the West Wing for the students who lived there.

Although the West Wing had not yet been built in 1967, its dining hall was built and ready to be used by the time the new Wing was built. Until the opening of the West Wing in 1979, the dining hall that we use today stood empty and was hired out by the House Committee to anyone who desired to hold a function, such as a dinner or banquet in it. Today the dining hall can accommodate approximately 100 people and is used by catering students in the West Wing as well as those in self-catering who have booked meals at the dining hall. For over 20 years, all Ernestmen had to wear a dinner jacket and tie when going into the dining hall for supper. At first it was compulsory to also wear a jersey, but soon members of the house started crying out to the House Committee because of how they sweated on hot evenings in the dining hall during supper. These cries eventually got the Dean to allow the absence of jerseys in summer.

For many years Ernestmen requested that the rule of wearing a shirt, tie and blazer to the dining hall be dropped but Radford Jordan, being a stern gentleman himself, continuously made it clear that he was “unwilling (for Ernestmen) to settle for a low standard of dress” and would “not allow the dignity of residence life (at EOH) to suffer”. Obviously this rule was only dropped well after Mr Jordan had retired and left EOH. Ernestmen today are allowed to enter the dining hall wearing casual clothes but we must acknowledge the value and distinction of what Mr Jordan instilled in the residents of EOH by implementing such a rule.

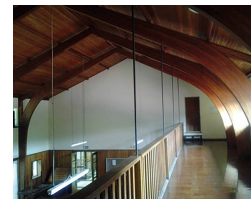
From 5pm to 7pm the dining hall is abuzz with students collecting their food and sitting down to have a meal. It is a place where Ernestmen are able to share the day's experiences, discuss current affairs and engage in debates, some of which may even possibly be heard all the way from North Lodge.



What was previously the main EOH dining hall has now become the Games Room. House meetings are still held in this hall, just as they were in the first house meetings back in 1967. The Games Room is equipped with two pool tables, table tennis, two foosball tables, and couches and tables



The thick timber columns that curve into beams and support the roof structure of the dining hall (and games room) can be seen here. These were to be a unique feature and today give EOH some value in terms of its architecture.



The passage way connecting the two wings of EOH.

The Pub

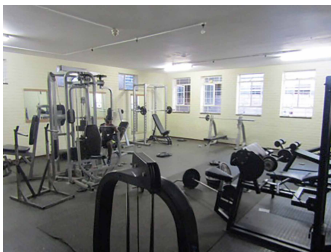


The Squash Court



The squash court was donated to EOH by Dr Harry Oppenheimer in 1968. It boasts a spectators' gallery and a changing room.

The Gym



Study Room



Computer Room

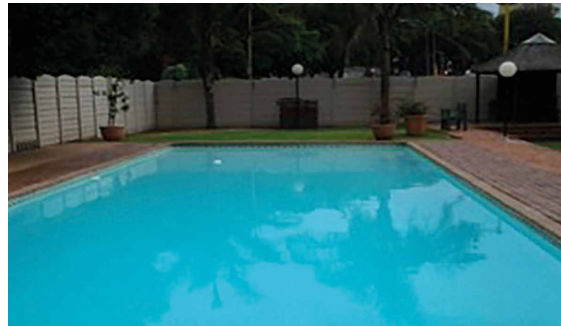


Tennis Court And Swimming Pool



The building of the tennis court and the upgrading of the swimming pool was achieved through an initiative taken by the EOH residents of 1967. The House Committee proposed that every Ernestman should pay a levy of R6 (about R400 today) cash to the House Committee at the beginning of every year. This was agreed upon and for three years the House Committee collected the R6 levy. At the end of 1969 it was noted that the levy had achieved its purpose and was no longer needed.

For many years the swimming pool has been the venue where freshmen are “baptized” after their initiation and thereafter pronounced Ernestmen.



With its design, lighting, lush lawn, a braai stand and a small lapa, the swimming pool area is one to be envied.

About the Author

I was born on the east coast of South Africa in a relatively small city named East London on the 28th of September 1991. I am the eldest of two brothers, Luke and Joshua, and son of Ivan, previously a well-known taxi operator in East London, and Michelle, a nurse. My family raised me in the Christian faith, specifically, Seventh-day Adventist, which I embrace and accept. We grew up with my grandmother, an Isi-Xhosa- speaking Coloured woman, in a four- room house in the local Coloured area called Parkridge. My father, a man who went through hell and high water to make sure his children got the education he was unable to attain, enrolled my brothers and me at the well-known Selborne Boys' School, from pre-primary until we completed high school careers at Selborne College.

In December of 2009 I was accepted at Wits University and entered the MBChB programme in 2010. Having not applied for University Residence at the time, I was forced to look off-campus for accommodation. I resided in the infamous South Point accommodation for my first two years at Wits.

My relationship with the Ernest Oppenheimer Hall (EOH) started long before I took up a room there. In my first year class I came to befriend a number of residents from EOH, growing especially close with two members of the House during this time, namely Dr Buyani Buthelezi and Dr Mpendulo Nkosi. As such, I found myself spending a lot of my time at EOH, mostly studying, but also socially too. I quickly became accustomed to the highly successful parties they hosted, but also to the political vibe which existed at the residence. I was fascinated by the seriousness and stature of the men who spoke during gatherings. They spoke not just randomly, but in order and "constitutionally". I remember glancing at the Honours boards in the East Wing foyer and wondering what it was these people had done to get their names on there. I had many questions on my mind: "What is House Comm?" "Why are people upset at them?" "Who is that old Indian man with grey hair who is always standing in the background?" I enjoyed the chanting and the singing. I understood the words to some extent because of my multi-lingual upbringing so now I just had to learn how to sing them. And so my relationship with EOH started.

Through all the days and nights I spent there with my two friends, mostly doing class work and assignments, I came to understand a lot about the custom and culture of the residence. As juniors, they did not have the same privileges as the other residents, and they respected that. They respected their seniors and regarded them highly, so much so that when I came across someone who I knew to be a senior at EOH, I would see him as some sort of super hero, but equally, these same seniors were humble men who returned a smile and always had a word of encouragement. "It is a brotherhood," they would tell me.

By the time I moved into EOH as a resident in January 2012, I had been to two House meetings, taken part in an EOH Sports Day and somehow had signed my name on a certain petition to recall the House Committee.

As such I had come to be known by quite a few residents and it is probably why I was asked to stand in the 2012 House Committee elections, which of course was unconstitutional, as 2012 was only my first year as a resident and I had not been initiated at EOH as a first year.

It was over the first two years that the conception of this book was put in motion. I made it my priority to take part in House events. I attended most functions at the residence. I joined the soccer team and also very quickly became known by many as the guy who always complains on the Facebook page about issues of maintenance and cleanliness. This resulted in my soccer teammates, specifically Mr Bongani Machabe (Sportsman of the Year 2009 and House Committee Chairman 2011), nicknaming me 'Nazime' as I would reprimand players who arrived late for training, apparently in the same way Mr Nazime Randera would reprimand the residents – and not knowing that getting that nickname was a type of foreshadowing of the wonderful relationship I would come to have with our Cluster Manager, Mr Randera, and his family. That name, however, thankfully fell away after a couple of months.

The high school I attended was very strong on tradition and history and instilled that value in me too. In the same way, we all hold our family history strong in our minds, so too as brothers and a family away from home, I proceeded to search for documentation on the history of EOH. I wanted to know about the rooms, the halls, the honours boards, how things used to be, and how they are now, what had changed and what had not. Unfortunately there was not much to find in the form of a book or any write-up, and so it was in September of 2013 that I set out to start compiling sources and contacting people to kick start this project. Three years later, and together with all the contributors who have helped me put this together, we have reached this point of completion. I must state that if I were to document my entire five years spent at EOH, which I was tempted to do, I could probably write a small book on that too. Who knows, I might just do it one day.

I learnt and grew a great deal during my time at EOH – socially, politically, emotionally and even physically too. Every individual I came across had a story to tell which I listened to, and I took every opportunity I had to make sure that I made the most of my stay in this wonderful residence. EOH is a place I always cherish.

Dr Brendon Matthews served as Chairperson of the EOH House Committee in 2014 and also as the EOH representative in the All Residence Council in that same year, serving on that body as Honorary Treasurer. He again served as Honorary Treasurer of the EOH House Committee in 2016. He completed his MBChB degree in December 2016 and is currently working as a Medical Intern at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital, Gauteng.

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Ernest Oppenheimer Hall of Residence at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg was founded in 1967. It has nearly 400 Engineering, Education and Health Science male students. Over the years, the House of Excellence has groomed industry leaders, distinguished gentlemen and fostered brotherhood between men from all corners of the country. This book celebrates the history of a university residence unlike any other.