**CITATION: AIMEE VIVIENNE STEWART**

Professor Aimee Stewart has made her mark not only as an academic physiotherapist of distinction but also as a pioneer in creating the way for others to shine in the profession. She has played a pivotal role in curriculum design and the accreditation of physiotherapy in South Africa, elsewhere on the African continent, and internationally. And her on-going involvement in national and international leadership roles continues to contribute to the discipline’s academic integrity and status.

She graduated as a physiotherapist from the University of Witwatersrand in 1968 and has been involved with its physiotherapy department ever since, apart from two stints in clinical practice. The first began in 1969, when she worked at the then-Johannesburg General Hospital for four years. The second was when she ran the Johannesburg City Council’s Cardiac Rehabilitation programme from 1986 to 1990.

She became a clinical supervisor at Wits Physiotherapy Department in 1973, and was a fulltime staff member from 1991 until her retirement in 2012. Appointed Associate Professor in 2003, she coordinated the department’s postgraduate programme and research. Through her leadership and mentoring in that role, she helped develop the department’s vibrant research ethos that sets it apart today. Her own PhD, with which she graduated in 2003, focused on the role of the family in supporting lifestyle changes in chronically ill patients.

One of her greatest contributions to the Department of Physiotherapy was in its curriculum development. In 1991 she and a colleague developed a cohesive curriculum for undergraduate physiotherapy training. This involved holding staff workshops to determine teaching objectives and outcomes, and then coordinating the curriculum to ensure all teaching was weighted according to treatment needs. The outcome was the first comprehensive packaging of the undergraduate physiotherapy curriculum. It still forms the framework of the department’s now-updated curriculum and clinical training outline.

Professor Stewart was awarded a six-year National Research FoundationResearch Niche Area grant in 2007 to explore the management of chronic disease and disability, including HIV/Aids. This was the first time that someone from therapeutic sciences had been awarded the grant.

She served as the Africa representative on the International Scientific Committee of the World Confederation of Physical Therapy. And from 2004 to 2010 she acted as a consultant to the Kigali Health Institute, now the University of Rwanda, to assist with the development of their undergraduate physiotherapy curriculum.

Her influence has not ended with retirement.

She is the Editor-in-Chief of the South African Journal of Physiotherapy, which has gained significant traction under her leadership**.** She has increased the editorial board to include international members and those from elsewhere in Africa. The journal is now listed on the PubMed and Scopus indices, which has increased its standing considerably.

In 2012, the World Confederation of Physical Therapy, which represents physiotherapy associations from 121 countries, nominated her to chair its International Scientific Committee for the 2015 World Congress held in Singapore. This committee is responsible for the scientific programme at its conferences, and Professor Stewart’s innovative approaches to sharing knowledge were so successful and well-received, they are now a feature of their congresses, punted as “where the world of physiotherapy meets”.

She is still a member of the World Confederation’s Accreditation Committee,which accredits physiotherapy programmes worldwide, particularly newly developed ones and those in under-resourced countries. In this capacity, she has undertaken accreditation reviews at universities in Beirut, Lebanon and in Pori, Finland.

Her input has not gone unnoticed. In 2011 she won the South African Department of Science and Technology’s Distinguished Women in Science award in the Humanities and Social Science category. She is the only physiotherapist to have received this award so far. She received this accolade not only for her contribution to science but also to acknowledge her mentoring role in the development of young scholars and PhD candidates.

In 2012 she was awarded the World Confederation of Physical Therapy Africa Region Service Award for services to the profession, in particular for her contribution to the development of physiotherapy training in Rwanda.

The Wits Faculty Health Sciences presented Professor Stewart with an Exceptional Service Award in 2007, and a Special Service Excellence Award in 2012. She received certificates for Dedication and Achievement in Research in 2009, 2012 and 2014.

In recognition of her contribution to the growth of physiotherapy as a discipline in South Africa and abroad, it is befitting that the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, awards a Gold Medal to Aimee Stewart.