

NEWS FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF WITS



WITS HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO IMPACT SOCIETY FOR GOOD

Professor Zebion Vilakazi was installed as 16th Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Wits University on 29 April 2021. He said Wits is a place where leaders emerge and impact positively on society. His full installation address can be viewed [here](#).

WITS100 CENTENARY CAMPAIGN
In 2022, Wits turns 100. Click [here](#) for more information.

Social justice core to democracy

Former Public Protector **Professor Thuli Madonsela** (LLB 1991, LLD honoris causa 2017) delivered the 2021 Nadine Gordimer lecture titled **"The Audacity to Speak Truth to Power"**. She said Gordimer's legacy is powerful because "she chronicled apartheid's everyday injustices. She chose to concern herself with the most underprivileged in the society she lived in." Her address can be viewed [here](#). "An all hands on deck war against corruption is a must, however, this cannot be achieved without waging a war against social injustice," she said.

FOR MORE WITS NEWS CLICK [HERE](#)

WITSIES WITH EDGE

Veteran actor and playwright **Dr Bonisile John Kani** (honoris causa DLit 2020) was awarded the 2021 Pragnell Shakespeare Birthday Award. Dr Kani said: "I am overwhelmed by this honour with pride." In his acceptance speech he described his introduction to Shakespeare at the age of 11 in the "little dusty town of New Brighton in Port Elizabeth" through the isiXhosa translation of Julius Caesar by WE Mfidele. "That was unbelievable. It opened my mind to another world, great thoughts, another understanding of the world." [Read more.](#)

Duo **Ngwako Sekhula** (BSc 2018) and **Mokgalakathe Tladi** (BSc 2018) beat 69 teams to walk away with top prize in the End Poverty Innovation Challenge. The virtual competition initiated by Social Ventures Foundations in the US promotes jobs for unemployed people in poor communities. They are the owners of **VegeThentic**. [Read more.](#)

Retired Chief Justice **Margaret H Marshall** (BA 1967, LLD honoris causa 2000) and former Wits Chancellor and former deputy chief justice of the Constitutional Court, **Dikgang Mosekene** (LLD honoris causa), will receive the 2021 and 2020 Botch Prize for the Rule of Law. [Read more.](#)

Actress **Thuso Mbedu** (BA DA 2014) is set to star alongside award-winning actress Viola Davis in the feature film *The Woman King*. She also plays the lead in the US series *The Underground Railroad*. [Watch](#) her recent interview with Trevor Noah.

In case you missed the feature on **David Berchowitz** (BSc Eng 1975, MSc Eng 1978, PhD 1980) and **Neill Lane** (BSc Eng 1982) in the *April edition* of WITS Review (pp 32-33), read [here](#) about their significant contribution in the fight against COVID-19.

SEE MORE WITSIE ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS [HERE](#)

WITSIES4GOOD

Nonhlanhla Nasheda (BSc 2010, BSc Hons 2011, MSc Med 2017) was a regional winner in the international 2021 Dedicated Teacher Awards for her leadership. [Read more.](#)

Professor **Paul Ruff** (MScCh 1979, MM 1986, DOH 1987) received the 2020 AC Oetli Memorial medal from CANSA in recognition of his outstanding contributions to cancer research. [Read more.](#)

WITSIES4LIFE

World renowned systems ecologist, Professor **Robert Scholes** (BSc 1978, BSc Hons 1979, PhD 1988), who was Distinguished Professor of Systems Ecology and Director of the Global Change and Sustainability Research Institute at Wits, died in Namibia while hiking with friends on 28 April 2021. [Watch](#) a moving tribute to him.

After 22 years with the Wits School of Mining Engineering, Wits Mining Institute director Professor **Fred Cawood** (GDE Min Eng 1995, MSc Eng 1997, PhD 2000) is keen to start his "second life". "The Japanese believe your second life starts at the age of 60. You have your first life, where you have the opportunity to make some mistakes... believe me I have made many... in the second life it's about doing good." [Read more.](#)

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Whether you graduated last year or decades ago, share what you've been up to: alumni@wits.ac.za

Michael Dams (BSc Eng 1982) shares his role in the reproduction of a Dutch Renaissance painter's work in a common room. [Read more.](#)

In an attempt to get more voices from our alumni community, we've launched a "where are they now?" section in our communication. The Alumni Relations Office will briefly publish news on any Wits graduate who sends us their information. **Kevin Brooks** (BSc Eng 1980, PhD 1986) and **Marjie Thorne** (BA 1979) kick off the series and tell us what success means to them. [Read more.](#)

EXHIBITIONS

Artist **Teresa Kutala Firmino** (BA FA 2016, MA FA 2019) is part of the art collective Kutala Chopetto and hosted her first London show at Everardt Read called *Manifestation Oku Yongo*. Born in 1993 in Puntaria, to a Congolese father and Angolan mother Kutala Firmino grew up in the community of former 32 Battalion soldiers and their families. She says "we heal by retelling our stories".

Early in May 2021, Witsie **Chris Soal** (BA FA 2018) was the youngest artist to unveil a large-scale sculpture at the Nirox Foundation, as part of the Nirox Winter Sculpture Fair Exhibition *Margins of Error*. His work evokes images of dead coral, rough tree bark, eroded marble and concrete sections of various sizes. Soal's first international solo exhibition at the Montoro12 gallery in Brussels, Belgium, sold out before it opened.

Alumna **Senzeni Marasela** (BA FA 1999) undertook to wear the same dress for six years and it left her wondering where she belongs.

[Read more about the three artists here.](#)

BOOKS

Janif F Khan (MA 2019) won the Best Non-Fiction Biography category of the 2021 HSS Awards for *Khams: The Makings of a Water-stamp*.

FRED KOLMADO, **SCHOOL GATES**, **SCAPURED**, **BEYOND TEA**

[Catch up on other Witsies with the writing edge here.](#)

EVENTS

UPCOMING EVENT - 25 JUNE 2021

We invite you to attend a global webinar with guest speaker **Greg Solomon** (BSc 1992, BA Hons 1993, BSc Hons 1993) who is CEO of McDonalds South Africa. Join us to hear his insights on leadership. Register [here](#).

Wits Business School alumnus **Pavlo Phitidis** (MBA 2001) and co-founder of Aurk shared a personal tale of his business journey in a talk titled "Reset Rebuild Reignite" on 27 May 2021. Phitidis specialises in the genesis of starting, investing and building businesses into assets of value. He offered a guide on the lessons learned and urged alumni to reach out. "We are growing a highly sophisticated service and product bulk in South Africa into foreign markets and we want to work with South Africans." [Read more.](#)

PLACES TO VISIT

Origins museum has reopened. [Watch](#)

[Giving to Wits](#) | [Wits Annual Fund](#)