

THE EDGE

NEWS FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF WITS



Royal Honour for Professor Zebion Vilakazi

The **Royal Society** (UK) announced that Wits Vice-Chancellor and Principal, **Professor Zebion Vilakazi** (MSc 1994, PhD 1998), has been appointed as a Fellow. He joins other alumni such as **Professor Phillip Tobias** and **Sir Aeron Klug** who have been part of one of the world's most prestigious scientific academies.

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A photograph to make Einstein smile



Wits' scientists collaborated to unveil the first image of a supermassive black hole, known as **Sagittarius A*** at heart of the Milky Way using a worldwide network of radio telescopes. **Professor Roger Deane**, Director of the Wits Centre for Astrophysics and postdoctoral fellow **Dr Iniyah Natarajan** were the two Witses involved in the international project, that supports predictions from Einstein's Theory of General Relativity.

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TB regime breakthrough

Under the leadership of **Dr Norbert Ndjeka** (DHSM 1999), South Africa's National Department of Health chief director of tuberculosis, a new breakthrough TB regime has been developed and approved by the World Health Organization. Through research conducted by Wits and the **Clinical HIV Research Unit**, the new regime will reduce the number of drugs or pills that the patient has to take from 23 per day to 23 per week. The treatment time has gone from 18 months to six months.



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WITSIES WITH EDGE



William Kentridge (BA 1977, DLit honours causa 2004) has been awarded The Queen Sonja Lifetime Achievement Award, one of the world's most important prizes for printmaking. The award celebrates an artist's career and lifetime contribution.

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Two fine art alumnae, **Ravel Pillay** (BA FA 2016) and **Malebona Maphutse** (BA FA 2018) were announced winners in the 2022 Emerging Painting Invitational (EPI) Prize by auction house Strauss & Co at Africa's largest invite-only event.

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Film producer **Gabriella Blumberg** (BAFT 2017) followed on the success of *I am Here* with another film *Leamies en Leegheid*, which premiered at kYNET's SilverScreenFest. This film won Best Short Film, Best Script, and the Audience Choice Award. The main character is Magdaleen, who struggles to process the loss of her husband with whom she spent most of her life.



Liam Macgregor (BSc Eng 2022) and **Ashley Randall** (BSc Eng 2022) were winners in the 2022 South African Institute for Civil Engineers National IP Showcase. Their research, "The Effect of Vermicompost on the Water Holding Capacity of Soil" examined the potential to improve soil water retention using organic fertiliser, which is currently underutilised in South Africa.



Semakaleng Mathebula (BA 2017, BA Hons 2018) made news last year when she qualified as a free balloon pilot. She completed her honours degree in international relations and politics at Wits, but later started working as a marketing assistant at Bill Harrop's Original Balloon Safaris and didn't look back. She will compete in the South African Hot Air Balloon Championship this month. Reuters captured [her story](#).

[SEE MORE WITSIE ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS HERE](#)

WITSIES4LIFE



The Goethe Institut announced that Wits alumna and director of the **Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre**, **Avital "Tali" Nates** (BA Hons 1994) has been awarded the 2022 Goethe Medal. Nates receives the prestigious medal along with multimedia artist Mohamed Abia from Egypt, and two artists from the Sanjib Collective: **Nimi Ravindran** and **Shiva Patnakh** from India.

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Human rights lawyer, social justice activist and founder of the Health Justice Initiative **Fatima Hassan** (BA 1993, LLB 1995) was awarded the 2022 Calgary Peace Prize for her contribution to justice in the international struggle against global health inequality. The Calgary Peace Prize recognises outstanding individuals from the global community who work towards making the world a more just, safer and less violent place.

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Wits alumnus and consulting physician in Plettenberg Bay, **Dr Giovanni Cocci** (MBBCh 1988), was appointed "Cavaliere" Knight in the Order of the Star of Italy by the president of Italy, Sergio Mattarella, in recognition for the work he has done as an Italian expatriate in South Africa.

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In February this year **Professor Sir David King** (BSc Hons 1961, DSc 1964, DSc honours causa 2003) was awarded the **David and Betty Hamburg AAAS Award for Science Diplomacy**. Listen to his presentation at Cambridge University live recording from Sustainability in Practice hosted by [Top1000funds.com](#) about extreme weather events and how the Earth's reached a "tipping point".

BOOKS



A few alumni were among the winners of the 7th HSS Awards awarded by the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS). The awards ceremony, held on 31 March 2022, celebrated the winners in the book, creative and digital categories.

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ALUMNI EVENTS

REUNIONS

The Alumni office, together with our VC and Principal, **Professor Zebion Vilakazi**, hosted a few reunions on the **West Coast of the United States**. View photos [here](#).

The School of Physics has hosted a series of **presentations** by alumni, who shared career experiences. **Professors Saul Teukolsky** (Dirac Medal winner 2021) and **Zebion Vilakazi**, Wits Vice-Chancellor and Principal, were among the participants.

The Australian Friends of Wits University was officially launched, at which a long-standing donor committed more than R80 million for a facility focusing on high-performance sports and health to be hosted in the Faculty of Health Sciences.



SAVE THE DATE!



Join in the Centenary Celebrations with a range of **events** for the whole family over this special Alumni Homecoming Weekend. Come and enjoy exhibitions, film screenings, musicals and theatre performances, campus tours, a spectacular light show as well as school, class and sports reunions.



London: 20 June
Oxford: 22 June
Cambridge: 23 June

The School of Construction Economics & Management invites all its former students to an **event** marking Wits University's Centenary and the reunion of the CEM Alumni.

Date: Wednesday, 6 July 2022
Venue: The Wits Club, Braamfontein Campus West
Time: 17:00 – 19:00

Faculty of Health Sciences will host its annual **Alumni Week** from the 5-10th September. This year's programme will feature the prestigious **Bohlahe Orentsein Memorial Lecture** and the return of the much-loved **"Alumni Gala Dinner"**.

CAREER RESOURCES



In 2019 alumna **Jeanmarie Boggenpoel** (BCom 1995, BAcc 1996) released her book *My Blood Divides and Unites*. She recently added a course "Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace - Race & Gender" on the Udemy platform. Boggenpoel has enjoyed a successful business career and has a master's degree from Harvard University's JFK School of Government. She was honoured as a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum and subsequently worked for the World Economic Forum in Switzerland.

[udemy](#) [YouTube](#)



ADVERTORIAL: Discovery is offering a special support kit to medical graduates. See more [here](#).

REMEMBER TO GIVE



Alumni have a chance to leave a legacy for future Witsies
WITS 2022: MAKE A CONTRIBUTION, LAUNCH WITS INTO THE NEXT CENTURY AND BEYOND [DONATE](#)

[Wits Centenary](#)

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