



The US Witsie



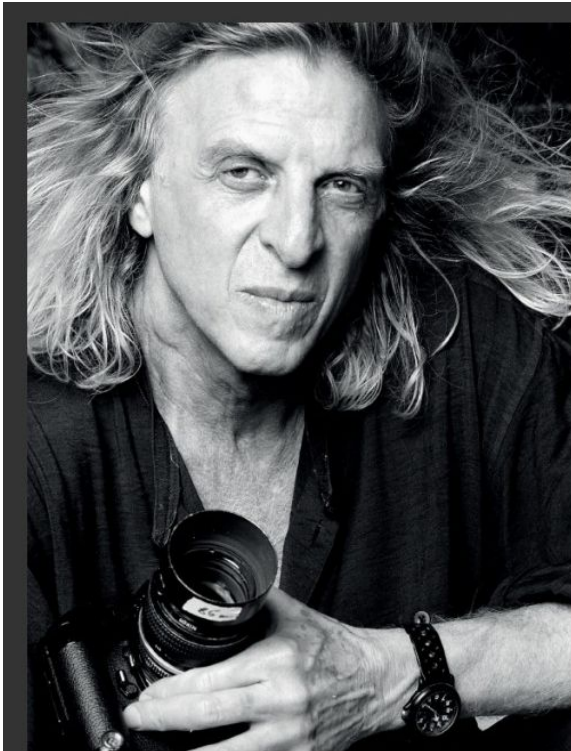
Wits Fund Newsletter October 2025

witsfund.org

Read more about [Wits today](#).

IT'S FALL Y'ALL...or autumn as we used to call it. Do you also switch between "sidewalk" and "pavement" , or "robot" and "traffic lights"? Hope you also see our ability to switch between cultures and languages as a strength, part of our shared identity as Witsies in the US, looking for ways to give back.

**US Witsie is "Master of the Moment" - Medic turned
Photographer Extraordinaire**



PROFILE

MASTER OF THE MOMENT

THE BEST WAY TO GET TO KNOW MEDICAL DOCTOR TURNED PHOTOGRAPHER AND DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER, **NORMAN SEEFF** (MBBCH 1964), IS TO WITNESS HOW HE INTERACTS WITH CELEBRITIES DURING HIS FILMED PHOTOGRAPHY 'SESSIONS'.

BY HEATHER DUGMORE

In 1975 I decided to bring a film crew into one of my photo sessions for the first time – it was an album shoot with Tina and Ike Turner, Norman recalls. “After developing the footage, I was really excited that the emotional depth of the interaction could be captured on film. I knew exactly what I was going to do from then on, and so began my Sessions Project.” As part of this, he has documented over 500 creative celebrities since moving to the United States in 1969. One of them is Alicia Keys.

His approach begins with exploring the artist's inner

process. “When did you know you could sing?” is his first question for Keys. She replies: “I knew I had a voice from a young age.”

Norman listens and she continues: “I was about 12 and my grandfather had passed a year prior. I just didn't just want to believe it. I blocked everything out until I went to see the movie *Philadelphia* and it broke me down to the core. That night I went home and sat down at my piano that had always been the divider between the lounge and my bedroom, and just played and said what I felt. I didn't care if it was technically »

43



Master of the moment Norman Seeff (MBBCh 1964) traded his physician's coat for a camera and spent the past five decades photographing some of the most iconic creatives. With a subject list that reads like a Hall of Fame, including The Rolling Stones, The Jackson Five, Alicia Keys and Steve Jobs, he has found a way to disarm them all. ✨

How has he turned photo shoots into sessions of self-discovery? Read more [here](#) in the latest edition of the **Wits Review**.

As we feel gratitude for the blessings in our lives, one way to pay it forward is through making an impact in a person's life that will uplift them, and their families, for generations to come.

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Urban oasis From koi to campus cats, bees to blossoms – a focus on the wild heart of Wits

Archives Crafted musical treasures from the Hans Adler Memorial Music Museum still resonate with stories

Books What makes Joburg a port city? Urban planner Tanya Zack shares a hopeful story about the inner city

Socials Nuclear physicists from the Schonland Research Centre gathered to reignite old

bonds

Global Witsie No mortgage, no permanent address. A glimpse of Xan Rice's "mildly interesting" life as an international correspondent.

Braamfontein: A Space for Art, Light, and Prosperity



Braamfontein gets a fresh new look with Ameshoff Street. The upgrade supports art and life in the City, with Braamfontein being one of the key gateways to the vibrant social, intellectual and cultural life in Jozi.

The R3 million upgrade features striking new lighting installations, public benches, and a mosaic watershed fountain at the foot of the entrance leading to the Joburg Theatre. The design aims to foster a sense of belonging and pride among residents, workers, and visitors, while encouraging greater pedestrian activity and nighttime safety.

Situated near Wits University, the Liberty offices, and a network of creative and cultural spaces, the corridor now offers a refreshing and inspiring environment for students, professionals, and residents alike – capturing the energy that defines Braamfontein's day-to-night identity.

Read more [here](#).



Wits Sports Stars Shine, on and off the Field



The 2025 Wits Sport Awards were a celebration of sporting excellence on and off the field.

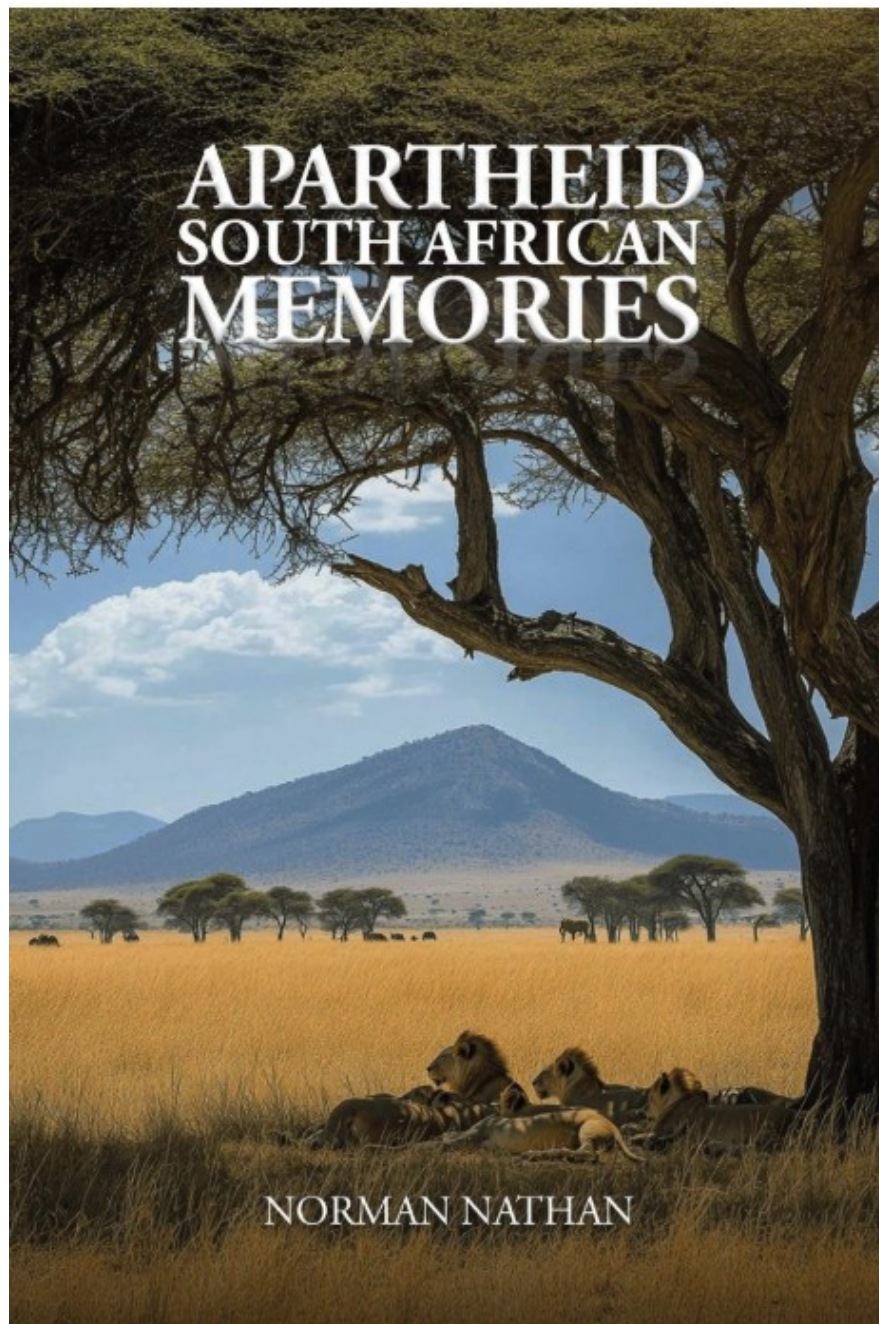
Applause, lights and a much-earned red carpet time were the name of the game as the Wits Sport Awards on Thursday, 7 October 2025. Wits Sport hosted its annual awards ceremony to celebrate and honor athletes for their stellar achievements throughout the year.

The Sturrock Park Hall was filled with athletes, staff and supporters as they celebrated the heights that the Wits sporting community had reached over the past year. The ceremony was themed 'Rising Stars' in recognition of the rising athletes in the Wits community.

This was a night filled with entertainment, energy and passion that brought the community together and highlighted the rising stars that power the university's sports.

Read more [here](#).

Alumni Corner: Wits Medical Grad Publishes Memoires



US Witsie Dr Norman Nathan (MBBCh 1970) recently published his biography, a "powerful memoir [which] offers a deeply personal journey through a childhood shaped by privilege and shadowed by injustice.

Norman Nathan shares intimate and often startling recollections of growing up in Johannesburg during the 1950s and 60s: from idyllic suburban scenes and schoolyard adventures to witnessing brutal acts of racial violence and navigating a society divided by law and prejudice.

Through vivid storytelling, Nathan introduces readers to the people who shaped

his early life - African caregivers, family members, and classmates while chronicling the stark realities of military service, political awakening, and the slow unraveling of innocence."

Read more [here](#).



WATCH | Wits in 60 Seconds

Wits and Joburg Water have partnered to improve access to sustainable water in informal settlements while a global report highlights that the world has reached a critical climate tipping point. The new Africa Data Drive platform is helping support data-driven decisions for sustainable development and conservation across the continent. We visit the Cross-Faculty Symposium where postgraduate students showcase their research across disciplines. Wits researchers help discover a new Jurassic reptile species, revealing links in the evolution of lizards and snakes. Read more [here](#).





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Vision

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