



RHODES UNIVERSITY

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Rhodes Communication & Advancement: Alumni Newsletter

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Graduation is a significant milestone which marks one of the most memorable experiences in the life of our graduates of any age. It marks the end and a new beginning.

Dr Sizwe Mabizela

Dear Old Rhodians and Friends

The Campus and the Monument was once again ablaze with the glory and excitement of proud families, graduates, and academics. In the six graduation ceremonies that took place from 11-13 April, a total of 2321 students received their degrees and diplomas. Of these, 1261 (54%) were undergraduate Bachelor's degrees and 1060 (46%) were postgraduate degrees and diplomas. Of the 1060 postgraduate students, 230 received their Master's degrees. Of the 2321 graduates, 61% were women, and 19% were international students.

This year, we produced 89 PhD graduates: 38 in the Faculty of Science; 30 in the Faculty of Humanities; 16 in the Faculty of Education; 3 in the Faculty of Commerce; and 2 in the Faculty of Pharmacy. These fabulous statistics bear testimony to the standing of our university as a preeminent centre of academic excellence.

Furthermore, fulfilling its commitment to individual and social transformation, Rhodes University's Community Engagement Division, in partnership with the University's Communications and Advancement Division, continued with their initiative of live-streaming graduation. The live-stream screenings took place during the 14h30 sessions on Thursday and Friday, and grade 11 and 12 learners were invited. On Thursday, learners from Khutliso Daniels,

Ntsika and T.E.M. Mrwetyana secondary schools joined their peers at Nombulelo Secondary School where the first screening was held. On Friday, learners from Nathaniel Nyaluza Secondary School and Mary Waters High School assembled in a classroom at Mary Waters for a secondary experience. The reputation of educational quality continues. We hope you are inspired by the read.

The Rhodes University Alumni Team.

Rhodes University Vice-Chancellor, Dr Sizwe Mabizela, congratulated the graduands on behalf of the Chancellor, Council and the entire Rhodes University Community. “Each one of you, our graduands, has your own unique story to tell about your journey to the glorious achievement we are celebrating. For some of you, the path to this day has been a long and a rocky one requiring persistence, perseverance and hard work. I hope that this public celebration of your achievements has consigned to a distant and ever-fading memory all the difficulties you encountered along the way. Graduation is a significant milestone which marks one of the most memorable experiences in the life of our graduates of any age. It marks the end and a new beginning. It is a culmination of many years of hard work and personal sacrifice; a celebration of a great personal accomplishment, a moment of joy and pride for parents and other family members; a time to reflect on the road travelled and to look forward to a future filled with great promise.”

Honorary Doctorates

In this year's graduation ceremonies, Rhodes University conferred five honorary degrees on highly eminent individuals in recognition and celebration of their extraordinary lifetime achievements and contributions in a field of knowledge or scholarship, in public service, or in artistic creation.

Professor Emeritus George Ellis: Doctor of Laws (LLD) (*hc*)

This internationally-renowned academic, researcher and author was honoured for his stellar scholarly contributions in general relativity, cosmology, theoretical physics and policy. He has authored and co-authored 16 books, including 'The Large Scale Structure of Space Time', which he co-authored with the late great physicist, Stephen Hawking.



Professor Glenda Gray: Doctor of Laws (LLD) (*hc*)

President of the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), Prof Gray was bestowed an honorary doctorate for her unwavering dedication in the field of Paediatrics. Currently a Professor in Paediatrics at Wits University, Prof Gray has been instrumental in researching the prevention of postnatal mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV-1.



Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela: Doctor of Laws (LLD) (hc)

Author and Research Chair for Historical Trauma and Transformation in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch University, Prof Gobodo-Madikizela has been primarily focusing on two strands of research. These are: exploring ways in which the impact of the dehumanising experiences of oppression and violent abuse continue to play out in the next generation in the aftermath of historical trauma; and remorse and forgiveness in the context of the interconnected relationship between empathy, *Ubuntu* and the embodied African phenomenon of *inimba*.



Professor Ian Scott: Doctor of Laws (LLD) (hc)

Deservedly recognised for his tireless work and immense contribution in higher education, among other things, Prof Scott's work has included designing national policy related to teaching and learning and higher education curriculum design, particularly focused on catering effectively to student diversity, and the role of educational and professional development in addressing effectiveness, equity and quality in higher education.



Chief (Mrs) Okunike Okundaye: Doctor of Fine Arts (DFA) (hc)

Chief (Mrs) Okunike Monica Okundaye-Davis, who is affectionately known as 'Mama Nike', was born in a very small village in Nigeria. Mama Nike is principally a social entrepreneur and a well-known philanthropist championing the cause of the neglected Nigerian rural women through using art as a tool. She is the Managing Director of Nike Centre for Art and Culture (established in 1983), owner and curator of the Nike Art Galleries in Lagos, and established the Nike Art and Culture Foundation with the aim of fostering Nigerian cultural heritage.



More graduation stories:

[Acceptance speeches](#)

[Rhodes University 2019 graduates inspire Makhanda learners](#)

[Water resource PhD graduate to continue the legacy of Professor O'Keeffe](#)

[Honours degree for petrol attendant](#)

[Seventy-seven year old botanist crowns her life's work with a PhD](#)

[The journey to reviving, resuscitating and reigniting isiXhosa after 30 years](#)



GARDEN PARTY

The graduation ceremonies are never complete without the illustrious Graduation Garden Party. Throughout their years at Rhodes University, each graduate has been sustained by the unfaltering support, loving sacrifices and constant encouragement of parents, guardians, siblings, friends and loved ones. Similarly, their successes and achievements would not have possible without the dedicated and committed support of academic staff, tutors, laboratory technicians, computer assistants, and support and administrative staff. The garden party is an acknowledgement of these support structures, as well as a welcoming of new alumni via the Old Rhodian Union. The Old Rhodian Union is a platform for establishing connections, making intellectual and financial inputs into the future of the institution and more specifically, that of future Rhodians.



Rhodes University honours Masters and PhD students at special event



The Rhodes University Postgraduate Hall hosted a dinner in honour of new master's and PhD graduates on 13 April 2019 at the Bantu Steve Biko Oppidan Dining Hall.

Addressing those in attendance, Dr Nosiphiwe Ngqwala, Senior Lecturer in Pharmacy and the master of ceremonies, related stories of her life as a student on campus. She also echoed the university Vice-Chancellor Dr Sizwe Mabizela's message to graduates: “As a Rhodian, you have to brighten the corner wherever you are.”

She explained that the special event was about celebrating accumulative achievements of the last few years. “At Rhodes University, we are creating job developers, creators, and innovators – not job seekers,” she exclaimed to enthusiastic applause.

Read more and view the pictures [here](#)

Alumni events

The 2019 alumni events calendar kicked off with a well-attended Orientation Cocktail function at Alumni House. Old Rhodians from different generations came together to welcome and celebrate the 2019 Rhodents.

The annual Orientation Cocktail Party is specifically aimed at new students who have a family connection to Rhodes University and this year's gathering gave Old Rhodians and their first years the unique opportunity to meet the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic & Student Affairs, Dr Chrissie Boughey, and other members of staff on a more personal level.

To view photographs from this event please click [here](#)



Hobson House Class of 1969 Reunion

Friday 8 March was a very special day at Rhodes University, when nine former members of Hobson House returned to campus for a fifty-year homecoming reunion. Organiser Yvonne Reynolds managed to entice two of the attendees, Sally MacEachern and Anne Summers, to fly all the way from the UK to attend this extraordinary day. Read more and view the photographs [here](#)



Pharmacy Class of 1969 Reunited

Celebrating 50 years after graduating with their Bachelor of Pharmacy degree from Rhodes University, the Pharmacy class of 1969 held a special reunion weekend in Cape Town on the weekend of 5 April. One of the class members, Melanie Sandler, who now lives in the United States, was tasked with tracking Alumni down for the big weekend, while other members, Steve Bardwell and "Shake" Jeremy Seigel, assisted with the logistics for the weekend. All their hard work resulted in a group of 20 pharmacy Alumni meeting on Friday night for an informal gathering at the Cape Town's V&A Waterfront. This became a glorious night of glitz, smiles and hugs as some of the group had not seen each other since graduation. Read more and view the photographs [here](#)



UK Reunion

On 30 April, over 150 UK-based alumni reunited in London in a wave of nostalgia for their *alma mater*. Hosted by Dr Geoffrey de Jager and the Rhodes University UK Trustees, alumni gathered at the Mhiki Mayfair, which was made available to the large group by old Rhodian Ross McCreath.

This heart-warming union is testament to the lasting love and sense of community that comes with being part of the Rhodes University family. It might be the smallest university in South Africa, but its bonds are big enough to ensure that neither time nor distance can keep our alumni from finding each other.

Upcoming Events

Perth Australia Reunion: Local organisers, Shirley Andres, Greg Biegel, Craig Hardman, Gail Mosdell, and Ian Rogers invite you to join them for an evening of fun and socialising with fellow old Rhodians.

Where: Le Roi Function Room, Belgian Beer Café, corner Murray St & King St, Perth

When: Thursday, 23 May 2019

Time: 18h00-21h00

Cost: \$10 per head cover charge, which includes snacks. Full cash bar available

RSVP: oldrhodians.wa@gmail.com

Homecoming Weekend and Alumni Reunion (Classes of 1980-1995)

28 June:

Alumni Festival Cocktail Party: Rhodes University Senior Common Room at 18h00. Join us in honouring our 1980-1995 Alumni. RSVP to t.mccarthy@ru.ac.za

NB: Space is limited, so RSVP is strictly on a first-come-first-served basis, and our 1980- 1995s take priority.

29 June:

We have left the day open for National Arts Festival activities. For golfers not interested in festival activities, bookings can be made directly with the Belmont Golf Club for a 10h00 tee off. Email: bianca@thebelmont.co.za

Gala dinner at Steve Biko Dining Hall for our homecoming 1980-1995 classes will commence at 19h00. RSVP to t.mccarthy@ru.ac.za

Honouring Our Own: Distinguished Alumni Awards 2019

The Awards honour Old Rhodians who, through their individual achievements, continue to enhance the reputation of Rhodes University. The award is specifically intended to acknowledge alumni as role models and is, in essence, the Rhodes University family rewarding one of its own.

Closing date for the 2019 nominations is on the 1 July 2019 and the award selection will take place shortly after.

For the nomination forms and criteria please click [here](#)

To view our awardees for 2018, please click [here](#)

Giving to Rhodes University

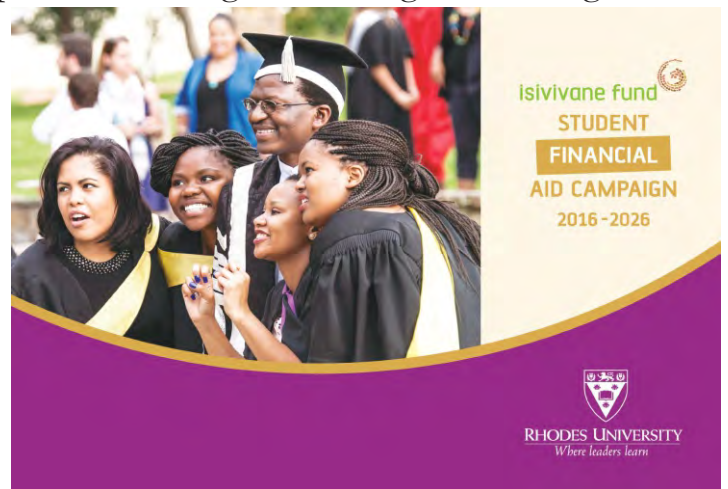
The Natasha Joseph fund once again touched the hearts of our students who had fees outstanding at the end of last year, meaning their results would normally be withheld.



Natasha asks fellow Old Rhodians to donate to Rhodes University to support this fund annually. Fifteen South African students were personally assisted by donors, and another donor requested that Zimbabweans specifically be supported through her donation, which meant 17 more students were able to pay their fees off.

One of the Zimbabwean students she supported was saddled with quite a large outstanding debt, which meant she could not register for her Honours degree in 2019. Up to this point, this student had overcome severe obstacles yet managed to pass her undergraduate degree with high marks regardless. One of Natasha's contacts came to the rescue and generously donated enough money to cancel her debt, enabling the student to concentrate on her studies. In her thank you note, the student wrote, "Thank you so much for your generosity. I am actually still in tears because I feel so overwhelmed. I am really appreciative for everything that you have done for me and I will definitely endeavour to one day give someone else a chance in life."

Please visit the Isivivane page to read more [here](#)



Human Kinetics Ergonomics (HKE Cricket Research Group)

The HKE Department's Cricket Research Group has been accepted to present ten papers at the Cricket World Cup Medicine and Science in Cricket Congress which is being held in Loughborough, United Kingdom from 8-10 July 2019. Led by Professor Candice Christie, this is the largest Cricket Research Group in the world and manages the daily workload of information being entered by coaches, players and medical staff on an online platform for the Protea men's and women's sides, the Kolkata Knight Riders and the Hobart Hurricanes.

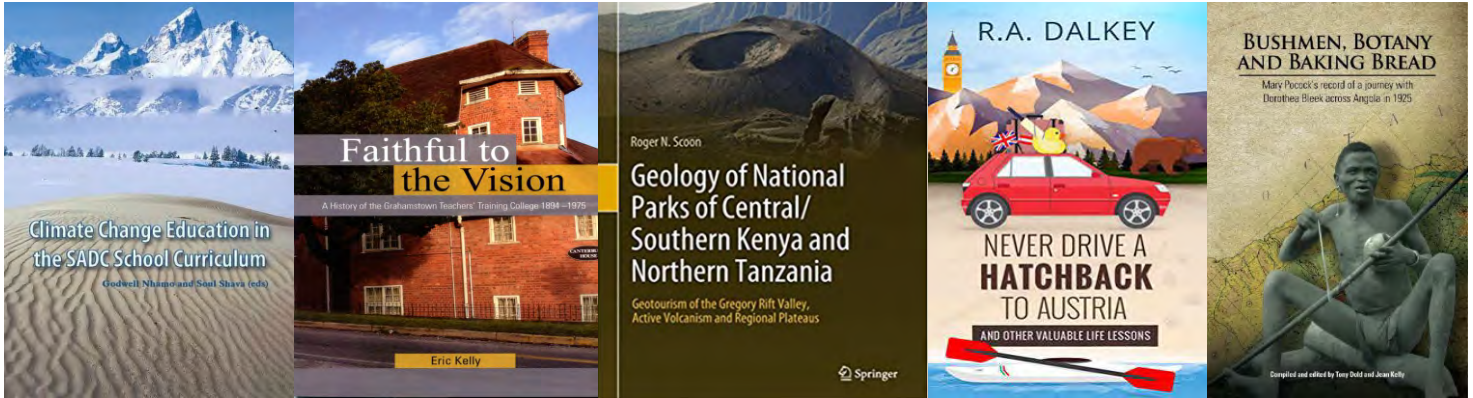
By attending the conference, they will have a platform to present their niche work related to injury risk and workload management, and be able to further cricket development and bridge the gap between science and practice. Although they have received some funding and held an online auction to raise funds, the group still needs to reach the overall amount of R186 000 to send five master's students and one PhD candidate to the conference.

If you are able to help in your private capacity, please click www.ru.ac.za/donate, choose the project '*FACULTY*' and specify '**HKE Cricket Research Group**' as reference on the donations page. We will ensure any donation we receive from you will make an impact and that bona fide donations are properly receipted. Please contact Ellen (e.duplessis@ru.ac.za or 046 603 8509), to discuss appropriate branding for sponsorships, or suggestions that you would like to negotiate. If you would like any further information, please email Prof Candice Christie at c.christie@ru.ac.za

Old Rhodian authors

Our latest Old Rhodian Authors include:

- *Faithful to the Vision: A History of the Grahamstown Teacher's Training College 1894 – 1975* by Eric Kelly
- *Climate Change Education in the SADC School Curriculum*. Godwell Nhamo and Soul Shava (eds)
- *Bushmen, Botany and Baking Bread* by Tony Dold and Jean Kelly
- *Geology of National Parks of Central/ Southern Kenya and Northern Tanzania* by Roger Scoon
- *Never Drive a Hatchback to Austria* by RA Dalky



read more [here](#)

Old Rhodian news

Over the years, the Alumni Office has kept a section on the website called Old Rhodian News. It contains snippets of news from our Alumni all over the world. Although progress on this section has been slow over the last few years, we have been inspired by several requests we received recently to update it more frequently and to keep its momentum going. It is split up into years and goes as far back as 1950.

Please explore this section to ensure that your news is up to date and if you would like to contribute anything new, please email t.mccarthy@ru.ac.za

Access the site [here](#)

[Alumni in the news](#)

[Rhodes University news](#)



[UK Trust website](#)
[USA Trust website](#)

