

## Rhodes Communication & Advancement: Alumni Newsletter

April 2018  
Issue 64

*The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.  
Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.  
Martin Luther King, Jr*

Dear Old Rhodians and Friends

Grahamstown once again excitedly boiled over in a glorious cauldron of proud families, jubilant graduates and academic regalia. Celebrating yet another record-breaking graduation weekend, the celebratory atmosphere was palpable. In the six graduation ceremonies that took place from 5-7 April, a total of 2494 students received their degrees and diplomas. Of these, 1457 (or 58%) were undergraduate Bachelor's degrees and 1037 (or 42%) were postgraduate degrees and diplomas. Of the 1037 postgraduate students, 229 received their Master's degrees. Of the 2494 graduates, 63% were women, and 16% were international students. This year, we produced 88 PhD graduates. The Faculty of Science produced 44 PhD degrees – up from 38 in 2017; the Faculty of Humanities had 22 PhD graduates; the Faculty of Commerce had six; the Faculty of Education had 13; the Faculty of Law had one; and the Faculty of Pharmacy had two PhD graduates. These fabulous statistics bear testimony to the standing of our university as a preeminent centre of academic excellence. Further accolades include:

- We enjoy the best undergraduate pass and graduation rates of any South African university;
- We have outstanding postgraduate success rates;
- We share the first position with another university in research output per academic staff member;
- Among the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA), we are ranked as the most efficient research university;
- Thanks to the excellent efforts of our Community Engagement office, we are a leading South African university in community engagement and in engaged research.

The reputation of educational quality continues. We hope you are inspired by the read.  
The Rhodes Alumni Team

## Three Days Of Unrestrained Optimism: Graduation 2018

The 2494 graduates, attending family members, and participating Rhodes University staff and alumni glowed with pride over the three days of jubilation, inspirational speeches, music, dance, and applause that made up Rhodes' 114th graduation in April.

“Graduation is a culmination of many years of hard work and personal sacrifice; a moment of joy and pride for parents and other family members; a time of celebration; a time to reflect on the road travelled and to look forward to a future filled with great promise,” said Vice Chancellor, Dr Sizwe Mabizela.

Six exceptional individuals were conferred with Honorary Doctorates this year, two of them in absentia. The graduation proceedings also featured two exceptional and talented movers and shakers, Ms Xoliswa Kakana and Advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi, to help encourage students during their transition from university to the working world.

Furthermore, for the first time in the history of our University, the graduation proceedings were shared via video link with high schools in Joza and Vergenoeg. This Rhodes community engagement initiative, done in collaboration with the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), and the Department of Education, was done to bring secondary school learners and their families closer to the exhilaration of academic achievement.

### The six Honorary Doctorates were as follows:

Professor Emeritus Peter Mtuze, a leading scholar in the field of African languages and Rhodes University's first black professor, received his Doctor of Letters (DLitt).

Professor Vishnu Padayachee, who was appointed by Nelson Mandela to the Board of Directors of the South African Reserve Bank in 1996, received his Doctor of Economics (DEcon).

Dr Andrew Mokete Mlangeni, or prisoner number 46764 as he is known in political circles, spent 26 years of unswerving and sustained commitment to the fight against apartheid during his imprisonment at Robben Island prison alongside Nelson Mandela, received his Doctor of Laws (LLD).

Dr Sindiwe Magona, a world-renowned author, poet, playwright, storyteller, activist, language ambassador and inspirational speaker who worked her way up from being a domestic worker, received her Doctor of Letters (DLitt).

Ms Yvonne Chaka-Chaka, who was chosen by Former President Nelson Mandela as the first ambassador for his Children's Fund and ambassador for the 46664 campaign to raise global awareness about HIV/Aids, received her Doctor of Laws (LLD) in absentia.

Justice Dikgang Moseneke, who made an exceptional contribution in the development of the jurisprudence of South Africa with the ground-breaking and progressive judgements he penned relating to affirmative action, property law in respect of land rights and expropriation, and the constitutionality of Parliamentary Rules, received his Doctor of Laws (LLD) in absentia. A special event will be hosted for Ms Chaka-Chaka and Justice Moseneke by the University in Johannesburg in May. To read any of our 2018 Honorary Doctorates' inspirational speeches, please [click here](#).



Prof Emeritus Peter Mtuze

Prof Vishnu Padayachee

Dr Andrew Mlangeni

Dr Sindiwe Magona

Justice Dikgang Moseneke

Ms Yvonne Chaka-Chaka

## Orientation Cocktail Party:

Rhodes University welcomed some 1500 first years early in February and the Alumni Office used this wonderful opportunity to also welcome our Old Rhodians back to campus. The Orientation Cocktail Party, abuzz with first years and their Old Rhodian relatives, gave us the opportunity to catch up with our alumni whose children or brothers and sisters have joined the purple family.

Hosted by the Old Rhodian Union Vice-President, Prof James Gambiza, the event offered an opportunity to thank you, our alumni, for your continued support. Over the last five years, the Old Rhodian Union has provided approximately R200 000 annually through fundraising efforts. These bursaries are given to children of Old Rhodians and staff members who work at Rhodes.



Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research & Development, Dr Peter Clayton, welcomed all guests with the reassurance that Rhodes University continues to be an outstanding institution of higher learning, and our position in educating young people to become agents of social change and societal transformation remains. One of the exciting aspects of the university experience is interacting with and learning from other young people who come from different social, economic, geographic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which also occurs in

sports and social clubs, student societies, extra-curricular activities and through participation in community engagement activities. The first years will need to learn to balance their academic and social lives in order to become well-rounded graduates of Rhodes University.

## Give5 2018

The 2018 give5 campaign continues to be a successful student fundraiser. With much preparation beforehand, the students' activities throughout the week were admirable and very inventive.



The Fire Walk was extremely successful with 40 brave students walking over five metres of red hot coals. Of the experience, each participant expressed feeling as if they could conquer the world! R71 586.00 was raised, which is an indication of the determination and focus of our current students. The full amount will go towards the Pocket Money Fund, incorporated with the SRC UBUNTU Fund and further fundraising will continue throughout the year. If you would like to add to the fund, please contact [alumni@ru.ac.za](mailto:alumni@ru.ac.za) to pledge a monthly amount, or to make a once off payment with your credit card, please [click here](#) to donate.



## Postgraduate Hall and Alumni Celebration Dinner

The Postgraduate Hall and the Alumni Office joined together to congratulate our Master's and PhD Graduates. This event has become an annual occurrence to welcome our Postgraduates into the elite alumni family.

[Click here](#) for the photographs of the evening.



## Upcoming Events

**RUMEP 25<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary** will be celebrated on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2018 at Gavin Relly Postgraduate Village in Grahamstown. Contact Lynette Sparrow, email: [l.sparrow@ru.ac.za](mailto:l.sparrow@ru.ac.za) or telephone: 046 603 8166.

**Perth Australia Reunion:** Local organisers invite you to join in for an evening of fun, and socialising with fellow Old Rhodians on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The reunion will be held at the Le Roi Function Room, Belgian Beer Café, corner Murray St & King St, Perth. Please pass on the invitation to your fellow Old Rhodian network and RSVP to [old.rhodians.wa@gmail.com](mailto:old.rhodians.wa@gmail.com)

**Rhodes Business School Purple Thursday:** The Rhodes Business School will be joining our OR Gauteng Association on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018 and invites all Alumni from the Business School to a PURPLE THURSDAY EVENT. Dunkeld Bowls Club, 15 Hume Road, Sandton from 18:00 onwards. Contact Leon Soko and [leonlksoko@gmail.com](mailto:leonlksoko@gmail.com) for further details.

**MTN walk the talk 702:** The OR Gauteng Association would like Rhodents to join together on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July, and do this walk as a group. Please contact Pride Jani at [pridejani@gmail.com](mailto:pridejani@gmail.com) and for information on the walk, please [click here](#). Don't delay as the closing date is on 7 June 2018!

We are in the process of finalising dates and venues for our annual Reunions, Dinners and Luncheons. We will keep you posted at the following link: [Click here](#)

## Isivivane Campaign Visibly Changes Lives

The amount of support our Alumni has been contributing towards fundraising campaigns is heart-warming. Even though we have been able to see a positive difference in the lives of our Isivivane recipients since last year, watching them graduate this year made the remarkable and life-changing impact Isivivane has had on their lives clearly visible.

Upile Bongco, who has just graduated with a BA in Drama and Psychology (with distinction), is a fine example of what is possible with Isivivane.

Now one of our Absa sponsorship recipients, Upile was barely able to keep up with the financial and academic demands of her BA degree last year. Her father had been forced into an early retirement due to illness, and with her mother being a primary school teacher, and her sister studying with only a partial medical school bursary at Stellenbosch University, Upile had to juggle two jobs while trying very hard to excel during her third year at Rhodes. Although Upile was discouraged to apply for funding, since performing arts bursary grants are so uncommon, she applied to Isivivane anyway, and was rewarded with a partial bursary for the duration of her BA degree last year.



isivivane fund 

To secondary school learners wanting to progress to tertiary academia, Upile advised, “Getting a degree is a lot of hard work, but it is worth it. Furthering your studies can lead to immeasurable wisdom. From matric to now, my critical thinking skills have evolved significantly. What we hear and think we know often ends up being wrong – and it's only through pushing our levels of understanding about the world we live in that the truth becomes clear.”

Upile recalled it was only after bumping into her admiring resident warden that her remarkable achievement as a graduate sunk in. “To all of those struggling as Rhodes University scholars, please don't give up. Whenever the situation seems impossible, remind yourself about the bigger picture... the greater purpose. Ask yourself why you decided to take on this worthwhile challenge in the first place. You have to keep pushing, pushing, pushing – and when all hope seems lost, remember the counselling service is there for us. You will get tired, but you won't fall down. Please, whatever you do, don't give up – South Africa needs you.”

Contact Qondakele Sompondo at [q.sompondo@ru.ac.za](mailto:q.sompondo@ru.ac.za) or visit our Isivivane page here to find out how you can contribute. [Click here](#) to visit the page.

## Giving to Rhodes University

There are many ways that you can contribute to Rhodes University, be it via the Annual Fund, Isivivane Fund or Bequests. Last year saw over R8 million in Bequests coming to Rhodes University. The money is invested into the Rhodes University Endowment Fund which is structured so the principal amount invested remains intact, while investment income is available for immediate funding for bursaries.

Old Rhodian Arthur Clarke has written a booklet *Estate Planning: Putting your Affairs in Order*. This step-by-step guide and checklist of action is an easy-to-read booklet, divided into two parts. The first part provides a lot of information about financial and other matters, and points out many of the potential pitfalls. The second part of the booklet consists of templates and a very comprehensive checklist and programme of actions that you should take for any surviving spouse or partner to keep on file. Arthur has generously allowed the link to be freely available for Old Rhodians to use and plan accordingly. No matter what your age, this booklet is a must read - the templates list dozens of items like "where do you keep your spare house keys" that your financial adviser won't be interested in – but your survivor will.

[Click here](#) to access the booklet.

## In Memoriam

2018 has started on a very sad note with some notable alumni passing away. Close to Rhodes' heart was the passing away of Prof Matthew Lester. Prof Lester was a qualified chartered accountant and had worked at South African Revenue Services (SARS), BDO, Department of Accounting, Rhodes University and at the Rhodes Business School where he specialised in the fields of stewardship, governance, taxation and entrepreneurial law. Further notices of deceased included Dr Hugh Masekela, Prof Brian Gaybba, Mr Noël Estcourt, Ms Debra Webb, Ms Sinazo Manentsa, Dr John Cloughton and Mr Colin Bland. We send our condolences to all family and friends and take a moment to remember them with fondness and respect.

Please [click here](#) to read the notices.



## Honouring our Own: Old Rhodian Awards 2018

The awards honour Old Rhodians who, through their individual achievements, continue to enhance the reputation of the University. Closing date for the 2018 nominations is on 1 July 2018 and the selection meeting will take place shortly after. There are two awards: The Emerging Old Rhodian Award for alumni under 40 years and Distinguished Old Rhodian Awards.

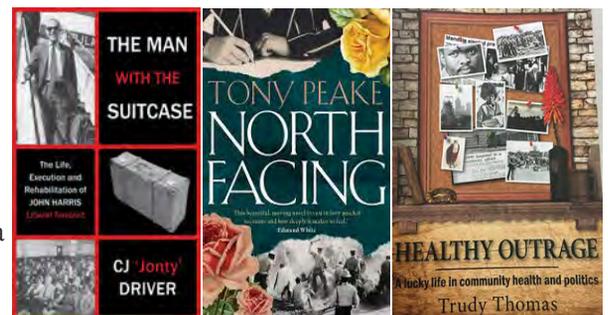
Please [click here](#) for the nomination forms and criteria and please browse through our *Alumni In The News* section to read more about our amazing alumni.

## Old Rhodian Authors

The latest books donated to our Alumni House bookcase, include:

- *The Man with the Suitcase: The Life, Execution and Rehabilitation of John Harris, Liberal Terrorist* by CJ 'Jonty' Driver.
- *Healthy Outrage: A Lucky Life in Community Health and Politics* by Dr Trudy Thomas.
- *North Facing* by Tony Peake. According to Scottish novelist Shena Mackay, Peake's latest book "makes the political personal... It is elegiac in its depiction of things half-understood, telling in its detail, and a gracefully achieved work of art made more powerful by its quiet anger and understatement."

[Click here](#) to read further.



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Where leaders learn