

Tanya Accone

Tanya Accone is a fourth-generation Chinese South African, whose ancestors came to South Africa from China to practice traditional medicine and manage trading businesses. Issues of social inclusion resonated strongly with Tanya, because like all non-white South Africans her childhood was shaped by exclusion.

She was a high-achieving student, who received more than a dozen academic awards while completing her BJournal (1993) at Rhodes, culminating in a Fulbright Scholarship that enabled her to continue her studies with distinction in the United States. She has an MA in Public Communication (1996) from American University in Washington and an MSc in Futures Studies (2005) from University of Houston-Clear Lake. During her MSc she twice received University of Houston's 'Best of Clear Lake' award for research.

As a former journalist she published hundreds of articles and had the most widely-read internet and technology front page column in the *Business Times*, with an audited readership of 1.6 million people. She co-authored three best-selling books: *The Best IT Companies in South Africa*, *The Best Companies to Work for in South Africa* and *South Africa's Most Promising Companies*. Her leadership on digital divide issues over more than a decade has led to invitations to write for the Harvard University's *Nieman Reports*, *Rhodes Journalism Review* and numerous speaking engagements.

Tanya's commitment to social issues became evident while she was at Rhodes. She served on the SRC and various house committees and was involved with child nutrition, educational outreach, and chronic care projects in and around Grahamstown.

The opportunity to be able to promote the rights and wellbeing of every child, especially the most vulnerable and excluded children, and to be of service to children and women in the global community inspired Tanya to exit the private sector and pursue a 15 year career with UNICEF, where she is now Senior Advisor on Innovation and Deputy of UNICEF's Global Innovation Centre.

She has been a staunch supporter of Rhodes throughout her career and has served as a trustee on *The Rhodes University Trust (USA)* since 2003, where Tanya has made a specific effort to raise awareness and funds to support previously disadvantaged students in the Eastern Cape to make a successful transition from high school to university.

Tanya is the perfect example of a committed Old Rhodian who has left her mark on every institution with which she has been associated. She has played an important role as an ambassador for her *alma mater* and for her country. Apart from her professional abilities it is her very strong sense of social responsibility that epitomises the ethos of Rhodes and makes her a highly deserving recipient of a Distinguished Old Rhodian Award.

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