

PLACE OF KNOWLEDGE

experience • research • technology • ideas

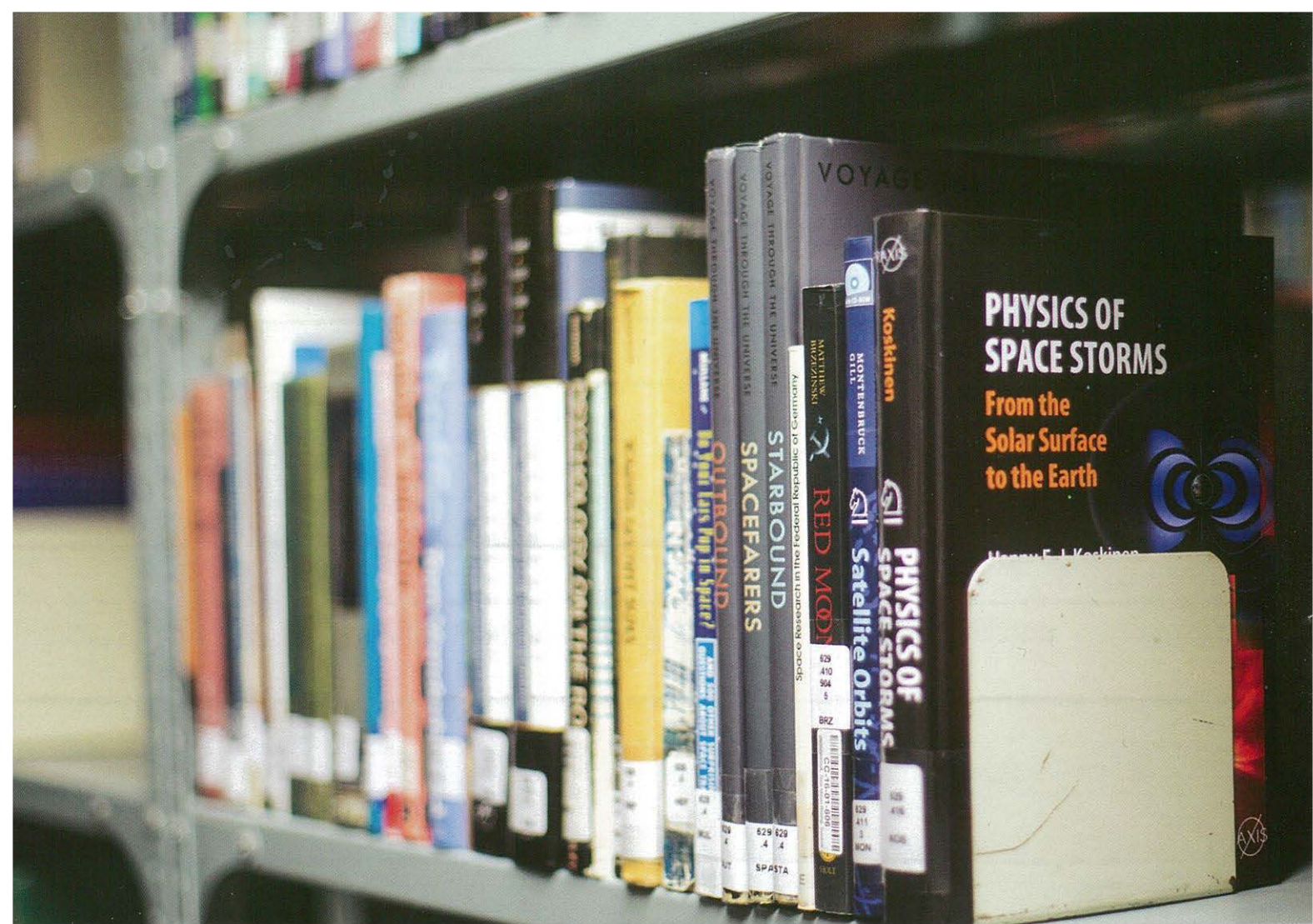


RHODES UNIVERSITY

Where leaders learn

INDAWO YOLWAZI

(place of knowledge) in pursuit of excellence in
teaching, research and community engagement.



[HOW IT ALL BEGAN]

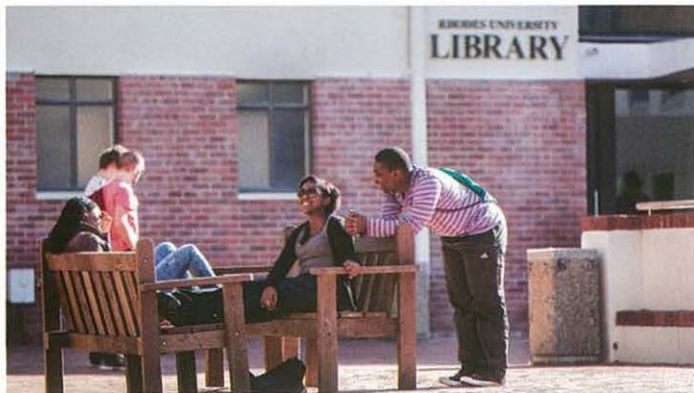
The dream of the new library began with the late Margaret Kenyon. Initially joining the library staff in 1982 as a cataloguer, she was appointed to the position of University Librarian in April 2001. It was through her initiative as Head of Cataloguing that Rhodes became the first library in South Africa to create hyperlinks on OPAC records to material also available in electronic format. She was an initiator of the Rhodes eResearch Repository (RePR), which was among the first open access institutional repositories in South Africa.

She also started the LibQUAL survey and while the old library scored well on service and information, it failed dismally on place. The pattern of student use had changed and there was no space for discussion areas to accommodate peer learning and group work. With student numbers having grown to 6200 and academic staff to 300, the library could only seat 10 percent of its users.

It was Mrs Kenyon who contacted Geoff de Wet, Architect and Director of the Physical Planning Unit at UCT, and arranged for him to visit

the Rhodes Library. It was a great tragedy that she did not see the seed that she had planted come to fruition.

**THERE WAS NO SPACE
TO ACCOMMODATE
PEER LEARNING AND
GROUP WORK**



[THE **BUILDING BLOCKS** OF KNOWLEDGE]

The ever changing demands for versatile workspaces that are responsive to evolving patterns of teaching, learning and research require a completely new approach to university libraries. We are thrilled to have seen the Rhodes University Library evolve from humble beginnings in a single room in the old Drostdy building into its grand position as a highly technological facility today.

Estimated to cost R90 million, Rhodes allocated R50 million of an R80-million re-capitalisation grant made to the University by the Department of Higher Education. The Development team was tasked with raising the remaining R40 million. The final cost of the new library came in at almost R11 million under budget, representing a saving of 13 percent.

Building began in September 2008 and at the end of January 2010 the main entrance to the new section of the main library was opened to users. The renovations of the old part of the building then began. The new library was officially opened

by the Minister of Higher Education, Dr Blade Nzimande, on 4 November 2010.

Ms Gwenda Thomas, the former Director of Library Services, who oversaw the library expansion, referred to it as "one of the most exciting and ambitious infrastructure projects in the history of the institution." Today Rhodes boasts a library that responds to the needs of the new generation of students and researchers who use new ways to find information and seek versatile and supported study, learning and work spaces that require skilled use of high technology and online research.

We are exceptionally proud of this shining example of how Rhodes University not only achieves what it sets out to do but has optimally placed itself to serve the University's objective of becoming a preferred destination for postgraduate research. We are truly indebted to our many generous donors, without whom this project would not have been possible. With the success of the library we take great pleasure in demonstrating

how these funds have been invested in contributing to the growth of the institution and South Africa's knowledge economy.

**TODAY'S STUDENTS
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[THE LIBRARY **AS SPACE**]

New library design and space has emerged as a crucial conversation between academic librarians and university management globally as undergraduate students show a decided preference to use the library in fulfilment of their academic requirements. Despite the wide availability of and accessibility to online resources from several locales, students still choose to use the physical library as their preferred learning space. Fred Kent, a noted architect of library spaces, says that although people may not necessarily use the library to meet their information needs, they will go if the library is a "desirable place". Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs, he characterizes this desirability as access and linkages; uses and activities; sociability; and comfort and image.

**'I LOVE THE LIBRARY;
IT'S ONE OF MY FAVOURITE
PLACES ON CAMPUS.
IT IS A SANCTUARY ...'**

So if I have to measure the Rhodes University Library against Kent's framework, we have

succeeded in achieving an extremely desirable space! It is a space that is defined by its central location; various Commons' catering for different user groups; excellent individual and group study spaces; training and meeting facilities; abundance of natural light and ventilation according to green principles; print and digital collections; and comfortable furniture that have all resulted in a communal, social, contemplative and scholarly atmosphere. The comparison between the 2005 and 2012 LibQUAL survey results show a significant improvement in the perceptions of the Rhodes community towards the quality of service, information resources and the library as place. This affirmed that the new library building and faculty library liaison model are serving to locate the library positively in the academic endeavour.

I wish to acknowledge your contributions towards making this building a reality and can assure you that your investment has enabled the Rhodes University Library to take its rightful place in the academic endeavours of Rhodes University.

MS UJALA SATGOOR
DIRECTOR: LIBRARY SERVICES



[OUR SCHOLARLY **HEARTBEAT**]

Since its opening in 2010, our wonderful new library has become the heart of the scholarly space that makes Rhodes one of the most productive universities in South Africa. Our outstanding library facilities have supported us in retaining the top undergraduate pass rate, one of the top three research outputs per capita in South Africa, and it has provided feature rich study and group work spaces for our growing student and staff population.

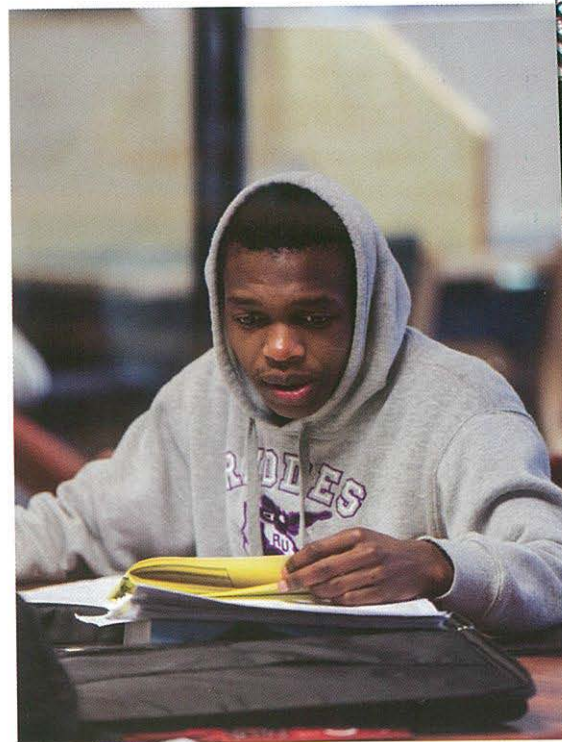
Undergraduates use the library as their study space of choice, and the Carnegie Research Commons for senior postgraduate students and academics was full to capacity within a year of opening. Funds were found to extend this facility to a broader cross section of postgraduates through the completion of the basement level of the new wing. This, along with the specialist training of library staff, has enabled the library to be transformed from a passive service model to one that promotes pro-active scholarly support. Much of the staff training has been undertaken under Rhodes' membership of the Research Libraries' Consortium, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which also funded the establishment of a powerful online

digital research portal, and a rich set of tools for facilitating aggregated access to electronic information resources.

'THE NET RESULT IS AN ENVIABLE ACADEMIC LIBRARY TO SUPPORT MODERN SCHOLARSHIP AND UNDERPIN THE QUALITY OF GRADUATES AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION THAT RHODES IS KNOWN FOR'

The success of the University in the recent DST/NRF South African Research Chairs Initiative epitomizes the contribution that the new library makes to our scholarly space. Rhodes was awarded 10 of the 60 chairs available in this competitive process, based significantly on the strength of the University to support the scholarship of the focused field of each chair; not bad for a university that has less than one percent of South Africa's university students.

DR PETER CLAYTON
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR:
RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT



[A CHANGING PATTERN OF USE]

The statistics reflecting traffic through the library since the opening in 2010 as compared to usage rates of the old library over previous years indicate that this is a preferred study space for many Rhodes students. Recent statistics reveal a daily user average of 1752 visitors to the library with an occupancy rate of 800 people in the library at any given time. Between the various study spaces, namely the research commons, postgraduate commons, information

commons, group study rooms and the Xstrata training room there are 1200 study seats available in the library and a total of 170 computers for staff and students. Most exciting for us is the significant 29.7% overall mean increase when comparing the changing user perceptions of the Library as Place between 2005 and 2012. This relates directly to the ethos created by the design space of the library and our students' experience of these library spaces.



[EXPERIENCE THE LIBRARY]

The most popular sections of the library directly reflect the dynamic information, individual and group study needs of our users. While the general study spaces are welcoming and appealing to all students, the purpose-built spaces for students at different stages in their academic careers make the library experience unparalleled. State-of-the-art computer workstations donated by the Dell Development Fund SA and placed at information service points throughout the library make these spaces easily navigable.

Other spaces for socialising and quiet reflection such as the newsroom and relaxation areas are essential in offering respite from sessions of intense study.

More undergraduates are intensifying their study sessions in a space that is conducive to hard work and separate from the many appealing distractions of student life. The Information Commons, which is funded by alumni in the United Kingdom, is a designated undergraduate space providing 56 computer workstations in a spacious mixed-use area, including group study areas. "During exams the quiet environment is great for studying and concentration," said Tia Jordan, who

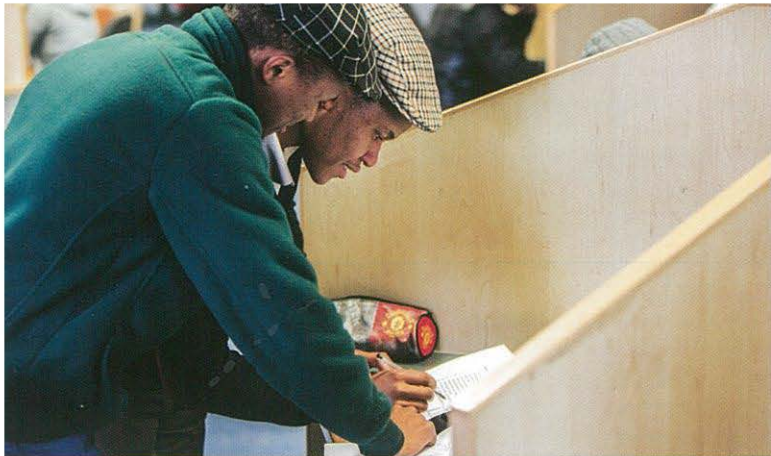
is doing her Honours in Ichthyology. "The easy accessibility to all of the library's resources added value to my undergraduate degree. There is even a seminar room with an overhead projector in which you can practice your seminar." The facility is a one-stop-shop for access to printed and online resources. Here library staff and student navigator assistants are in frequent conversation with students to provide assistance.

The **Information Literacy Training Room**, funded by Xstrata, is a 26-seater hi-tech training classroom where hands-on information skills training ensures that all University users can make optimal use of the electronic resources available to them. Our Vice-Chancellor, Dr Badat, commented on the fact that the Extended Studies Programme Management 101 students did better in the June exams than the other students. The Library runs six-week programmes for all ESP students each year; these students were given an extra two 45 minute sessions for the two essays they had to prepare. "Our pass rate is roughly 84%. I am delighted about this," said the course coordinator, Oscar Eybers. "We could not have achieved this without the input from the library. I

look forward to our continued collaboration in the second semester." The room is also equipped for video conferencing and is sound proofed. When not being used for training, the doors are left open and the computers may be used by students in the adjacent Information Commons.

THE PURPOSE-BUILT SPACES FOR STUDENTS AT DIFFERENT STAGES IN THEIR ACADEMIC CAREERS MAKE THE LIBRARY EXPERIENCE UNPARALLELED

The **Reading Room**, funded by Dimitra David, is a popular space away from the hustle and bustle that provides room for relaxation and reflection. Another reading room was named in honour of former University librarian Margaret



Kenyon. Sound proofed and equipped with reader tables, users can either work on their laptops or catch up with the latest news as provided by a current selection of magazines and newspapers.

In the **Carnegie Research Commons** trained faculty librarians provide top-class information services in a quiet and reflective environment. Funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, this space is reserved for postgraduates and academics. As Rhodes embarks on its drive to grow its postgraduate research complement, enhancing the research experience is vital to this space. Located beyond the Science Hub, this area is access controlled for academic and research staff, postdoctoral and postgraduate students. Consultations are also arranged with subject specialists as needed. There are 10 computer

workstations and laptops for loan, a seminar room for presentations and discussions and, essentially, a coffee station and space for relaxation and socialising.

The **Postgraduate Commons** is a colourful space and has proven extremely popular among Honours and other postgraduate students for its individual, duo and group study spaces. This area provides 80 study seats and 29 computer workstations and is an essential complementary space to the Carnegie Commons which are frequently full to capacity. Molly Matlotlo, who studied Linguistics, admits to not having been much of a library fan prior to the launch of the new library. Her experience as a postgraduate stood out in stark contrast: "The postgraduate commons, being smaller and more exclusive

and allowing me access to librarians who could address my specific online journal queries made the library a far more inviting place to study. It was relaxing and I enjoyed chilling on the couches too."

The access-controlled **24/7 study area** funded by Investec continues to prove that despite a vast array of technological resources available to them, the physical library is still the preferred space in which students choose to work.

The library has embraced the Faculty Library model that is arranged according to subject specific collections as follows:

- Science & Pharmacy
- Commerce
- Humanities & Education
- Humanities (with Music)

[THE **VALUE** OF **SERVICE**]

Adding value to its state-of-the-art facilities, the library runs several programmes to enhance the experience of all users.

Faculty librarians across all six faculties connect the world of teaching, learning and research and the vast array of information resources available. This allows a team-based approach to providing professional and dedicated services to researchers, academics and postgraduate students. These teams actively engage with departments, provide information services, and collaboratively engage in collection development and management.

Various information literacy programmes provide hands-on training for users in using the catalogues, databases and referencing systems in the library.

Online products available to users include subject-specific guides that list databases, e-resources, articles, books and journals.

A popular reading collection has been introduced to include and encourage recreational reading out of the users' specific subject areas.

**'I HAVE WATCHED THE LIBRARY GO
FROM REALLY AVERAGE TO AMAZING
AND NOW THAT I'M DOING MY
POSTGRADUATE DEGREE, I COULDN'T
BE MORE THANKFUL FOR HOW
RESOURCEFUL THE LIBRARY HAS BECOME'**







[SPACE TO **GROW**]

The library is a vibrant and dynamic space where scholarly engagement and intellectual interaction are the name of the game. Based on the demand still evident among the wider Rhodes community of users, a serious consideration is the conversion of one of our reading rooms into two seminar rooms and a boardroom with video-conferencing facilities, and the other will be converted into another postgraduate commons.

Rhodes is already a preferred choice for postgraduate teaching and research. Prime examples of the strides Rhodes is making in growing its

research complement include the current capital projects that have emerged given the rapid expansion in African Language Studies and the specialist research being conducted in the Life Sciences. This growth has necessitated new buildings and facilities to provide room for future collaborative research. Essential to the research initiative is an extension of the Research Commons to provide a personalised library and research experience to the growing numbers of emerging researchers at Rhodes.

In the not too distant future, the library wishes to further develop an art collection that is

reflective of the Eastern Cape but also the global reach of the University. This will be displayed in the exhibition area in the light and airy foyer funded by Barloworld. Here you can also view some of the University's rare books beautifully displayed behind illuminated glass. The gallery of portraits of African writers to the left of the central staircase is the work and inspiration of international photographer George Hallett.

We hope you will continue to follow our journey as we enhance our unique academic experience and grow a new generation of researchers.



[THE GENEROUS DONORS WHO MADE THE LIBRARY EXPANSION PROJECT POSSIBLE]

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