

**Naming of the Adam Small
Theatre Complex, Stellenbosch,
18:10 Friday 23 November 2018
Remarks by SU Rector and Vice-Chancellor
Prof Wim de Villiers**

**Naamgewing van die Adam Small-
teaterkompleks, Stellenbosch,
18:10, Vrydag 23 November 2018
Opmerkings deur prof Wim de Villiers,
Rektor en Visekanselier van die US**

[Bilingual version as prepared for delivery. Tweetalige weergawe soos voorberei vir lewering]

Goeienaand, almal! Good evening. Molweni. Welcome to a very special event, the official reopening of the University's renovated and expanded theatre complex.

We will get a tour of the building later, and I am sure you will agree, it's magnificent. The building has been refurbished as part of Stellenbosch University's extensive Campus Renewal Project.

Ons is baie trots op hierdie gebou. Waar daar vantevore slegs een groot teater-ouditorium was, is daar nou ook 'n splinternuwe kleiner laboratorium-teaterruimte, plus twee nuwe klankstudio's, 'n televisie-opnamestudio en 'n seminaarkamer. En vir die eerste keer sluit die aangrensende Dramadepartement nou funksioneel aan by die teaterkompleks.

So, I'm sure this building will serve our Drama Department well for years to come. As the Head of the Department, Dr Mareli Pretorius, says, the building has had "not just a facelift but liposuction too"!

However, despite what I have said so far, tonight is not about bricks and mortar, it's about flesh and blood. It's not about this building per se, but about the people it serves – the lecturers and students who teach and learn here, the artists who perform here, the audiences entertained here.

Above all, tonight is about the three Rs – no, not "reading, writing and arithmetic", but recognition, redress and reconciliation. Because tonight we are naming this theatre complex after Adam Small to recognise him as one of our greatest thinkers and authors, to right some of the wrongs done to him and other victims of apartheid, and to heal the wounds of the past ... to bring together again those torn asunder by what Adam Small himself called an "evil system".

Maar wag so bietjie, laat ons ons nou nie hoogheilig hou nie. Ons was self aandadig aan die ongeregthede van die verlede. Hierdie Universiteit se deure was toé vir mense wat destyds kamtig die "verkeerde" velkleur gehad het.

Adam Small was een van daardie mense. Hy het die verhaal self vertel: "Ek wou in jare wat nou lank verby is liewer hier studeer. Maar ek kon nie ... weens apartheid, en die kulturele voorskrifte en verbodinge van daardie bose stelsel."

Dit het dr Small gesê op 11 Desember 2015, toe hy 'n eredoktorsgraad van die US ontvang het vir sy "verruiming van die Suid-Afrikaanse letterkunde, sy verryking van Afrikaans, en sy verwoording van eens verbode onderwerpe om sodoende as 'n stem vir menige stemloses te dien."

Hy het op tipiese nederige wyse dankie gesê vir dié eerbetoon: “My groot waardering aan die US vir hierdie eredoktorsgraad”. En toe voeg hy by: “Dis vir my baie belangrik dat dit juis die Universiteit Stellenbosch is ... en u weet hoekom.”

Ja, dr Small, ons weet. En ons is jammer. “Die Universiteit erken sy bydrae tot die ongeregtighede van die verlede en verbind hom daarom tot gepaste regstellings- en ontwikkelingsinisiatiewe.” Dít het ons 18 jaar gelede gesê in ons “Strategiese Raamwerk vir die Eeuwisseling en Daarná”.

En vanjaar – in ons Eeufeesjaar – sê ons onomwonde “ons vra sonder voorbehoud om verskoning aan die gemeenskappe en individue wat uitgesluit was van die historiese voorregte wat die US geniet het, en ons huldig die kritiese stemme wat nie tot swye gebring kon word nie.”

Adam Small was one of those critical voices – one of the loudest, in fact, an acclaimed poet, playwright and academic who wrote himself into the very being of the South African nation as compass and moral conscience. And that is why Stellenbosch University is grateful and proud to be associated with his rich legacy. We would like to see his vision of human dignity and healing justice realised.

Vriende, hierdie teaterkompleks word vanaand na Adam Small vernoem. Maar die vorige naam verdwyn nie – soos u hier kan sien. Nes hierdie historiese fasade sou skade ly as die naam “HB Thom” verwyder word, so sou ons begrip van die geskiedenis skade ly as ons probeer voorgee hierdie teater het nié eens ’n ander naam gedra nie.

’n Erkenning van Adam Small is nie ’n ontkenning van HB Thom nie. Both names – Adam Small and HB Thom – will be contextualised here, with information along the lines of the text about them in tonight’s programme. That is part of Stellenbosch University’s approach to visual redress, including the naming and renaming of buildings. Adam Small documented the story of a past that should never be repeated in South Africa. But precisely for that reason, we should not try to erase that past, lest we forget the lessons it holds.

Vriende, ek gaan nou die lint knip ... en daarmee sê ek met groot vreugde, Adam Small het huis toe gekom. En almal is welkom in hierdie huis!