



UNIVERSITEIT  
STELLENBOSCH  
UNIVERSITY

# e-Matieland

SPRING 2016 • #3

## FROM THE ALUMNI OFFICE

Spring is in the air and, in the spirit of the just past National Women's month, we are delighted to bring you this special edition of e-Matieland to celebrate outstanding Matie women.

This edition highlights the successes of some of our eminent researchers, across a range of academic disciplines. We also celebrate other formidable SU staff and talk to radio host Sherlin Barends, Olympic triathlete Mari Rabie and business leaders Lizé Lambrechts and Martha Murorua – trailblazers who can serve as an inspiration to us all.

Whilst we share in and celebrate their achievements, it's also important to acknowledge that women still face many challenges in realising the ideals and values espoused in the South African Constitution.

Finally, in this edition of e-Matieland you can read up on a host of alumni events taking place over the next few weeks. We look forward to reconnecting with you, so be sure to RSVP [alumni@sun.ac.za](mailto:alumni@sun.ac.za) to secure your seat.

Onward and upward!



Photographer: Martin Viljoen



Stellenbosch University  
Alumni (Maties) and  
Friends



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# NEWS in short

## National awards for eminent researchers



Prof Lou-Marie Kruger and Ms Caroline Pule, two top female researchers at Stellenbosch University, recently received national acclaim when they were honoured with the Department of Science and Technology (DST)'s Women in Science Awards.

The DST hosts these awards to reward the country's outstanding female scientists and researchers and to encourage younger women to follow in their footsteps.

Kruger, a lecturer in the Depart-



ment of Psychology, was a second runner-up in the category Distinguished Women Researchers in the Humanities and Social Science, while Pule, a doctoral student in

the Department of Molecular Biology and Human Genetics, won a TATA Africa Scholarship. Kruger was honoured for her significant contribution to psychology in South Africa, especially her work on the emotional impact of poverty on women and girls, and what needs to be done to empower them. Pule received the scholarship for her doctoral research which focuses on the physiology of drug-resistant and tolerant Mycobacterium tuberculosis.

## SU appoints first woman registrar

A new era begins at Stellenbosch University soon when, for the first time, a woman will hold the position of Registrar. Dr Ronel Retief, Deputy Registrar: Tygerberg Campus, takes over the position on 1 January 2017. The current incumbent, Mr Johann Aspeling, retires at the end of this year.

"I am looking forward to taking on the role of Registrar and hope to add value, both by giving informed advice about the determining factors in the higher education sector in South Africa and by promoting excellent, empathetic academic administration that supports student success."



Retief studied at SU where she obtained a BA, HonsBA, MA and DLitt. She joined the University in 1998 as a Coordinator: Research Funding in the Division of Research Development and was appointed Assistant Registrar at the Tygerberg campus in 2003. That position was later upgraded to Deputy Registrar.

## Impact of TB diagnostic tests evaluated

Dr Eleanor Ochodo has been awarded a fellowship in Public Health and Tropical Medicine by the Wellcome Trust to develop a framework for the design of clinical trials to measure the impact of Tuberculosis (TB) diagnostic tests on patient outcomes.

"TB remains a pressing health problem with about nine million new cases and 1.5 million deaths reported globally in 2013," said



Ochodo, a researcher at the Centre for Evidence-based Health Care.

## Events

**5 - 13 Sept**  
**Alumni Telethon**  
E-mail: [alumni@sun.ac.za](mailto:alumni@sun.ac.za)

**14 Sept**  
**Free seminar in George**  
(will writing; estate planning)  
E-mail: [hugos@sun.ac.za](mailto:hugos@sun.ac.za)

**16-18 Sept**  
**Tuin van Digtors**  
Tel: 021-8732786  
E-mail: [besprekings@breytenbachsentrum.co.za](mailto:besprekings@breytenbachsentrum.co.za)  
Programme ([click here](#))  
Website ([click here](#))

**15, 27 Sept**  
**#ShapeTheFuture**  
(<http://www.sun.ac.za/english/alumni/shapethefuture>)  
Tel: 021 808 2830  
E-mail: [development@sun.ac.za](mailto:development@sun.ac.za)

# NEWS in short

## Choir wins big at international Choir Games



The University Choir under the baton of André van der Merwe was the biggest winner at the eighth International Choir Games held in Russia recently.

The Choir won first places and gold medals in three categories. In the category for Sacred á Capella, it received a score of 92%; in the category for Spirituals 94%; and, in the category for Contemporary Music 98%. This is the highest score awarded in any of the 27 categories

in which choirs competed in over 10 days. With this achievement, the SU Choir keeps its first place on the Interkultur list as best international non-professional choir – a position the Choir has been holding since 2012. A further bonus was the special CD contract for the coveted Choirs of the World series.



*Maties perform  
'Say Something'*

## PhD candidate's first poetry collection published



The first poetry manuscript to be penned by Sindiswa Busuku-Mathese, a doctoral candidate of the Graduate

School of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, has been published by Botsotso. Busuku-Mathese, who is originally from Durban North, is currently completing her first year of PhD studies in the English Department via a three-year, full-time scholarship offered by the Graduate School. She is

being supervised by Prof Sally-Ann Murray, an academic and poet whose work she says she greatly admires. Loud and Yellow Laughter, says Busuku-Mathese, is a personal reflection on childhood. The poems in the collection are woven together with archival materials such as letters, photographs, scraps of conversations recorded verbatim and found notes.

• If you are interested in purchasing a copy of *Loud and Yellow Laughter* at R80, you can contact Botsotso at [botsotso@artslink.co.za](mailto:botsotso@artslink.co.za) or Busuku-Mathese at [sindi.busuku@gmail.com](mailto:sindi.busuku@gmail.com).

## Matie recognised as best rural nurse



"This award does not belong to me; it goes to each nurse working on a mobile health care clinic that dedicates his or

her time and efforts to the health of people in far flung places." This is exactly the attitude that assured Sr Charlotte Stemmet's award as the Rural Nurse of the Year 2016 at the Rural Health Conference held in Grahamstown in August. Stemmet is an alumnus of the Division of

Nursing. She started her career as a professional nurse in primary health care over 15 years ago at the clinic of Nduli, just outside Ceres. She is currently employed by the Western Cape Department of Health in the district health services operating a mobile clinic service to the Bossieveld farming community in Worcester. She has also been involved in establishing a health committee, soup kitchen, sustainable vegetable garden, halfway house for HIV patients and the coordination of community care workers.

## Events

20 Sept

EMS in Gauteng  
Tel: 021 808 9265  
E-mail: [marvin@sun.ac.za](mailto:marvin@sun.ac.za)

22 October

Engineering Alumni  
in Port Elizabeth  
E-mail: [marvin@sun.ac.za](mailto:marvin@sun.ac.za)

Alumni in Canada

29 September (Toronto)

2 October (Calgary)

3 October (Vancouver)

E-mail: [alumni@sun.ac.za](mailto:alumni@sun.ac.za)

# NEWS in short

## Fellowship will promote research on HIV

Dr Moleen Zunza, an expert in the field of breastfeeding by HIV positive mothers, received the prestigious Janssen/CTN International Postdoctoral Fellowship to further her research in this field.

With this fellowship, Zunza plans to build on her research on the promotion of breastfeeding by HIV-infected mothers conducted for her PhD degree. She is a postdoctoral fellow at the Biostatistics Unit of the



Centre for Evidence Based Health Care at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.

## Maties part of winning SA team

Two Maties were part of the South African team that won the World University Netball championships in Miami in July. The team beat Jamaica

43-39 in the final.

Juline Rossouw and Charmaine Baard were very excited about their team's close victory. "We're very happy," Charmaine said, while Juline added that it was a "tough and physical match".

Juline, a former learner of Paarl Gimnasium, and Charmaine, a former learner of Brackenfell High School, are both education students – Juline in her fourth year and Charmaine in her third year.



## Change agent for women in sport

Ilhaam Groenewald, Chief Director: Maties Sport, first female member of SARU's executive council and deputy chairperson of University Sport South Africa, believes the contribution of women in sport is still under-valued and can be improved with more women serving in decision-making positions with appropriate systems in place to register continuous advancement.

"The more role models women have in the sport industry, the more women will be prepared to take on the challenges. It is important that

we have or develop the confidence to be steadfast about what we deserve." In her opinion, there are still some barriers that need to be broken down.

"Women should be included as a result of a constitutional commitment, rather than be at the mercy of those who 'believe in you'. The tendency to underestimate our abilities and capabilities must stop and we should set our own standards rather than be expected to conform. You don't have to join



men at the bar, you don't have to play golf, you don't have to visit the change room, but you can if you want to." Lastly we should get rid of the guilt. We have working fathers juggling schedules too, it is no longer only a challenge for women. Find a solution that works for you."

## New Vice-Rector plans to build on SU reputation

"It is very important to listen to what people say, to get to know the institution and to form a good concept of everybody's needs and expectations," says Prof Hester Klopper, SU's new Vice-Rector: Strategic Initiatives and Internationalisation.

Klopper is an internationally-recognised academic and professional leader with extensive networks in global health, policy, nursing and health care. "I am very excited and it is an honour and a privilege to be appointed to the position - all the more so at Stellenbosch University. I look forward to being part of the



excellent management team and continue to build on the reputation and history of the University," Klopper said. This former Chief Executive Officer of FUNDISA (Forum for University Nursing Deans of SA) and former President of Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) also is an extraordinary professor at the Potchefstroom

Campus of the North-West University and the University of the Western Cape, where she was Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences prior to her current position. She is the only South African who is inaugurated at the American Academy of Nursing.

On 23 July, she was honoured in the International Hall of Fame for Research Excellence of STTI for her international contribution in research. In September this year she will receive an honorary doctorate from Oxford Brooks University in the UK for her contribution to nursing education and research globally.

# It's up to you, says Santam CEO

*As the first female CEO of Santam, South Africa's largest short-term insurer, Lizé Lambrechts is used to being in the spotlight and putting in long hours but this hardworking businesswoman relishes a challenge and is taking her responsibilities in her stride.*



Lambrechts joined Santam in 2015 from the Sanlam Group, where she was Chief Executive: Sanlam Personal Finance for about 12 years. She has a BSc Hons in Applied Mathematics from Stellenbosch University, qualified as an actuary and held numerous senior memberships and directorships within Sanlam's local and international operations.

"I felt honoured that the board of Santam was willing to consider me for the position. Of course, one is always a little bit apprehensive when one leaves an existing and familiar position to take up a new challenge. But, most of all, I was excited to embark on a new and challenging chapter in my working life," she says.

This former Matie says that she does not feel pressure to put in extra effort just because she is a woman. "Maybe when I started out with my career and when I had a young family, I sometimes felt that I had to demonstrate that I was fully committed to my career. Nowadays, we all just put in a lot of hours irrespective of our gender."

And what does a typical working day entail? "There is no such thing as a typical working day for me. A typical week may involve elements of preparing for and chairing meetings (like an executive committee meeting or a subsidiary board meeting), individual discussions with my management team members and meetings with or presentations to our business partners (our clients) or employees. It also normally involves some travelling, mostly to Gauteng. I also try to fit in some time to walk around in the business to get a sense of what is happening there and spend time to reflect on strategic issues facing the company and the industry we operate in."

So what makes her work so rewarding? "I love the fact that I work in an industry that makes a difference to its clients. We are there for our clients, often when they face traumatic events in their lives. I also love the variety – there is never a dull day in my position or our industry.

"I have never set myself specific goals that I want to achieve other than to enjoy what I do and to contribute positively to the business I work for, the employees around me and our clients."

Her message to other women is to believe in yourself and your abilities. "As women, we

have enormous potential to contribute not only to the workplace and to our families but also to the society we live in. We must never be afraid to grab the opportunities we are offered – but then it is up to us to make a success of it."

## Those Stellenbosch days...

I remember all the fun times and little of the hard times, when I had to study for exams! They were some of the best years in my life. I remember being proud to be associated with one of the oldest and most prestigious academic institutions in the country. I will also never forget the friendships made in my residence, Huis ten Bosch. We had a lot of innocent fun! I also met my husband while studying at Stellenbosch. Seeing that we are still happily married, our time there is one of my happiest memories. My daughter is now a second-year Matie student and it is interesting to see how things have changed, some radically – but the essence of Stellenbosch is still the same!

## What makes you...

**Happy:** I am always happy when I can spend time with my family and when they are happy.

**Laugh:** My husband has a wicked sense of humour!

**Sad:** I am really sad when I see how cruel we as humans can be to other people and even animals.

**Stressed out:** Being in front of a camera!

# 'Bold, bald and bubbly'

Most people experience their 'aha' moment later in life but Sherlin Barends, radio host and content producer, realised in Grade 12 already that her passion is people and that connecting with them is her purpose. These days, this bubbly alumnus is hosting a prime time radio show and loving every minute of it.

## Tell us about yourself.

I am a bold, bald and bubbly radio host and content producer. I was born and bred in Stellenbosch – Idas Valley. It is here where I attended church, received my schooling (at Idas Valley Primary School and Lückhoff High School), captained my hockey team and did ballet. It goes without saying that Idas Valley and its colourful people played a massive role in my formative years.

## You studied journalism at Maties. Who or what inspired this choice?

I took a break in my studies after my first degree (BA in Humanities), hoping that I would be picked up by a commercial radio station. When that did not happen, applying for Stellenbosch University's postgraduate honours degree in journalism felt like 'the next best thing'. In retrospect – it was actually the best thing! Also, during that time, I made solid friendships with talented people.

## You host a prime time radio show on Good Hope FM. Tell us about it.

I co-host 'The Hype' with Dan Corder, weekdays between 08:00 and 11:00. The show focuses on local music, interviews with fascinating people and engaging content that

will get everyone talking. One of the things I'm most excited about is 'Finding The Hype', a weekly feature that creates a space for talented yet undiscovered local musicians to get their music playlisted on Good Hope FM. Another highlight is #CelebrateCapeTown, a feature that puts the spotlight on young Capetonians who are doing great things.

## How do you maintain a healthy balance between work and leisure?

It's important to work hard and deliver good work but it's as important to take a break. Doing yoga, hiking and reading are my favourite ways to switch off. I'm also very fortunate to have a supportive network of family and friends.

## Have you faced challenges in the workplace as a woman?

The South African media industry is dominated by men. Women are often seen as mere sidekicks. The time to use our voices is now! Not just during the month of August but every day! I'm very fortunate to host a prime time radio show. It's great to see how things are changing (albeit not as fast as we like) for the better.

## What advice would you give young women?

We tend to underestimate our power



Photographer: Megan Darrin

and look outside ourselves for solace and solutions. Great things happen when we learn to love, respect and trust ourselves and that can happen only when we know ourselves. It's in knowing (accepting and celebrating) ourselves that we find our passion and purpose and, to my mind, true happiness. Then to those who want to make it in the industry: Actively listen to various local and international radio stations. Find and follow a couple of radio role-models, use them as inspiration – but don't imitate. Find your own unique voice and don't be scared to use it.

## Tell us about your role-models.

My mother, Sherine Barends, is deputy principal at one of the schools in Stellenbosch. She is a passionate teacher and great at what she does. She pushes herself to be better and do better but isn't scared to take a break. Also, one of my mentors, Celeste Stewart, whom I met during my time at Media24; she's frank, she's funny and she

has dedicated her life to helping others to become the best version of themselves.

## How do you remember your time as a Matie?

I made sure I left university with more than just my journalism degree. I was part of Aurora Private Student Organisation's house committee, I took part in the serenade, I joined the soccer team and I was a waitress at one of the watering holes in town. In my second year, I joined the campus radio station – MFM92.6 – which changed the course of my life. It was here where I fell in love with radio.

## What are your future plans?

I want to do what I'm currently doing for decades to come. In the short term, I seek to continue to create entertaining, engaging and informative radio content on a daily basis. In the long term, in addition to radio, I dream of becoming a TV or online presenter and write for a reputable publication. I want to be a respected voice in the industry and advocate for positive change.

# Sport's life lessons inspire Mari to greater heights

*Sport is fickle. Triathlon athlete Mari Rabie (29) knows this from experience, writes Pia Nänny.*

Something completely out of your control can sabotage your efforts and undo years of hard work. She knows this too.

When Mari returned from the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing she was bitter. The disappointment of a 43rd place in the competition after her bicycle broke down was so big that she decided to rather concentrate on something else – her studies.

Never in her wildest dreams did she imagine that eight years later she would be on her way to another Olympic Games to represent South Africa in the triathlon again.

In the meantime, however, she was awarded the Rhodes scholarship to study at Oxford University and in the past few years she has obtained her Master's degree in Applied Statistics, as well as an MBA degree.

Mari's story starts in Stellenbosch, and it is because of this story that she has agreed to become part of the Stellenbosch Sport Ambassador (SSA) programme.

Her grandparents studied at Stellenbosch University and her parents both grew up in Stellenbosch. Mari herself was a learner at Eikestad Primary School and Bloemhof Girls'



*(Photos: Peartree Photography)*

High and obtained her degree in Actuarial Science at Maties. "I am very passionate about Stellenbosch. The town contributed a great deal to where I am today. I don't know whether I would be going to Rio if I hadn't grown up here with all the opportunities and support that I have received. "Stellenbosch could be a town of excellence. I don't think the kids at school always realise how many opportunities there are in Stellenbosch."

Mari joined Maties Swimming Club when she was six years old. She also took part in long-distance running on the track when she was at school. She only started focusing on

triathlon after school. She qualified for the Commonwealth Games in 2006 and the Olympic Games in 2008 and had very bad experiences at both events. She fell ill at the Commonwealth Games and had to leave the competition in an ambulance while technical problems affected her performance in Beijing.

"I was bitter after Beijing. In sport, your highs are so much higher than in real life and your lows so much lower. But, after a while, you get to a point where you can say: If it hadn't been for Beijing I wouldn't have applied for the Rhodes scholarship... You start looking beyond the pain and you learn how to deal with disappointment."

*"You start looking beyond the pain and you learn how to deal with disappointment."*

In 2012 she decided to try again, but soon afterwards she was faced with another challenge and disappointment: In 2014 she was diagnosed with myocarditis – she injured her heart muscle and the only answer was no training for almost a year. "It was difficult for me and I considered giving up my dream and to start working full time, but in my head, I had committed myself until the end of 2016," she says. When she eventually started training again she was under great pressure to qualify for the Olympic Games. Between March and May this year she participated in

seven competitions in six different countries on four different continents in the space of 10 weeks. Mari's goal, after she came eighth in a recent World Triathlon Series event is to finish in the top ten at the Olympic Games. (She managed to finish in 11th in a time of 1:59:13. The winner's time was 1:56:16 and 55 participants started.) And then? "My coach is retiring soon and I feel that I have studied hard – I would like to start focusing on my career. I still have to complete my actuarial exams." She hasn't been idle the past few years, though – she works for Remgro on a part-time basis and started the athleisure active-wear range "MovePretty" with a friend, Annelize Kotze. Although she has reached the end of her athletics career she hopes to be a role model for local young sport stars and that they will learn from her experience.

*\*The Stellenbosch Sport Ambassadors programme aims to empower local athletes on their journey of excellence. The programme is a working partnership between the Stellenbosch Municipality, the Stellenbosch Academy of Sport and Maties Sport. Like the Stellenbosch Sport Ambassadors page on Facebook or follow them on Twitter at @SboschSA.*



# 'I am enough'

*Martha Murorua, executive of consumer banking at First National Bank Namibia, knows that hard work can lead to success but this USB alumnus also knows that you should never lose sight of who you are.*

Murorua, who comes from the dusty roads in Hakhasseb Township in Usakos, says she knew from an early age that the only way out of poverty was through education. "I would describe myself as a woman of humble beginnings, who has taken the opportunities that life has given her with both hands and succeeded in making her ambitions a reality."

She started her higher education studies in Namibia, where she obtained a BAcc degree from the University of Namibia and a National Diploma in Commerce from the Polytechnic of Namibia. In addition, she completed her articles as an accountant and external auditor at PwC, one of four international professional services networks offering audit, advisory and tax services.

She also holds an MBA from the University of Stellenbosch Business School, which she obtained in 2009. "I always dreamed of studying at Stellenbosch University and, when the opportunity was presented by my previous employer, I grabbed the opportunity with both hands," she says. "The Operations Research course offered by Prof Wim Gevers was my highlight as a student, apart from the insightful discussions during the study weeks and meeting a diverse group of people from across Africa."

She owes her career success to hard work and maintaining a healthy balance between work and the rest of her life. "I love to be involved in things that are difficult, risky and out of my comfort zone. My social support system – family, friends,

colleagues and peers – are also very important to me. Given the limited time at my disposal with my loved ones, I strive to be fully present when I have the opportunity to be with them," she says. She says that it is no secret that, despite women making significant inroads into leadership roles, there remains a socially entrenched patriarchy to be surmounted.

"Most women are stuck in the middle and experience greater obstacles reaching the upper echelons. Although there is little difference between men and women in leadership levels, there is an assumption that top roles are better suited to males. Society generally associates successful leadership with stereotypically 'masculine' traits such as assertiveness and dominance. As a female, you need to demonstrate these traits to be accepted as a peer."

Murorua's vision is to be executive director of a listed company one day and to set up a charitable organisation focusing on girl child education through the creation of reading clubs in various regions in Namibia. Her advice to young women is to concentrate on the positive because this will ultimately shape their outlook on life.

"My motto in life is: I am enough," she says. "I have stopped trying to fix my weaknesses and started to build on what is right. I have learned it is not possible to perform well in all the dimensions in my life, therefore I use my different capabilities in those aspects where I can excel. I choose to be authentic but equally firm in my dealings with anyone who crosses my path."

## Alumni Office

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