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UNIVERSITY

e-Matieland

WINTER 2016 • #2

FROM THE ALUMNI OFFICE

With winter fast approaching, we are pleased to bring you the latest edition of *e-Matieland*. In this edition, we look back on our very first Homecoming weekend and alumni's enthusiastic response to it. We certainly enjoyed seeing so many of you walking around campus, reconnecting with your alma mater.

In addition, we proudly celebrate the awarding of the first Vlakte bursaries to five Maties. The generous contributions of our alumni and donors enable us to continue to provide bursary support to students in need and thereby facilitate the development of our future professionals. In a similar vein, this issue commemorates the contribution of our former Rector and Vice-Chancellor, the late Prof Russel Botman, who passed away two years ago on 28 June. If you would like to help keep his vision alive, please consider making a donation to the Russel Botman Bursary Fund to honour his memory.

Also be sure to read the feature on SU alumnus Dagnachew Wakene. The story of this Ethiopian national, who has overcome a host of challenges and is today blazing a trail for disability rights in Africa, is truly inspirational.



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Friends



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NEWS in short

Rector celebrates one year since inauguration



On 29 April 2016, it was exactly a year since Prof Wim de Villiers was inaugurated as Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University (SU). "It has certainly been an eventful period, but I would not have had it any other way," he says in a new video in which he looks back on his first 12 months in office.



[Click here to watch the video](#)

Woordfees 2016 a festival to remember

Woordfees 2016 was a festival of unprecedented highlights and successes. Festival director Saartjie Botha said the record amount of tickets sold is proof that the festival serves a community who engages with the arts.

Ticket sales were up by 27,8% – 20% in rand value – owing to the one Friday on which tickets were sold at R30 each, and the cash-free system grew by 200%. "We can be proud of a successful festival in these difficult times. Audiences are price-sensitive, and we want to make it accessible to as many people as possible," Botha said.



[Click here to watch a video with Woordfees highlights](#)

First Homecoming Weekend ends on high note

Our very first Homecoming Weekend (4–7 March 2016) was a huge success, and we are already making plans for Homecoming 2017. The weekend had something for everyone – a cocktail party with Prof Wim de Villiers, a range of faculty activities, the popular Dagbreek/Maties Street Mile, and various residence-specific events. One of the highlights was an intergenerational talk on local and global issues hosted by the Frederik van Zyl Slabbert Institute and facilitated by alumnus Prof Pierre de Vos. "I hope we've succeeded in showing alumni that



it's always great to come home to Matieland; that their alma mater is doing well and remains a world-class institution, held in high esteem for its expertise in teaching and research, and climbing up the university rankings," says Shaun Stuart, Manager: Alumni Relations.

- If you have ideas for Homecoming 2017, don't hesitate to send your thoughts to alumni@sun.ac.za.

Homecoming 2016 in pictures (click)



Events

26 June – 1 July
Engineering Winter Week
Tel: 021 808 4203
E-mail: winterweek@sun.ac.za
Web: <http://www1.sun.ac.za/winterweek/index.php>

26 – 30 June
Science Winter Week
Tel: 021 808 3760
E-mail: mvdworm@sun.ac.za

25, 26 en 27 July
Thys Visser commemorative lectures
STIAS, Stellenbosch
Tel: 021 808 9564

8, 9, 10 July
Eendrag 55 year reunion
Tel: 078 457 5555
E-mail: info@eendragreunion.com

15 - 17 July
Dagbreek 95 year reunion
Tel: 083 368 5948
E-mail: francois_fouche@hotmail.co.za

23 July
Monica 90 year reunion
E-mail: 170230333@sun.ac.za

6 August
Hippokrates turns 40
E-mail: 18268188@sun.ac.za

NEWS in short

I am humbled, says Mandy Rossouw Bursary recipient



The Mandy Rossouw Bursary for 2016 has been awarded to Ms **Nation Nyoka** (26), a BA Honours Journalism student at the University.

The bursary to the value of R40 000 was instituted in 2013 by friends and colleagues of the late journalist Mandy Rossouw and is awarded to a female BA Honours Journalism student with an interest in politics.

The bursary goes towards covering the recipient's class fees. Nyoka hails from

Johannesburg and completed an undergraduate degree in Media Studies at Rhodes University. "I am very humbled," she said.

"I hope I can live up to the standard of journalistic integrity that Mandy Rossouw set." Rossouw, an alumna of the Department of Journalism, was a renowned political reporter and the first journalist who wrote about the Nkandla saga. She passed away at the age of 33 in March 2013.

Want to contribute to this Fund?

The details for direct payments are: Standard Bank, account number 073006955 and branch code 05 0610. Please make sure to add the reference: H713 + initials & surname.

Top prizes for SU theologians



The Andrew Murray Prize Fund has announced the winners of this year's prizes for Christian and theological books. The publication *Living with Dignity - African Perspectives on Gender Equality* from Sun Press received the Andrew Murray Desmond Tutu prize this year.

The editors are **Elna Mouton** and Len Hansen of SU's Faculty of Theology, Getrude Kapuma from Malawi, and Thomas Togom from Kenya. The project involved more than 20 scholars from across Africa who discussed important issues of

gender equality and human dignity in Africa from different perspectives.

The Andrew Murray prize for the best Christian book in Afrikaans was won by Barend Vos for his book *Die ewigheid in my hart* (Eternity in my heart), published by Lux Verbi. Vos, an alumnus of the Faculty of Theology and author of biblical novels, is known as a satirical columnist.

Spotlight on international partnerships

Stellenbosch University recently celebrated its collaboration with partner universities from around the world at the 14th annual Stellenbosch International Academic Network meeting. Participants from 27 institutions representing 14 countries attended the meeting hosted by the Postgraduate & International Office.

According to Prof Wim de Villiers, the meeting helped strengthen ties with international partners, which is crucial for international collaboration in joint research and student mobility.

He highlighted SU's internationalisation efforts, saying that the international students currently enrolled at SU come from 117 different countries. "Last year, approximately 15% of our students were international. This was double the national average."

Scientists develop rapid screening tool for TB



A point-of-care rapid diagnostic test for tuberculosis (TB) has been developed by a multinational team of scientists led by SU researchers.

"This low-cost screening test has the potential to significantly speed up TB diagnosis in resource-limited setting," says co-inventor, Prof Gerhard Walzl. The test is conducted on blood obtained from a finger-prick and can make a TB diagnosis in less than an hour.

The diagnostic test is a hand-held, battery-operated instrument that will measure chemicals in the blood of people with possible TB.

The device is currently in developmental phase and its accuracy and efficacy will be tested in five African countries over the next three years.

NEWS in short



Surgeon runs to restore patients' dignity

For many years, Dr Karin Baatjes, a breast cancer surgeon with the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, has been helping patients with her hands. But this year, she did it with her feet!

An avid runner, Baatjes decided to run the West Coast marathon (42,2km) to raise R42 000 for Reach for Recovery's Ditto Project. This project provides external prostheses to women who have undergone mastectomies due to breast cancer.

"The total donations came to a whopping R57 183! I wanted to combine my two passions in life, surgery and running, for a good cause," says Baatjes, who has been a surgeon at Tygerberg Hospital for 11 years.

Last year, Baatjes raised R54 000 to buy rain jackets and socks for 1 200 pupils at Rosendal Primary School in Delft, Cape Town.

✓ Reach for Recovery (www.reach4recovery.org.za) is an international breast cancer support group run by breast cancer survivor volunteers.

It offers emotional and practical support to patients in both state and private health services around the country.

Honour Prof Russel Botman's legacy

On 28 June, it will be exactly two years since the passing of SU's former Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Prof Russel Botman. He was halfway through his second term when he unexpectedly passed away in his sleep. Prof Botman was passionate about shaping 21st-century thought leaders and in October 2013, on his 60th birthday, he established the Russel Botman Bursary Fund - requesting friends, family and colleagues to contribute to the Fund in lieu of gifts. He was passionate about giving access to students who would otherwise not have the opportunity to study at a world-class institution such as Stellenbosch University. If you would like to keep Prof Botman's vision alive, please consider making a donation in his honour.



✓ The details for direct payments are: Standard Bank, account number 073006955 and branch code 050610. Please make sure to add the reference: Botman.

Koopman and Klopper appointed as Vice-Rectors

The SU Council has recently made two senior appointments. Prof Nico Koopman, currently acting Vice-Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel, has been appointed permanently in this position, while Prof Hester Klopper, an internationally recognised academic and professional leader with extensive networks in global health, policy, nursing and healthcare, has been appointed to lead the new Strategic Initiatives and Internationalisation portfolio. "Both Professors Koopman and Klopper bring proven knowledge and experience to the management of the University," says Prof Wim de Villiers, Rector and Vice-Chancellor.



Record number of doctoral degrees conferred

A total of 139 doctoral degrees were awarded at the March graduation as part of the 2015 academic year. This brings the number of doctorates awarded for the 2015 academic year to 266, which is the most ever for an academic year at SU. In the Faculty of Science, 28 doctoral degrees were awarded at the March ceremony (out of an overall total of 50 for the 2015 academic year). With 21 doctorates (39 for 2015 academic year), the Faculty of Engineering wasn't far behind. Four of these were obtained by staff members. The Faculty of Engineering wasn't the only faculty with new doctorates among its staff, however, as the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences staff also produced four.

[Click here for graduation highlights](#)



News in pictures



Representatives of the asset management industry in South Africa recently gathered in Stellenbosch for the inaugural investment seminar hosted by global asset management firm Schroders in collaboration with the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science. *(Photographer: Anton Jordaan)*



Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine (RUSVM) has signed an articulation agreement with SU. Through this agreement, students from SU's Faculty of AgriSciences who meet specified academic requirements will gain direct admission to RUSVM, which is based in Saint Kitts in the West Indies. *(Photo: Supplied)*



The University recently awarded the first Vlakte bursaries to five students. All the recipients are descendants of people who were forcibly removed from the area called Die Vlakte in Stellenbosch's town centre during apartheid. *(Photographer: Anton Jordaan)*



A classy performance by Maties earned them a 19-5 victory over the surprise package UWC to win the 2016 Varsity Sevens final. The tournament was played at Villager RFC over the weekend of 30 April to 2 May. Maties also won the title in 2013 and 2014. *(Photographer: Thys Lombard, SASPA)*



The Military Academy recently turned 66. The Academy was established on 1 April 1950 as a branch of the SA Military College, with the aim of elevating the training of permanent force cadets to provide the Defence Force with a competent, professional corps of officers. *(Photographer: Major Engela Meintjes)*



'You have to learn to take that first step'

It has been said that entrepreneurs are born, not made. And this is certainly true of Dewald Müller, currently studying towards an honours degree in Actuarial Science and co-founder of the company Adflow, writes Pia Nänny

His entrepreneurial flair, determination and dedication were recognised on various platforms during the past few months.

In July 2015 he received the Innovation Award at the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation's national fellowship jamboree.

In October he was named one of the winners of the Nedbank Stellenbosch University LaunchLab Business Incubator's Pitching Platform competition and in November he gained recognition at the Western Cape Premier's Entrepreneurship Recognition Awards (PERA) by winning the category for Best Innovative Student Business Idea. In February 2016 he came third in South Africa in the Global Student Entrepreneurship Awards.

During this time he also graduated with a BCom degree, *cum laude*.

But where did it all start? When he started



the business 'Biltong Broers' as a Grade 4 learner at Robertson Primary School? When he calculated that he could earn more money by pushing trolleys than working on the till in the local supermarket during school holidays? When he noticed students' habit of buying expensive coffee and started Cuppa Campus, installing vending machines in residences? Or when he realised that these coffee cups are 'billboards on wheels' and

that he would be able to sell coffees and cappuccinos at cheaper prices if he could persuade companies who offer services to students to advertise on the cups? Which he did.

And now he is expanding his horizon beyond campus (watch this space) and exploring the idea of a cross-subsidisation marketing process that gives companies direct access to the lower income market while enabling the lower income market to attain basic products at lower costs.

"I used to think that entrepreneurship was about creating something that didn't exist and making money off it. But I realised it's about influencing the environment around you. How do you start a business that people want to be a part of? My dream

is to take what I've learnt until now and build on it to create something that is profitable and that South Africa can benefit from."

Coming to Stellenbosch University, living in Eendrag residence and taking part in the above-mentioned competitions have opened Dewald's eyes to the myriad of opportunities available.

And he is making use of each and every one and creating some of his own along the

way. He finds the networking opportunities especially valuable.

But being a student entrepreneur is not easy and he has had to learn to deal with red tape, disasters and failures.

Shortly after Cuppa Campus installed its first vending machine, he was woken up early on a Saturday morning by someone informing him that the machine's pipe had burst during the night and that the floor was under water. Even though he had to write a test that morning, Dewald first had to sort out the mess and arrange for a plumber...

"I've had to deal with some of the most difficult challenges of my life and there are times that I wish I can just be a student."

But Dewald firmly believes that if you walk out of university with only a degree, you've wasted your time.

He finds his subjects very useful and enjoys the irony of studying a course that teaches you how to determine risk and avoid it.

"And as soon as I walk out of class I jump off a cliff," he smiles.

"When you're an entrepreneur you don't go into things half-heartedly. You go into it with everything you have. You have to learn to take that first step, not to take yourself too seriously and to be patient, persistent and positive."

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'Onward and upward'

Disability rights advocate, educator and lifelong student... Meet alumnus, Dagnachew 'Dag' Wakene (33), who for the past nine years, and longer, has been working tirelessly combatting the serious socio-economic prejudice and myriad of misconceptions that people with disabilities face on a daily basis.

Tell us about yourself.

I'm from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and have been working for over nine years as an advocate, educator and research consultant on disability rights and inclusive development. I did my first degree in law at Addis Ababa University, and then I did a Master's of Philosophy majoring in rehabilitation and development studies at Stellenbosch. I am a polio survivor – a condition I contracted as a child.

What does your job entail?

I'm currently working as the Africa Regional Coordinator, based in Addis, for a research project called Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI) – run by York University in Toronto. It aims to establish a sustainable monitoring system that addresses disability discrimination globally. I am also co-founder of THISAbility Consulting, an initiative established in 2014 to bridge existing gaps

of participatory disability research in Sub-Saharan Africa. In a system which all too often magnifies the limitations of persons with disabilities, rather than their immense capabilities, THISAbility Consulting envisions to do its part in curbing this status quo.

How did you end up at Stellenbosch University?

In 2009, I was recruited as a research assistant in a research project jointly led by the Centre for Rehabilitation Studies at Stellenbosch University and the Trinity College Dublin of Ireland. This project studied disability inclusion in Poverty Reduction Strategy Processes of four African countries. As part of this, I was awarded a full scholarship.

You've been on a prestigious exchange visit to the United States. Tell us about that experience.

The Mandela Washington Fellowship is a flagship programme of the US State Department and President Barack Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative. In line with its objective of "empowering the next generation of African leaders", this programme invited 500 Africans between the ages of 20-35 to be hosted by 20 major universities in the US for six weeks. A culmination of the programme was a town-hall meeting with President Barack



Obama. One hundred selected fellows then remained in the US for an additional six-week segment of professional development and I was one of them. All in all, standing tall on this prestigious platform was not only an honour, but a reminder of the responsibilities I have as a person, disability rights advocate, educator and a lifelong student who aspires for a better, inclusive Africa.

Are you a proud Matie?

Joining Stellenbosch University was, without any shred of doubt, a landmark in my academic trajectory and it takes a significant share in the accomplishments I've had hitherto, as well as in the journey ahead. I am grateful for the remarkable professors, staff and administration who strive, day in and day out, to make the University an inclusive arena of academic excellence. I am more than truly proud to be a Matie!

What drives you to succeed?

Growing up in Ethiopia with quite a complicated post-polio physical disability,

my parents and I had to deal with crippling prejudice and a myriad of misconceptions, mainly stemming from deep-rooted societal ignorance. I grew up noticing that most people never expected me to achieve anything more than earning a living wage someday. And it's precisely such perceptions, which, instead of holding me back, kept me pushing forward. An individual with a disability can indeed become a voice to be reckoned with; a source of pride to his/her family, continent and the world; a transcending role model to many. One should be thankful for people who are too quick to judge because their presence can be a blessing in disguise, showing us why giving up is simply not an option; why one must keep going onward and upward.

What do you still hope to achieve?

I feel that I am and have been on the right track. Being aware of your roadmap in life is in itself something. My plan is to do a PhD, specialising in developing context-specific tools of monitoring disability rights discrimination in Africa. Alternatively and until a PhD scholarship presents itself, I want to do a master's degree in law. This would help beef up my leadership role in current endeavours to influence governments and policy makers. A meaningful political representation of minorities such as persons with disabilities is essential if the system is to change for real. Lastly, I will continue to mentor youth with disabilities and advise disability-related initiatives and organisations.

Always a Matie film hits the big screen

Lights, camera, action!

Stellenbosch University has launched a series of short documentaries showcasing the personal stories of current and former Matie students and their experiences. The series titled **Always a Matie/Altyd 'n Matie** aims to address some of the curiosities of alumni regarding their alma mater, and to explore the central question of what being a Matie really means.

“Stellenbosch University is synonymous with academic excellence and innovation, picturesque campuses, well-equipped buildings and vibrant student communities.

But what are the lived experiences of current and former students? How have things changed and do we still deliver well-rounded graduates who are on a path to become captains of industry?” says Karen Bruns, SU’s Senior Director: Development and Alumni Relations.



“We decided to use the medium of film to explore these questions and enlisted the help of older and more recent alumni as well as current students to tell their stories,” she explains.

The first short films in the series specifically look at six areas, namely bursaries, disability, sport, innovation, student leadership and the arts, giving alumni and current students the opportunity to share the impact that the University has had on their lives.

The films feature SU’s Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Prof Wim de Villiers; two recent graduates of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Wandile and Wanele Ganya; Melanie Verwoerd, a student leader during the 1980s and former MP, diplomat and director of UNICEF Ireland; Axolile Qina,

current chairperson of SU’s Student Representative Council; Paralympics world champion Ilse Hayes, and artist Louise Gelderblom, to name but a few.

The films have been posted on our YouTube alumni channel:



Alternatively, a DVD of all six films can be obtained by e-mailing alumni@sun.ac.za.

Each of the Maties featured in the series thus far generously shared their personal journey with us. We invite you to suggest other stories that demonstrate what it means to be a Matie.

Alumni Office

Victoria Street, Admin B, 3rd Floor

