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Graduation week caps academic year in celebratory fashion

UCT has graduated a whopping 147 PhD candidates this year (75 at last week's graduation ceremonies), five more than last year.

A record nine of these came from the Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology.

They were among thousands of other students who closed the final chapter of their academic lives, donning hoods and gowns to be capped in the stately Jameson Hall from 8 to 12 December.

As has been the case for many years, the bulk of the students, 2 694, graduated from the larger humanities and commerce faculties (2 667, 2007).

Of the total number of 4 489 graduates (4 507, 2007), the Faculty of Commerce awarded 1 374 degrees and diplomas (1 326, 2007), including 533 Bachelor of Business Science and 307 Bachelor of Commerce degrees. The faculty also awarded six PhDs and 30 master's degrees.

The Faculty of Humanities had

1 320 graduates (1 341, 2007). Of these, 277 received Bachelor of Arts degrees. There were 14 PhD graduates, and 69 students were awarded master's degrees.

Graduates from the Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment numbered 671 (690, 2007). The faculty awarded 12 PhDs and 76 master's degrees.

The Faculty of Health Sciences had 427 graduates (460, 2007), including 165 MBChB graduates (169, 2007), 13 PhDs, and 31 master's degrees.

The Faculty of Law graduated 138 candidates (151, 2007), awarding 96 Bachelor of Laws degrees, 33 master's degrees and three PhDs.

Though the Faculty of Science's total number of graduates, 559 (538, 2007), was smaller than the bigger faculties, they produced the largest number of PhDs: 25 in all. The faculty also awarded 69 master's degrees. A total of 280 students received BSc degrees (307, 2007). MP



Honorary graduates

Two honorary degrees were also awarded at last week's ceremonies; a Doctor of Science (*honoris causa*), to Professor Jonathan Dorfan (8 December) and a Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*) to Claire Palley (12 December).

Dorfan obtained a BSc degree in physics and applied mathematics in 1969 from UCT, and later obtained a PhD in experimental particle physics from the University of California, Irvine. Upon acquiring his doctorate in 1976, Dorfan joined the Stanford Linear Accelerator Centre (SLAC) as a postdoc, and two years later as a staff scientist. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1984, full professor in 1989 and associate director in 1994. As SLAC director, Dorfan managed the most important transition in the history of the laboratory. Traditionally a single-purpose particle physics research centre, SLAC has become a multi-programme laboratory, whose largest programme in 2009 will be in Photon Science.



A South African, Palley was the first woman to become a law professor in the UK and the dean of a law school. She graduated LLB from UCT in 1952. In 1965 she obtained her PhD from the University of London. She has an MA from the University of Oxford (1984) and an LLD (*honoris causa*) from Queen's University, Belfast. She began her academic career as a lecturer in law at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1960 – 1965). After leaving Rhodesia, Palley moved on to a distinguished career as an academic. Between 1971 and 1973 she was Dean of the Faculty of Law at Queen's University. In 1974 she became Master of Darwin College, University of Kent at Canterbury, and from 1984 to 1991 was the Principal of St Anne's College, Oxford. She pioneered the way for women in academic law, in a profession known for its conservatism.

Sleepless nights for Student Records



Busy bees: Students Greta Clarence and Kefilwe Pitsie, seen here sorting transcripts, are among students who are helping the Student Records Department to ensure that graduation runs smoothly.

MYOLISI GOPHE

As Melanie Swinerd spoke, her left hand slowly massaged her neck while her right hand moved the mouse, her eyes glued to her computer screen.

Although she had agreed to an interview, she has little time to chat. She had been at work since 5.40 in the morning, and would stay till "late".

This is testimony to the frantic pace at the Student Records Department in the Office of the Registrar, in the run-up to graduation.

A week before the start of graduation was also the beginning of "two weeks

of 12-hour days" in which some employees report for duty as early as four in the morning and others leave at ten at night; and work over the weekend of 6 to 7 December.

This requires "superhuman efforts", added Dr Karen van Heerden, deputy registrar for academic administration.

The office, which is responsible for all student records, has three officials preparing programmes and student lists, three producing degree certificates, and six students assisting them.

In the process, the information has to be checked and double-checked. Some staff deal with logistics and must ensure that the venue is ready, gowns are ready for issuing, and that the necessary health and safety measures are in place.

A major challenge is that students change their minds all the time until the very last moments.

"Some would first say they would graduate in absentia. Then say they are coming and need two tickets. And then, no, they need four. Or sometimes they want their names on the certificates changed. We have to update our information until the last 10 minutes," Swinerd said.

"We feel compelled to go the extra mile to ensure that things run smoothly on the graduation day."

The job is stressful, but Swinerd says they do their best under the circumstances because they appreciate the hard work put in by students over their studies.

They get their reward when they see students graduating with big smiles. **MP**

Stepping out

SIVUYILE MANGXAMBA

A large proportion of UCT graduates from the past few years have successfully secured either employment or a place for further study, a graduate study has found.

The UCT Graduate Exit Survey, which measured a three-year cycle from 2004 to 2006, recorded that around 15 000 students had graduated. The study tracked the employment, location, incomes, and further study of nearly 9 000 of these.

Nearly 70% of the survey's respondents had secured employment by the time of graduation, while a similar proportion seeking to study further had secured a study place. However, the three-year trend shows a small but gradual decrease in respondents seeking employment, in favour of an increase in studying further.

A significant number of these graduates found work that was directly related to their field of study.

The report noted that there was a close relationship between respondents' studies and first-destination employment across the 2004–2006 period. Quite large differences between various qualification levels were noted, with half of the graduates doing a three-year bachelor's degree compared to 85% of professional first bachelor, respondents indicating that they had found work that was directly related to their field.

The study also found that 40% of the graduates earned less than R9 000 in their current jobs while 33% earned more than R12 000, with the income of the graduates varying considerably by faculty and qualification level.

More than two-thirds of the students in the survey rated what they

had studied at UCT as "adequate to excellent preparation" for employment.

In addition, "the overwhelming majority of the respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their overall experience of studying at UCT," says principal planning officer Ashraf Conrad.

According to the survey, "the trend of a large majority of respondents who are studying further opting to study at UCT was evident in all qualification levels and in respondents from all faculties".

When it came to preparations for further study, the report found that a large majority of the students felt that the university had prepared them adequately.

The full Graduate Exit Survey Trend Report is available on the UCT website under www.uct.ac.za/services/ip/iiu/reporting/destination. **MP**

The faculty that delivers



Baby doctor: Suki Goodman and little Amy Ray Distiller.

Producing a doctoral thesis is one thing, but to also produce a baby in a few months is quite another. There must be something in the air in the Section of Organisational Psychology at the Faculty of Commerce, because they seem to be in the business of producing successful women academics ahead of schedule.

Creator of both a thesis and a baby, virtually simultaneously, is senior lecturer Suki Goodman. The baby took her less than nine months to produce and the doctoral thesis was conceived and delivered within a gestation period of only two and a half years.

Little Amy Ray Distiller arrived on 4 September, about three weeks ahead of schedule, throwing a spoke in work plans. Fortunately her team ensured that everything in the section ran smoothly.

"It is unbelievable how supportive my colleagues have been to me, says Goodman. "The collegial support from the Department of Management Studies has been phenomenal – they took over my postgraduate supervision, course co-ordination and teaching."

She paid tribute to her supervisor, the head of the section, Professor Joha Louw-Potgieter, who had the foresight to encourage her to deliver the thesis before the baby.

Goodman registered for her

doctorate, titled *An Evaluation of a Social Context Training Programme for South African Magistrates*, in 2006, and worked solidly, without the benefit of a sabbatical.

"It is a great testament to my supervisor, Joha, who told me long before I fell pregnant that she could hear 'the pitter-patter of little feet'. Joha had the wisdom to push me and I am so grateful for getting her supervision. My doctorate is as much about my supervisor as it is about me."

Goodman's hard work has paid off, and she was recently promoted to senior lecturer. She is now spending her maternity leave putting the final touches to her thesis, as the Doctoral Degree Board has accepted the Committee of Assessors' recommendation that she be awarded her doctorate provided minor changes are made.

Although she is loving being a mother, she is also looking forward to being back in April 2009.

"I love what I do," she says. "I love coming to work every morning - which says a lot about the place where we work."

Said Louw-Potgieter: "Dr Sarah Riordan, another doctoral student who graduated from this section last year, did her thesis on successful women academics. I am very proud to say that in Organisational Psychology we do not just write about it, but we live it!" **MP**

Medical students raise funds for Thembacare

Final-year MBChB students at UCT have raised R12 000 for a charity that looks after HIV-positive and other children in need.

A cheque was handed to

Thembacare on 2 December.

The charity has two main establishments in the Western Cape, one in Bridgetown, Athlone, and the other in Grabouw. They

recently bought a six hectare farm in Grabouw, and the donation will be used to buy cots for the paediatric unit they are currently renovating.

Green Campus takes the initiative during exams

After diligently working throughout the semester, the thousands of students staying in UCT residences prepare for that period known as exams. While late nights, litres of coffee and living in the library are most commonly associated with this time of year, it also results in tons of waste paper thrown into rubbish bins. However, this year there was a difference.

During the recent exam period the Green Campus Initiative (GCI), a young organisation that aims to raise environmental awareness and make UCT carbon neutral, teamed up with Student Housing & Residence Life and volunteers from UCT residences to provide paper recycling throughout

15 residences.

Paper recycling bins were placed in the foyers of the participating residences and monitored by the respective representatives. The representatives notified GCI when the bins were full, and provision was made for collection.

The project was a resounding success, with support and enthusiasm from students far surpassing all expectations, reports the GCI. The bins routinely filled up within two days of being emptied, and there were even continued requests for paper recycling long after the bins had been removed. In total, approximately 1.4 tons of paper that would otherwise have gone

into landfill was collected, highlighting the students' demand for a more environmentally friendly campus.

Some of the collected paper was sold and some donated to the Oasis Foundation.

A big thank you goes out to all the students and staff who supported the project and made it such a success. This is only the beginning of an integrated campus-wide recycling system that will see the introduction of recycling bins on upper campus and recycling depots near residences during 2009, says the GCI. This will give students who would like to recycle the opportunity to do so throughout the year. **MP**

MBChB for epidemiologist

HELEN THÉRON

It's not often a lecturer finds himself in the same class as some of his students. As a fellow student, that is.

Associate Professor Landon Myer, an epidemiologist in the School of Public Health & Family Medicine, was among scores of MBChB students who graduated last week.

At 34 he's about 10 years older than the class average. But age and experience have given him an interesting vantage point, he says, the students' enthusiasm reminding him how easy it is to become "closed-minded" and jaded as a researcher and academic.

"It was fun and I developed some close friendships," he said.

While coping with the demands of medical studies, Myer worked as a part-time teacher and researcher in the school.

His research there focuses on the roles of infectious diseases (including HIV/AIDS, TB and sexually transmitted infections) in shaping individual and population health in southern Africa.

"I'm particularly interested in how the HIV epidemic influences other areas of population health, including women's reproductive health and mental health."

In investigating these topics, Myer's research incorporates



Med cred: Epidemiologist Assoc Prof Landon Myer graduated MBChB last week.

biological mechanisms, individual behaviours and exposures, as well as structural socioeconomic and health service conditions.

With his work grounded in the 'macro' elements of public health, the MBChB shifted his focus back to the health of the individual. It's an important balance, he says.

Myer also teaches in the Master's in Public Health programme on epidemiological methods, infectious diseases epidemiology and social epidemiology. Within the programme he convenes courses on advanced epidemiology and clinical research.

He's enjoyed a somewhat convoluted academic path. A South African-American (he was raised in the States), his first interest was in botany (his office in the Falmouth Building is shared with numerous potted plants).

In the mid 1990s he completed an MA in social anthropology at UCT and then became interested in the social aspects of HIV.

He went to work at the Medical Research Council in KwaZulu-Natal and from there he left for the States, where he completed his PhD in epidemiology at Columbia.

With a brand new medical qualification to add to his credentials, Myer pays tribute to the faculty and school's flexibility in making possible his dual academic life, particularly stalwarts like Rodney Ehrlich, Leslie London and Jonny Myers, for their support.

"It couldn't happen anywhere else." **MP**

Rhodes Scholarships for UCT graduates



Off to Oxford: Front, Jessica Auerbach, Bonolo Mathebela and Garikai Nyaruwata, and, back, Bronwyn Tarr and Vitaliy Volonkov are five of UCT's seven Rhodes Scholarship recipients.

Seven UCT graduates have scooped prestigious Rhodes Scholarships, which takes them to Oxford University in the UK to continue their studies in 2009. UCT picked up six of the 10 scholarships awarded to South Africans, with the seventh graduate hailing from Zimbabwe. Winners of the Rhodes scholarships, which cover all living, travel and academic expenses, are:

Jess Aurbach graduated with a Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) in anthropology and English, and is the recipient of a South Africa-at-Large Scholarship. She will continue her studies in forced migration in 2009. She says: "There is a real sense of directing Rhodes' legacy towards the strengthening of democracy now, and it's a great privilege to be part of that."

Simon Franklin graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce (Honours), and is the recipient of the Bishops Scholarship. He will begin his master's in economics in 2009.

Nicholas Friedman graduated with an LLB and is the recipient of the SACS Scholarship. He is currently working at the Constitutional Court and doing an LLM part-time through UCT. In 2009, he begins his PhD in legal philosophy. "I think that for all people who get the scholarship, it marks the beginning of an exciting career, rather than the culmination of one," he says.

Bonolo Mathibela gradu-

ated with a Bachelor of Science in mechatronics engineering, and is the recipient of a South Africa-at-Large Scholarship. She plans to continue her studies in robotics in 2009. She says: "I look forward to using the skills I will acquire, and those that I already have, in order to play my part in building the African continent."

Garikai Nyaruwata graduated with a Bachelor of Business Science and is the recipient of the Zimbabwe Scholarship. He will begin his MSc in economics in 2009.

Bronwyn Tarr graduated with a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in natural zoology and is the recipient of the St Andrew's Scholarship. She begins her master's in environmental change and management in 2009.

Vitaliy Volonkov graduated with a Bachelor of Business Science, and is the recipient of the Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia and Swaziland Scholarship. He will do his MSc in both economics for development and financial economics. **MP**

The 12-year-old University Science Humanities & Engineering Partnerships in Africa (USHEPIA) programme toasted its three latest doctoral graduates last week. That brings the total number of PhD graduates to have come through USHEPIA to 41. The newest additions are Dr Joseph Mulema and Dr Betty Owor, who both hail from Ugan-



da, and Dr Isabella Wachira of the University of Nairobi, Kenya. Mulema and Owor (in picture with UCT's USHEPIA manager, Nan Warner, centre) did their doctoral work in UCT's Department of Molecular and Cell Biology, while Wachira was based in the Department of Construction Economics and Management.

Two for McMahan

For many, doing one degree is hard enough – Peter McMahan makes two sound easy.

He has graduated with a master's degree in electrical engineering and has also submitted his thesis for a master's in computer science (though the examination for that has not yet been completed) – degrees he has worked on at the same time.

"One of the motivating factors in my getting involved was that I like to work on more than one project simultaneously," he explained.

"That way, if I get stuck on one project, I can switch to the other one. Usually the diversion will allow me to return to the original problem with

a clear mind."

However, this happened "accidentally".

McMahan, who has now received a Stanford Graduate Fellowship to pursue studies at Stanford University, worked on his electrical engineering thesis project from January 2007 until July 2008. For that course, he did his research work with the Karoo Array Telescope (KAT) project in Cape Town, which works closely with the Centre for Astronomy Signal Processing and Electronics Research (CASPER) at the University of California, Berkeley.

After a few months in Berkeley, he heard about a project that aimed to

investigate the feasibility of performing genome sequence alignment on a BEE2 computer.

"Since I was interested in this topic and had gained some experience in using the BEE2 from my astronomy work, I volunteered to help the group during my spare time on weekends. After I had spent a lot of time on the project, and the project was achieving some success, I realised that the work I was doing could probably form the basis of a decent masters. So I arranged with Dr Michelle Kuttel in the Department of Computer Science to supervise my thesis."

Writing reports for both theses was draining, however, he admits. **MP**

Trading places

Some 20 years ago, from 1983 to 1987, Johan Brink was a student in the medical class of Professor Dimitri Novitsky.

Until he left South Africa in 1987, Novitsky, a protégé of one Professor Chris Barnard, did groundbreaking research on the hormonal and other physiological effects of brain death on potential donor-organ function.

He came up with novel concepts of how to manage and treat donors for optimal donor-organ usage - not only for the heart, but also for the kidney and liver.

He left in 1987 to help Barnard set up a top heart-transplant unit in Oklahoma City in the US.

But recently, Brink and Novitsky met up again when the latter wanted to settle some unfinished business. About four or five years ago, Novitsky, Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery at the University of South Florida, asked Brink to supervise his




Swap: Prof Dimitri Novitsky and Assoc Prof Johan Brink.

research towards a doctoral degree at UCT. Brink, now associate professor in UCT's Chris Barnard Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, is also surgeon-in-charge of the heart transplant unit at Groote Schuur Hospital these days.

Novitsky had handed in an MD thesis before he moved to the US, explains Brink, but never got to the revisions the examiners had proposed.

Last week, Brink was on hand to watch Novitsky graduate with a doctorate in health sciences. (Novitsky was meant to graduate in June, but couldn't make the ceremony.)

It's a rarity, noted Brink, for a student to help a mentor finish a degree.



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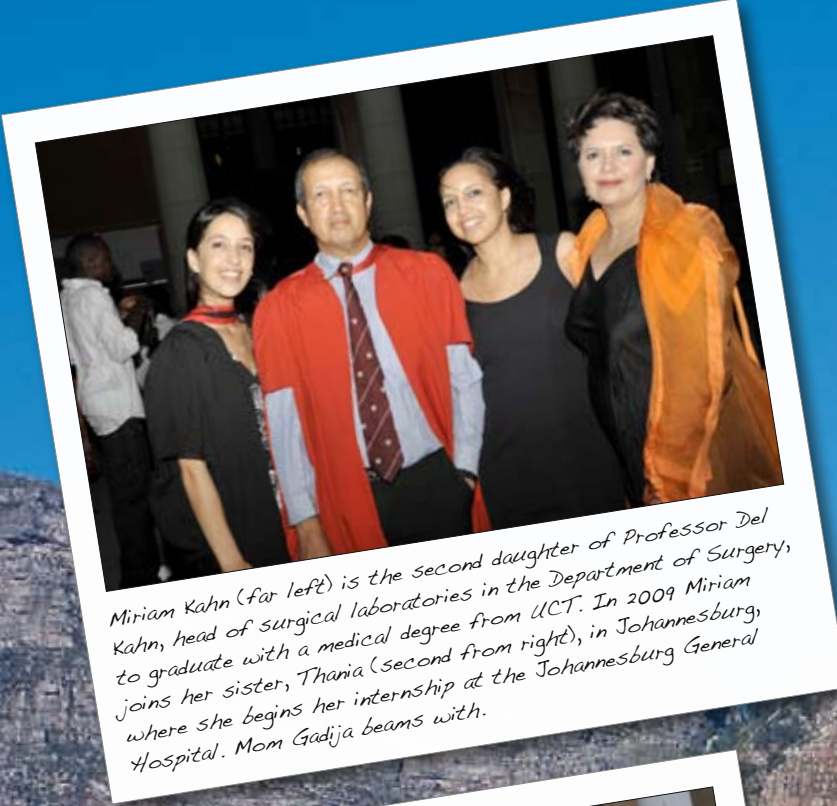
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All in the family

Family ties are strong at UCT. Among the many thousands of graduates, every year sees many proud parents gowning their sons and daughters - ditto for equally proud spouses, partners, siblings and other relatives gowning their spouses, partners, siblings and relatives - and this year was no exception. We likely missed quite a few, but here's a gallery of those we did get on camera:



Thabang Sekete, the son of Adjunct Professor Thandi Orleyn in UCT's Faculty of Law, graduated with a Bachelor of Social Sciences degree. Thabang is Orleyn's second son to graduate from UCT, and will be returning in 2009 to continue his studies in psychology.



Miriam Kahn (far left) is the second daughter of Professor Del Kahn, head of surgical laboratories in the Department of Surgery, to graduate with a medical degree from UCT. In 2009 Miriam joins her sister, Thania (second from right), in Johannesburg, where she begins her internship at the Johannesburg General Hospital. Mom Gadja beams with.



Teresa Cook, daughter of Professor Colin Cook, head of the Division of Ophthalmology in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Surgery, graduated with a Bachelor of Science (honours) in property studies. Tessa and dad are in picture with mom Myrna.



Dr Azila Reisenberger, head of Hebrew studies in the Faculty of Humanities' School of Languages and Literatures, has returned from China, where she was giving seminars and poetry readings, to attend her son Thomas' graduation. Thomas, who received his LLB, is Reisenberger's third child to graduate from UCT.



Jean-Luc Theron, son of Jacques Theron in the School of Architecture and Planning in the Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment, graduated with a Bachelor of Social Science.



Siona O'Connell, godchild of Professor Brian O'Connell, the rector and vice-chancellor of the University of the Western Cape, graduated with a master's degree in African studies, with distinction.



Lauren Steyn, daughter of Murray Steyn, marketing manager in UCT's Communications and Marketing Department, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in theatre and performance. With them is mom Tessa.



Ashraf Conrad, of the Institutional Planning Department, was there to gown sister Dr Ferozah Conrad, a doctoral graduate from the Department of Botany.



Prof Tim Myers of the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics celebrates with wife Marleen Myers, a master's graduate from the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology.



Dr Chris Lennard, who graduated with a doctorate from the Department of Environmental and Geographical Sciences, with wife Dr Jane Battersby-Lennard, a lecturer in the same department. (No, she wasn't his supervisor.)



Prof Les Underhill of the Animal Demography Unit, formerly the Avian Demography Unit, with daughter Jenny Underhill, a master's graduate from the Department of Botany.



Family way: Keith, Neil, Carol and Ross Balchin.

Keith Balchin of the Department of Mechanical Engineering has a lot to celebrate. His two sons, Ross and Neil, graduated this year, bringing his family's tally of UCT degrees to a round 10, plus a postgraduate diploma. Last week, Ross graduated with a PhD from the Department of Psychology, and Neil with a master's degree in economics. The family's scorecard looks as follows:

Carol Balchin (nee Hamilton)

BA (1973) and Higher Diploma in Librarianship (1974);

Keith Balchin

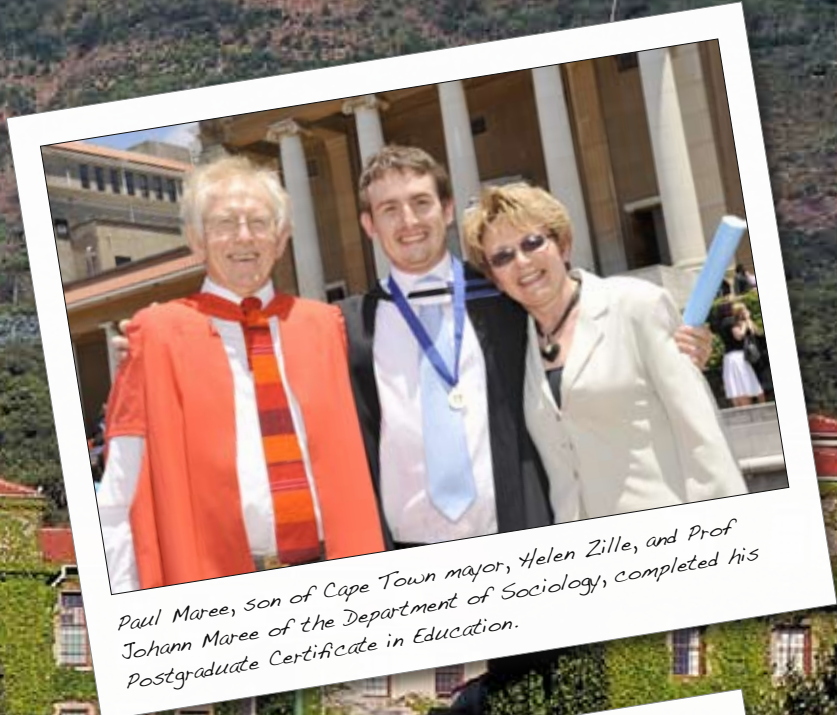
BSc Mechanical Engineering (1978) and Master of Industrial Administration (1986);

Ross Balchin

BSocSc (2001), BSocSc honours (2002), MA (2004) and PhD (2008);

Neil Balchin

BCom (2005), BCom honours (2006) and Master of Commerce (2008).



Paul Maree, son of Cape Town mayor, Helen Zille, and Prof Johann Maree of the Department of Sociology, completed his Postgraduate Certificate in Education.



Prof Marian Jacobs had two grad ceremonies to attend last Friday. That of the Faculty of Health Sciences, of which she is dean, and that of daughter, Tamlyn Roman, who completed her Bachelor of Social Science this year.



South African investors should have diversified international portfolios to benefit from the often volatile domestic markets, argues Nicholas Samouilhan, who graduated at UCT with a PhD in economics, in his thesis, *Risks and Returns in South Africa's Globalised Equity Market*.

"The more diverse assets you hold the less volatile

your portfolio, as assets will move in different directions. If one holding (say, an equity) falls, another one (such as a bond) will rise, partially offsetting each other. The key is to look for things that offer good returns and are not correlated. By investing abroad, local investors can further diversify their portfolios, lowering the risk that they take for each expected return."

Samouilhan, who did both his master's and PhD while working as a

lecturer in the School of Economics, produced four academic journal articles from his thesis, focusing on the risk and return behaviour of the local equity market, especially in its relationship with its international counterparts.

He found that while it is impossible to forecast market returns, the volatility of the domestic equity market could, to some extent, be forecast.

The positive relationship between

foreign and domestic returns is that in an increasingly integrated financial and economic world, much of the relevant information is global, said Samouilhan. This means that assets all over the world are increasingly reacting in the same way to the same information.

Samouilhan currently works for Investec in London.

His PhD was supervised by Associate Professor Corné van Walbeek.

Electrical Engineering graduate Marc Brooker is not one to waste time. After completing his BSc (Engineering) in 2005, he went straight to work as a postgraduate, and has already handed in his doctoral thesis.

This means he went from an undergraduate degree to completing his PhD in a mere two and a half years, which is almost certainly a UCT engineering record, and possibly an overall record for the university.

"Many of the issues I looked



at in my thesis haven't been covered extensively in the literature since the advent of cheap and plentiful computers, so the time was right for some real progress to be made in the field. I also had a student loan and bursary to pay off, so I was financially motivated to work hard and finish quickly."

Brooker's work is the upshot of funding he received from the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to

research computer simulation of signals from an arbitrary network of radar systems.

His thesis, *The Design and Implementation of a Simulator for Multistatic Radar*, covered the design of software for simulating radar systems at a signal level. His specific focus was on multistatic radar systems, and the timing issues that limit the performance of these systems in many cases.

The powerful and flexible simulation software described in his thesis

has been released as open-source software, which has been used at several centres of radar research.

Brooker is currently interested in cloud and cluster computing, and works at the Cape Town offices of Amazon.com, the leaders in this field, he says. He also plans to spend some time working on his hobby: designing and building hi-fi equipment.

Brooker's supervisor was Prof Mike Inggs of the Department of Electrical Engineering.

Whadi-ah Parker is a woman of many parts. A registered dietician who graduated from UCT with honours in 2002, she is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of the Western Cape and the Medical Research Council of South Africa. Last week she graduated with a PhD in medicine.

Parker completed her community service in Ulundi in KwaZulu-Natal, and laughingly explains how she came to be there: "It was a com-

plete pain initially. You are asked to complete a form stating your four choices of location for your community service. Each time, I was told that there were no openings in the locations I had chosen and eventually when they asked me to make a selection for the fourth time, I chose Ulundi, because it was the only name I could pronounce."

Her experience in this rural community setting increased her awareness of lifestyle diseases among the

people of South Africa and formed the foundation of her thesis, which assessed knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding lifestyle modification of health professionals and final-year medical and nursing students. She also identified patient preferences regarding health promotion materials and methods; and assessed conditions within the primary health care facilities she reviewed, to measure their capacity to facilitate education and counselling to patients.

Her findings have shown that there are improvements to be made in educating health workers about issues of lifestyle modification, and these recommendations are to be communicated to both health and education authorities to action.

Parker's supervisor was Professor Naomi Levitt.



For his doctoral thesis, *An Examination of Administrative 'Capacity' to Implement Development Programmes in South Africa*, Dr Vinothan Naidoo looked at the thorny issue of service delivery.

Naidoo sought to understand whether it was only lack of capacity that affected delivery, or whether there were other obstacles at play. He discovered that poor skills and an inadequate knowledge base among civil servants were far from the only problems. What hindered often very capable civil servants



from carrying out their duties properly were the structure of the bureaucracy and demands from politicians.

"Typically," Naidoo says, "there were conflicts of hierarchy. People in different positions who could influence policy implementation and thus slow down decision-making."

Or politicians would send a directive that had to be implemented in a specific way for a specific target group. "This might be difficult to implement because

the situation on the ground was not conducive."

Naidoo was born in South Africa but his family emigrated to Saskatchewan, Canada, where he grew up. He studied history and politics at the University of Saskatchewan, but was gripped by South Africa's political transition and decided to return here. He did a master's in political studies at Rhodes University, and is currently employed as a researcher at the Human Sciences Research Council.

For his research, Naidoo interviewed 45 senior civil servants

in various provincial and national departments. The programmes he focused on were the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme and the Expanded Public Works Programme.

Perhaps, with the elections coming up and lack of service delivery likely to loom large among voters' concerns, some of our political parties might care to take a look at his thesis.

Naidoo's work was supervised by Professor Robert Cameron of the Department of Political Studies.

In South Africa, modern work is performed in diverse ways, and the traditionally understood employment contract is no longer capable of accommodating these new forms of work.

This is the nub of Associate Professor Rochelle le Roux's highly commended PhD thesis, singled out by her supervisor, Professor Evance Kalula, as "one of the most impressive" he has supervised.

Le Roux, who heads the Department of Commercial Law,

was one of 75 PhD graduates who were capped last week - and one of the Faculty of Law's growing numbers of doctoral candidates.

"What I set out to do was to demystify the relevance of the contract of employment to show that the contract is not as important as the relationship between employer and employee," said Le Roux.

Her research has contributed an invaluable perspective on the employment contract, said law

dean, Professor Hugh Corder.

"Given the central importance of balancing socio-economic rights with the limited resources of our developing democracy, this topic is very much an issue of the day."

Le Roux's thesis explored three broad areas: the evolution of the employment contract in South Africa and the dichotomy between it and the independent contract; the forms of engagement of



workers in the South African labour market; and alternative regulatory models, with specific reference to models that are consistent with the South African Constitution.

Her research also showed that the diversification process will help redefine the employment contract, and extend labour legislation cover to those who "ought to be protected by labour laws".



Betty Owor has just completed a PhD in science at the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology with her thesis, *Maize Streak Virus (MSV) Diversity in Uganda and the Assessment of Gene Silencing as a Tool for Development of Resistance to MSV*.

Owor was born in Kampala, Uganda and obtained a BSc (honours)

in agriculture in 1999 and an MSc in crop science in 2003, both from Makerere University, Uganda.

In August 2004, she joined UCT under a University Science, Humanities and Engineering Partnerships in Africa (USHEPIA) fellowship for her doctoral work. In her research, she examined the problems experienced by Ugandan maize farmers with maize streak disease (MSD). MSD is caused by the maize streak virus, which is an important constraint to maize production in Africa.

Her thesis provides the first in-depth analysis of the epidemiology, diversity and genetic characteristics of MSV in that country. It also describes the development of a new virus sampling and isolation protocol that can be used by labs in resource-poor developing countries. This is considered the first proof-of-concept study showing that gene silencing may be a useful tool for developing MSV-resistant transgenic maize.

The findings of her study will be

useful to maize breeders involved in improving productivity of maize on the African continent.

Owor starts a postdoctoral degree at Cambridge University in January 2009. After her stint abroad she plans to return to Africa, where she feels she can make a difference and see the impact of her research on the lives of farmers.

Owor's supervisors were UCT's Prof Jennifer Thomson and Dr Dionne Shepherd, and Dr Richard Edema of Makerere University.

R50-million performing and creative arts institute a hub for talent

HELEN THÉRON

UCT will host a new hub for the creative and performing arts in the Mother City and South Africa, a facility that Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price has likened to London's Institute of Creative Arts.

This follows the launch of the Gordon Institute for Performing and Creative Arts (GIPCA) on 3 December, underpinned by a R50-million challenge grant from the Donald Gordon Foundation. It is the largest private foundation in South Africa.

Sir Donald Gordon, a South African businessman and philanthropist, is a renowned international patron of the arts. He founded the Liberty Group in South Africa and Liberty International in the UK.

Professor Pippa Skotnes, director of the Michaelis School of Fine Art, is the interim director of the institute.

Speaking at the launch, held on the Hiddingh campus, Price said the institute would create a cultural precinct at UCT and enhance "Creative Cape Town".

He praised the Donald Gordon Foundation for their foresight and imagination, saying that funders often targeted science and technology projects,



Taking off: students in action at the launch of GIPCA.

neglecting the cultural enterprises that "feed the soul".

Humanities dean, Professor Paula Ensor, said the facility is one of the most exciting developments since the faculty was formed in 1999.

"It builds on the creative energy of creative writing, drama, dance, film and media, fine art, music and the Baxter Theatre. The Gordon Institute not only enhances already outstanding work in the performing and creative

arts at UCT, but will also contribute in significant ways to the priorities of our city and province, as well as our country and continent, in the years ahead."

GIPCA will bring together various centres and departments in art and

production, and provide spaces for artists to work together.

The participating centres are: the South African College of Music, the Centre for Creative Writing, the Department of Drama, The School of Dance, the Michaelis School of Fine Art, the Centre for Film and Media Studies, and the Baxter Theatre Centre.

Importantly, the new institute will offer four post-master's level fellowships to bridge creative disciplinary boundaries. These candidates will work on year-long projects.

However, an avalanche of high-calibre applications delayed the announcement of the fellows on the evening.

Other programmes will include creative arts projects, stage conversations with visiting writers and artists, and a creative and performing arts archive and press.

Guest speaker Pieter-Dirk Uys said he hoped the institute would play its role in gathering and nurturing the country's talent.

"There is a black hole out there. So much talent wasted because we don't see it. There are so many important voices we need to hear." MP

a wrap-up • a wrap-up • a wrap-up • a wrap-up • a wrap-up



Dr Nick Kairinos (top), a UCT PhD student in plastic surgery and a registrar at Groote Schuur Hospital (GSH), has added four more awards to his growing collection. In October, he won the Stratmed Prize for Best Research Paper of the South African Society for Surgery of the Hand, and the Best Scientific Research Paper and Best Invention Award from the Association of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons of Southern Africa. (Kairinos also received third prize at the UCT Surgical Research Day.) His current research has resulted in the concept of a new type of vacuum dressing, which regulates its own suction pressure so that wound pressures are always optimal for healing. As a successful inventor, Kairinos has filed two patent applications through UCT's Research Contracts and Intellectual Property Services.

UCT's Brain and Behaviour Initiative hosted the annual Cross-University Brain & Behaviour Initiative (CUBBI) symposium at

Valkenberg Hospital on 28 November. CUBBI, which currently focuses on the study of the brain and its response to trauma, aims to establish a collaboration between researchers and departments across universities. The topic of this year's symposium was *Novel Approaches to Neuroimaging of Behaviour: an update*. Founding CUBBI researcher Professor Jack van Honk, of the Helmholtz Research Institute at Utrecht University in the Netherlands, delivered a keynote talk at the event.

Speaking at the opening of a mini symposium of Wellcome Trust supported research in the faculty, Professor Marian Jacobs, dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, praised the organisation for taking steps to ensure equitable funding, support and capacity building for the developing South. The symposium, held under the umbrella of the UCT Clinical Infectious Disease Research Initiative, led by princi-

pal investigator Prof Robert Wilkinson, was hosted by UCT's Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine (IIDMM). Earlier, a group of Wellcome Trust and UCT guests attended the opening of an extension to the Ubuntu Clinic in Khayelitsha.

Master's student at UCT's Centre for African Studies (CAS), Jennifer Hotsko, has applied her passions for photography and teaching in a visual literacy project for learners at Oscar Mpetha High School in Nyanga. Hotsko spent six weeks teaching 13 Grade-10 learners the craft of photography, then asked them to use their new skills to take photographs on a theme of their choice. Learners also kept journals in which they explained their photographs and why they had chosen them. Their work was put on display at the CAS Gallery on 1 December (below). "Learners chose themes which were concerns of their community, such as transport, work and pollution," explains Hotsko. "By photographing and writing on their perspectives of contemporary culture, learners are challenging historical representations of their environment." Hotsko plans to exhibit the

photographs and journals in her home country, Panama, when she returns this month, and also hopes to exhibit the work in the US.

Professor Bruce Bassett becomes quite animated when he talks about Einstein's Theory of Relativity.

Not only is his book *Introducing Relativity* ranked 17th on the best-seller list on amazon.co.uk for works on the subject, but it's just been translated into Italian by Gianbruno Guerriero.

Why Italian?

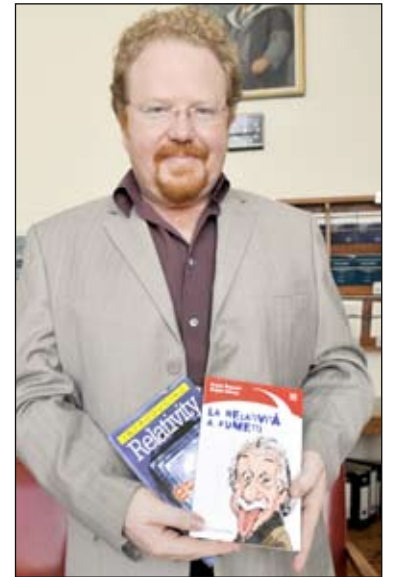
"To be honest, I'm not sure," said the mathematician and astronomer, "but I'm happy that after six years the book is sufficiently popular to warrant translating."

Bassett, who's based in the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics, was first approached by Icon books in 2001, on the back of other science outreach he'd done and really enjoyed.

Einstein's theory of relativity is described as one predicting that time does not flow at a fixed rate: moving clocks appear to tick more slowly relative to their stationary counterparts. But this effect only becomes really

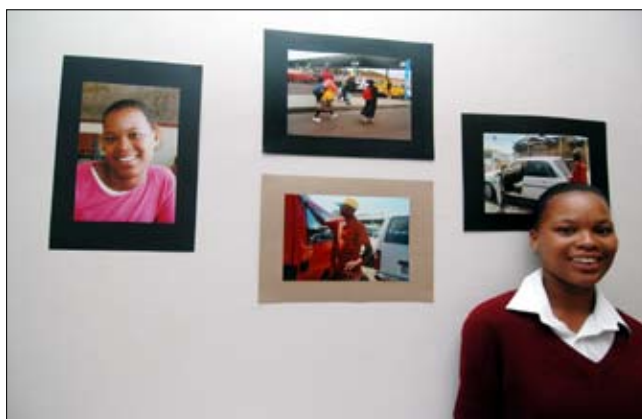
significant at very high velocities that approach the speed of light.

Unpacking this for a lay audience is not a particularly easy task. But for Bassett it was an opportunity to share some of the



thrill of a subject he loves.

"Conveying the beauty of physics to other people really appeals to some people and I happen to be one of them. On top of this, relativity is such a visual and beautiful theory that it was an exciting opportunity to break new ground in terms of making Einstein's work accessible to a wider audience." MP



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VC medal for Simpson

Professor John Simpson's contribution to UCT and beyond has earned him the Vice-Chancellor's Medal.

Simpson, deputy dean in the Faculty of Commerce, was praised for being a role model and an ambassador for good educational practice during his 35 years' service.

"As a renowned teacher he touched the lives of many students, often rated beyond the scale of excellence in his class evaluations and, as head of the School of Management Studies, he has been responsible for many innovations and developments within the school over the years," said Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price.

Simpson, who is also director of The UCT Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing, retires at the end of this year after a long and distinguished career in teaching, research and management.

He started as a part-time lecturer in 1969 and has held numerous leadership positions at the university, including being the chairperson of the UCT Sports Council.



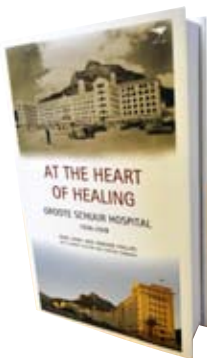
Sportingly: Prof John Simpson, left, on duty as chairperson of UCT's Sports Council.

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Research Contracts & Intellectual Property Services (RCIPS), UCT's office responsible for technology transfer, has made its presence felt in the Innovation Fund Most Innovative Higher Education Institution competition, collecting three awards. UCT received a certificate of recognition for coming second overall, and a R25 000 prize. It also won the Best Case Study category, as well as the category for the Best Improvement in Technology Transfer Capacity, winning R200 000 in each category.



There was standing room only at the launch of a book examining the history of Groote Schuur Hospital, titled *At the Heart of Healing: Groote Schuur Hospital 1938 - 2008*. According to Prof Howard Phillips of UCT's Department of Historical Studies, and co-author of the book with Prof Anne Digby of Oxford Brookes University, Dr Harriet Deacon and Kirsten Thomson, the long process began in 2005, drawing on voluminous archival material and many personal interviews,



to provide "a rich, probing history of Groote Schuur Hospital, in-the-round and in context". At the Heart of Healing provides a new kind of hospital history in its inclusive coverage of staff and patients. Phillips points out that the authors have taken particular pains to recognise both "beauty spots and warts" in their attempt to provide a balanced history of this landmark hospital.

Oceanographers from UCT and the Leibniz-Institut für Meereswissenschaften (IFM) in Kiel, Germany, have discovered that processes in the Agulhas Current System east and south of Africa influence changes in the Gulf Stream, the Northern Hemisphere's main current. This has important implications for climate in the Northern Hemisphere. The researchers were able to study these currents in greater detail thanks to a new computer programme. The results were published in *Nature* and *Geophysical Research Letters*. Their "unexpected and surprising" discovery showed that small fluctuations in the Agulhas Current south of the country have an influence all the way into the North Atlantic Ocean. Like the Gulf Stream, the Agulhas Current is one of the strongest currents in the world ocean. The finding has important consequences for observational programmes in the North Atlantic that attempt to determine "much feared" long-term climatic changes in the Gulf Stream system. "South Africa is located at a critical crossroad of world ocean currents that impact on climate and climate change," said UCT's Prof Johann Lutjeharms.

Rob Watermeyer, who received an award for the best body of undergraduate work at the Michaelis School of Fine Art's recent graduate exhibition, has won a prestigious Tierney Fellowship. The fellowship included a spot at the Tierney workshop

in Johannesburg, which he attended with his mentors and senior lecturers in photography, Svea Josephy and Jean Brundrit. The workshop gave fellows and mentors an opportunity to discuss their work. Tierney fellowships, created in 2003 by the US-based Tierney Family Foundation to support emerging artists in the field of photography, have been awarded to selected students from prominent art schools and universities in South Africa, Mexico and the US.

Fifty-eight UCT staffers who completed the isiXhosa course this year were awarded their certificates at a ceremony on 27 November. The Masithethe isiXhosa course for beginners and intermediate learners, which was completed by (below)



Tracey Dennis and Gadija Arend, was run by the Centre for Higher Education and Development's Multilingualism Education Project during the first and the second semesters this year. The three-month course is aimed at developing a multilingual institutional environment at the university. It was first launched in 2006, and since then over 450 staffers have participated. Although the medium of communication at UCT is English, the Language Plan indicates the need

to use other languages, especially isiXhosa and Afrikaans.

UCT's Prof Etienne van Heerden has released his latest Afrikaans novel, *30 Nagte in Amsterdam*. The novel (literal translation, '30 Nights in Amsterdam') is the multi-award-winning Van Heerden's 24th Afrikaans book and 11th novel. It tells the story of Henk de Melker, lowly museum assistant and writer of wafer-thin biographies of obscure historical figures - like a proposed piece on Vincent van Gogh's lesser-known sibling, Cornelius - who learns that his late aunt Zan has left him a house in Amsterdam. He visits the house, and through his encounters with a rogue's gallery of pickpockets, prostitutes and street musicians over 30 days in the city's byways, he learns more about himself and of the scandalous Zan; actress, activist, sensualist and long-gone outcast from the Eastern Cape dorpie of his childhood. "As he confronts Zan's past, he also looks differently at his own," notes Van Heerden.



Grant Willis has been appointed as the director of Student Housing & Residence Life in the Department: Student Affairs (DSA), effective December 2008. Willis has served in Student Housing as deputy director, and more recently as projects /operations manager. "Grant is widely admired for his dedication and integrity in addressing the student interest regarding student housing challenges," said Moonira Khan, DSA executive director.

UCT's School of Economics ruled this year's Economic Society of

South Africa meeting, scooping gold, silver and bronze accolades. The medals are awarded to top postgraduate students in the country. Dr Shakill Hassan won a gold medal for the best doctoral thesis with his dissertation, *Applications of continuous-time methods to dynamic rivalry in oligopoly*; and an essay on the monetary policy response to currency crisis. The silver medal, for the best master's dissertation in partial fulfilment of the degree, went to Neryvia Pillay for her work, *Theory-Consistent Formal Risk Measures: using financial market data from a middle income context*. Arden Finn's thesis on *The Role of Education in Labour Market Inequality in South Africa: ten-year analysis of employment and earnings changes* completed the winning streak with the ABSA prize for the best honours dissertation.

No fewer than seven UCT rugby players featured in the International Rugby Board Sevens World Series in George on 5 to 6 December, including new England cap Mathew Turner. Three Ikeys players - Kyle Brown (in picture), Mpho Mbiyozo and Paul Delpont - turned out for the Springbok team that won the tournament with a 12-7 victory over New Zealand. It was the first time South Africa had won the IRB tournament at home, and also the first time that they had put two successive wins together after triumphing in Dubai a week earlier. UCT was also well represented in the United States Sevens team, with current Ikeys captain Jonathan 'JJ' Gagiano, Dallen Stanford and Matt Hawkins donning the US' stars and stripes. **MF**

