

Monday Paper

Newspaper of the University of Cape Town

GRAD
EDITION

15 June - 26 July 2009

Volume 28#09



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

Bumper crop of PhDs at June grad

Jameson Hall put on its ceremonial cloak again last week, capping a bumper corps of 78 PhD candidates, part of the cohort of 1 273 students capped at UCT's mid-year June graduations on 11 and 12 June.

The bumper crop of students who received their degrees and diplomas was up from 1 113 students last year, and 1 092 in 2007.

In the lead was the Faculty of Commerce with 627 graduates, followed by the faculty of Humanities with 209, the Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment with 134, the Faculty of Health Sciences with 109, the Faculty Science with 101, and the Faculty of Law with 92.

In keeping with the annual trend, this June graduation was marked by a high number of postgraduate students finishing their studies, their theses and dissertations stretched over the academic semesters.

The provisional PhD counts for the various faculties are: 23 for science, 20 for the humanities, 14 for health sciences, 12 for commerce, six for engineering and the built environment, and three for law. **MP**



Honorary doctorates for two

UCT conferred two honorary doctorates at its mid-year graduation ceremonies. For his contribution to education and democracy, Richard Dudley was awarded a DEd (honoris causa) at his home in April, due to illness. He died on 31 May. Professor Gavin Mooney, a "founding father of health economics", received a DSocSc (honoris causa)

UCT alumnus, **Richard Dudley's** 39-year teaching career at Livingstone High in Cape Town is widely recognised as the foundation upon which hundreds of former pupils built success in a wide range of professional and academic fields, here and internationally.

By providing an alternative to the curricula of the Coloured Affairs Department during the apartheid years, and by his involvement with the Teacher's League of South Africa, Dudley galloped both the authorities and his immediate supervisors.

It was this philosophy that ensured that Dudley never became principal, even though he was eminently qualified for the job. He was banned in 1961, along with 200 other teachers, but was allowed to continue teaching.

Under his influence, Livingstone High became one of the foremost high schools in the country, and one of the most important feeder schools to UCT.

He taught his pupils to think, and

to analyse the world around them critically. Many of his Livingstone pupils became academics and reached



The late Richard Dudley.

professorial level, and he was responsible for nurturing and encouraging a significant number of academics and scholars who today serve the University of Cape Town.

At the heart of Dudley's thought and writing lay the clear argument that contemporary sociology and anthropology were promoting incorrect biologised notions of race, and that

race as an inherent and naturalised feature of who we are as human beings was a falsehood. This view was developed into a full-blown theory of social change – that of non-racialism.

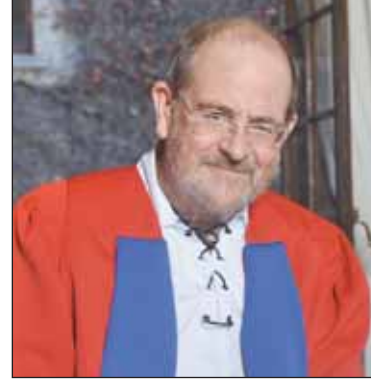
Dudley held five other qualifications from UCT: a BSc (1943), MSc (1944), BEd (1963), BCom (1964) and a Certificate in Secondary Teaching (1966).

Prof Gavin Mooney is one of the founding fathers of health economics. He has held the position of Professor of Health Economics at the University of Copenhagen, the University of Sydney and, most recently, Curtin University in Perth.

Mooney has made an exceptional contribution to scholarship and the discipline of health economics, both internationally and at the University of Cape Town.

One of his most important contributions has been to open up for debate the value base of the discipline, through challenging the prevailing orthodoxy of prioritising efficiency over equity considerations

in health care decision-making. His exploration has culminated in a book to be released by Oxford University



Prof Gavin Mooney.

Press in 2009, *Challenging Health Economics*.

Mooney has trained and mentored hundreds of young health economists, many of whom are now leaders in the discipline in their own right. He is regarded as one of the leading health economics educators in the world and has taught on postgraduate programmes in nearly 30 countries.

It is due in no small part to Mooney disseminating his knowledge in accessible forms that the discipline of health economics was able to take root in South Africa.

Mooney's conceptual and methodological contributions have particular relevance to a country such as South Africa. In the context of the income, social and health inequalities existing in South Africa, it is critical that efficiency concerns be balanced with equity concerns. Specific analytic tools developed by Mooney have been adopted by the South African Department of Health in supporting the development of historically under-resourced districts.

Since the mid-1990s he has been a frequent visitor to the UCT Health Education Unit. His support and contribution have enabled this unit to become one of the pre-eminent health economics institutions to be found in low- and middle-income countries. (For their citations, please visit <http://www.uct.ac.za/about/honours/degrees/>) **MP**

UCT values donors



Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price and UCT's Department of Alumni and Development (DAD) hosted a breakfast for donors on 9 June. Speaking on the topic *Funding*

Higher Education in South Africa: Challenges for the New Government and Universities. Price outlined the necessity for donor support and the vision for UCT's future. "The fee system should be kept in place, but the financial aid scheme needs to be boosted," he argued. "Donor support is a mainstay of that." Attending the breakfast were (front, from left) John Matthews, Price, Zinzi Mgolodela, and (back) Anthony Farr, Rob Otty and DAD executive director Dr Jim McNamara. **MP**

Spread of Africa Day celebrations

Africa Day, commemorating the formation of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963, was celebrated in grand style at UCT on 25 May. The celebratory events included a postgraduate cultural evening, a panel discussion chaired by Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo, and an exhibition of UCT projects in Africa and the university's many academic partnerships across the continent. Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price opened the exhibition and delivered a short address before guests tucked into the sumptuous African dishes at the celebratory cocktail party. Among the guests were (above,



from left) Jorg-Werner Marquardt, Consul-General of Germany, and

Mathokoza Nhlapo, photographed with Price. **MP**

Refugee Rights website goes live

HELEN THÉRON

The UCT Law Clinic has launched its new Refugee Rights Project website, thanks to weeks of hard work by the clinic's communication strategist, Johannes Sieverding.

Sieverding is a third-year student of international communication at Hanze University Groningen in the Netherlands. He is in Cape Town as part of the mandatory year-abroad programme required by his course, and has been working at the Law Clinic as an intern for five months.

This stint came on the heels of a six-month study sojourn in Macau, China.

"It's been an interesting journey from one culture to another," Sieverding said.

The website will act as an impor-



On the web: Johannes Sieverding, with Refugee Rights Project head Fatima Khan.

tant communication tool to showcase the full gamut of work done by the Law Clinic, as well as their contributions to the faculty's research endeavour, and will be a valuable tool for scholars and clients of the clinic.

To visit the site go to www.refugeerights.uct.ac.za **MP**

The health system of powerlessness

There is often a "vicious cycle" of power and distrust between patients and health care providers in Africa, often fed by another problematic cycle between employers and providers.

So said Professor Lucy Gilson in her inaugural lecture, *Providers, Patients and Power: Why trusting relationships matter to health systems*, on 27 May.

There is a general sense of "powerlessness" among the role-players in the health sector, said Gilson, whose findings are based on more than 20 years' work in research and academic environments in Tanzania and South Africa. Gilson noted that patients often experience health facilities as a place of powerlessness and vulnerability, of risk – not of healing.

"At times of sickness we're all



particularly vulnerable, but patients often feel themselves subject to the whims of 'provider power', she said. "Not surprisingly, such experi-

ences don't inspire patient trust in the provider."

Gilson said her research showed that most nurses distrusted their employer because they felt let down, uncared for and powerless to do anything.

However, Gilson added, local managers sometimes interrupt the vicious cycle between employers and providers, mediating between the two, and even encouraging a cycle of trusting interaction.

"But managers must be backed by frameworks and structures that allow decision-making autonomy and ensure accountability."

She also proposed concerted efforts to manage policy implementation better, and to engage communities and civil society organisations, among other initiatives. **MP**

awards • awards • awards • awards • awards • awards

One for the books



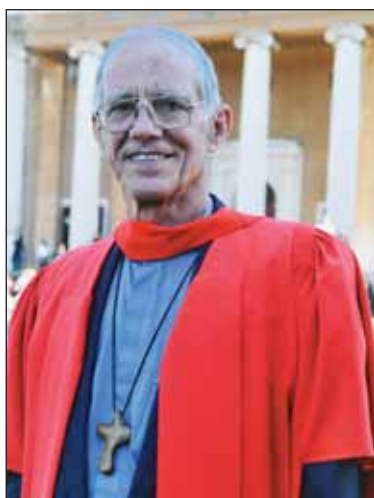
It doesn't happen too often, but this year the UCT Book Award went to two scholars, both honoured at Friday's graduation ceremony. Prof Nigel Penn of the Department of Historical Studies and Prof Pippa Skotnes of the Gordon Institute for Performing and Creative Arts were both named winners of the award, which recognises the publication of outstanding books written by members of faculty. Penn was fêted for his book, *The Forgotten Frontier: Colonist and Khoisan on the Cape's Northern Frontier in the 19th Century*, and Skotnes for her title, *Claim to the Country: The Archive of Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd*. *Claim to the Country* has also won this year's Outstanding Academic Title award from *Choice Magazine*. **MP**

Medal for activist

Dr David Russell's decades-long fight against apartheid was honoured by UCT when he was awarded the President of Convocation Medal at the graduation ceremony on Friday 12 June.

The medal is awarded annually to UCT graduates who have brought credit to the university by their contributions to the wider community. As a young priest in the 1970s, Russell, a former Anglican Bishop of Grahamstown who obtained his BA and PhD in religious studies from UCT in 1959 and 1985, respectively, made headlines as a prominent anti-apartheid activist, long before churches spoke out strongly against the apartheid regime.

He gained world prominence for lying down in front of bulldozers to protest against forced removals of people of colour from segregated



areas in Dimbaza in the Eastern Cape.

Previous recipients of the medal include Sir Aaron Klug, Mark Shuttleworth, Judge Pat Tebbutt and the Minister of Economic Development, Ebrahim Patel. **MP**

VC's Medal for Tindale



At the UCT Trust's recent Annual meeting in London, Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price (left) awarded

the Vice-Chancellor's Medal (Silver Award) to Sibylla Tindale, outgoing and founding director of the UK-based UCT Trust. Price praised the trust's work and particularly Tindale's enthusiasm, love for UCT and her drive to achieve "significant support" for the university. In his ovation, former vice-chancellor and founder of the trust Dr Stuart Saunders (right) said Tindale had been instrumental in raising some £18 million (approximately R270m) for UCT projects over the past 18 years. **MP**

Moment in time

Professor Judith Sealy, head of the Department of Archaeology, received her UCT Fellows Award at the science graduation ceremony on Friday 12 June. Sealy was abroad at the time of the previous graduation ceremony, at which the award would have been conferred. **MP**



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by Andre P Brink

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The book will be on sale at the event. All are welcome and entry is free.



High honour for Salazar



Honoured: Bridget Oppenheimer presented the Harry Oppenheimer Fellowship Award to Dist Prof Philippe-Joseph Salazar (middle). Prof Wieland Gevers (right), secretary-general of the Academy of Science, delivered the citation.

HELEN THÉRON

Distinguished Professor Philippe-Joseph Salazar has won the prestigious Harry Oppenheimer Fellowship Award (2008), only the third UCT scholar to do so after Professors Igor Barashenkov and Frank Brombacher were named recipients in 2004.

The award will allow him to pursue his research interests in the US.

Salazar is a Life Fellow of the university, and is director of the Centre of Rhetoric Studies.

The awards, initiated by the Harry Oppenheimer Trust in 2001, are aimed at supporting individuals who make significant contributions to South African public life.

"My main concern, as I contem-

plated applying, was that the trust may take a popular view on social relevance," said Salazar. "I was mistaken. In keeping with Harry Oppenheimer's humanism, the trust has an elevated understanding of the rapport between scholarship and engagement."

The accolade comes on the heels of an A1 rating from the National Research Foundation.

"Taken together, it means that my field of scholarship – rhetoric – has gained the sort of high recognition one is otherwise led to expect from traditional disciplines."

His work is particularly relevant to South Africa's developing democracy.

"The award will enable me to begin research, while in residence

at George Washington University, toward a book primarily focused on rare documents concerning George Washington – as a template for understanding what I call presidential ethics.

"I would think presidential ethics has local relevance, in the same way that the book I have just completed, *Hypertalk: Political technologies*, will, hopefully, be of relevance to French presidential rhetoric."

Salazar dedicated the award to his graduate students, who "although few in numbers, have made the bold choice of studying rhetoric, have brilliant careers in business and public service, and have shown how a complex and rare discipline, by and large ignored by South African academia, can yield the highest returns". **MP**

The battle of the bandwidth

Internet access speed remains one of the biggest sources of complaints on campus and UCT has been waiting for an improvement, expected this month. This massive increase in bandwidth availability will be brought about by a combination of the Seacom cable landing in South Africa and the linking of South African tertiary institutions via SANReN (the South African Research Network).

Unfortunately, delivery dates have slipped. Information from TENET indicates that UCT may only see a significant increase in bandwidth by March 2010. That's the expected date that UCT will switch from Neotel infrastructure to SANReN infrastructure.

"Disappointing though this may be in the short term, it will definitely be worth waiting for, so great is the increase in bandwidth availability and speed expected to be," said Sakkie Janse van Rensburg, executive director

of Information and Communication Technology Services.

According to the Meraka Institute, who are contracted to deploy and manage SANReN, their first priority is to provide a very high-speed, nationwide backbone network with Points of Presence in all major cities. As regards connecting sites, because emphasis is placed on research, preference is being given to connecting institutions that are currently busy with or could potentially be involved in scientific research activities.

So, what's the delay? A key milestone is the point at which both Seacom and the SANReN Backbone will be commissioned. This is expected to be in June or July 2009.

Once this has been achieved, Meraka's efforts can be directed to connecting the various institutions to SANReN.

"Providing a link from the Point

of Presence to the local access point (in our case UCT) is the tricky part," Janse van Rensburg said. "Referred to as the 'last mile connection', it requires input from many stakeholders: city planners, construction companies and network vendors, among others."

There is some good news, though. UCT won't have to wait to be connected to SANReN before it sees improvement. TENET has indicated that international bandwidth will be "plentiful and cheap" when Seacom and the SANReN backbone have been commissioned.

"If UCT spends less on international bandwidth, then we can spend more on national bandwidth. That'll be a welcome reprieve while we wait for SANReN," said Janse van Rensburg.

(Please refer to <http://protea.tenet.ac.za/cgi/cgi-sanren.exe> for updated information.) **MP**

Price on higher education



On the same page: VC Dr Max Price addressing the National Press Club of South Africa.

UCT's contribution to 'free' higher education and its difficulties with transformation were two of the topics that Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price tackled when he addressed a National Press Club of South Africa meeting on 2 June.

Price noted his support for the recent split of the national Department of Education into two – the Ministry for Basic Education and the Ministry for Higher Education and Training.

On the recently raised issue of free education up to a first degree, Price ex-

plained how, through its own financial aid scheme and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, UCT helps disadvantaged students get into higher education. The current funding system allows universities to "differentiate" their offerings and fees, and compete for students, he argued.

"I don't think there's any difference between Minister Blade Nzimande's position and my position with respect to the goal," Price said. "What we all want is that poor students should have access to higher education." **MP**

Fourth edition of gauge on children launched

This week UCT's Children's Institute launches the 2008/2009 *South African Child Gauge*. Themed essays in the issue focus on children's right to basic education. In a twist of fate, President Zuma announced the establishment of two ministries of education just as the Child Gauge was about to go to press.

Some very small additions acknowledged this change, said co-editor Professor Shirley Pendlebury.

She said that while it is too soon to tell how effective the new structures will be in addressing critical issues in South Africa's education system, the creation of a department of basic education suggests government is cognisant – and indeed proactive – about a number of concerns highlighted in this year's *Child Gauge*.

The publication is considered by many academics and policymakers to be an annual snapshot of the situation of South Africa's children.



Child watch: (From left) Lori Lake, Prof Shirley Pendlebury and Charmaine Smith, co-editors of the 2008/9 *South African Child Gauge*, their fourth such publication.

The latest issue contains three standard features: key legislative developments affecting children; 'meaningful access to basic education', a collection of nine themed essays that tease out the elements of 'meaningful'; and the hard numbers – sets of key indicators on children's socio-economic rights.

Though South Africa's school enrolment figures for grades R to 9 look healthy (96%), there's a sharp decline for grades 10 to 12 (86%). There are 408 000 children who don't attend school.

National literacy and numeracy tests show poor ratings in grade 3 and grade 6.

But it's meaningful access that still hamstrings results. Overall, in South African schools, the link between access and success is much weaker than in less-resourced schools in Southern Africa.

"In countries like South Africa, access to schools is more elusive in concept and in practice than is often assumed in government policy. Cultural, economic and health factors all play a major role in whether children attend and remain at school," says Pendlebury.

"Children from middle-class, literate families are much more successful in accessing formal knowledge than children whose parents are illiterate ... able-bodied children have better access to educational facilities than those with physical disability."

South Africa is still the only country in Africa that produces an annual evaluation of the situation of its children. **MP**

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Cluver among galaxy of stars at Caltech

HELEN THÉRON

Somewhere in the Zone of Avoidance in the plane of the Milky Way lies what Dr Michelle Cluver calls the Coelacanth Galaxy. That's its unofficial name and, much like the prehistoric fish it's named after, it's a rare and unexpected phenomenon in the local universe.

With its enormous gas disk, the Coelacanth Galaxy is actively converting gas into stars.

"If this galaxy represents what we think it might, it would be equivalent to catching a coelacanth today, because these types of galaxies are extinct and we don't see them in the local universe," says the new UCT PhD, who graduated *in absentia* last week.

Now a postdoctoral researcher at the Infrared Processing and Analysis Centre at the prestigious California Institute of Technology (Caltech) where she continues to study the HIZOA J0836-43 galaxy (Coelacanth's scientific name), Cluver has an impressive platform for her work.

"In the local universe are regions of high and low mass density, forming spectacular cosmic webs of clusters, filaments, walls and voids. The Coelacanth is located on the edge of a particularly low density or 'void' structure and we think this has everything to do with its evolution and survival," she explains.

From this galaxy, scientists hope to learn more about how galaxies formed and grew in their early evolution.

Cluver is only the second PhD – and the first woman – to have emerged from the National Astrophysics & Space Programme (NASSP) stream.

NASSP is a newish consortium



Gateway to science: Dr Michelle Cluver, who obtained her PhD through the Department of Astronomy, supervised by Prof René Kraan-Korteweg.

of institutions offering honours and master's programmes in astronomy. Among other goals, it aims to produce more PhDs, adding to the local and broader African astronomy community. The first PhD from the stream, Dr Bob Osano, lectures at UCT.

"All galaxies started off as concentrations of gas, and we hope to learn more about how they turned

them into stars and built disks, making them look like the beautiful spiral galaxies we see today."

It was the Coelacanth Galaxy's massive gas disk that led to its discovery by a radio survey of the Zone of Avoidance (a band within the Milky Way's plane through which few extragalactic objects can be seen at visible wavelengths, because of interstellar dust), and, more impressively, nestled behind the famous Vela Supernova Remnant in the Milky Way.

"The fact that it has such a large gas reservoir is what makes it resemble galaxies that would have been ubiquitous in the earlier universe," says Cluver.

"Spiral galaxies generally have a bulge and a disk – making them look a little like fried eggs. This galaxy has a prominent bulge and appears to be building its disk, so it's 'growing' into a big spiral galaxy that will someday have many more stars than the Milky Way does."

If the galaxy had formed in a denser setting, it's likely that it would not have survived. It's also likely this galaxy cannibalised several smaller galaxies, and in doing so, accreted its gas disk over billions of years.

"Because this process has been undisturbed, it gives us an opportunity to see how early galaxies may have formed giant gas reserves and, subsequently, stars."

Is building the South African astronomical community a luxury for a continent burdened by disease and famine?

Cluver thinks not. "Although astronomy and science research may not provide immediate relief for socio-economic problems, not investing in science negatively impacts our country in the long run. And astronomy is a gateway to science for the public." **MP**

Sabwa graduates against all odds

MYOLISI GOPHE

Xenophobic attacks and his initial patchy English could not stop Jean-Marie Sabwa from conducting groundbreaking research on spaza shops and completing his studies at UCT.

Last week Sabwa, who hails from the Democratic Republic of Congo, completed a troubled journey when he obtained his master's in operational research from the Department of Statistical Science.

No mean feat given that he failed three courses out of 10 in his first year because he could not do presentations in English.

And last year he lost all his belongings of his Philippi home, including a laptop and a computer containing all his work, when his family was displaced in the widespread xenophobic violence.

That, naturally, took a toll on him, but Sabwa never thought of quitting.

"And the important thing is that we are all still alive."

Fortunately, his supervisor had copies of his research. Sabwa has put that experience behind him, and is happy to graduate, hoping to make a difference to the society that, for all appearances, despised him.

His research, after all, focused on those most iconic institutions in poor residential communities, the spaza shops.

Having noticed a lack of documentation of spaza shops, and that they are generally unknown even in their locations, Sabwa investigated how these businesses could be more successful.

"Basically, I tried to check how and which areas we should focus on and improve," he explained.

There are some 144 000 spaza shops in the Western Cape, and Sabwa believes it is a huge market that can help deal with unemployment, and perhaps even turn informal traders into prosperous business people in the formal sector.

"This can be a boom industry. If half of the spaza shops can be formalised and each can employ one person, how many jobs can be created?"

"Most of the traders take their businesses as something to put food on their table. They don't see that they can be the Bill Gates of tomorrow," he adds.

There are multiple issues facing the sector but the key problem is the lack of business management skills among owners, Sabwa found.

As a possible solution, he has developed an intervention model that suggests



Spaza bonanza: "This can be a boom industry" – Jean-Marie Sabwa.

that wholesalers, financial institutions, government, non-government organisations and higher education institutions should work together instead of each trying to intervene on its own, on one hand. On the other hand, Sabwa attempted to determine the indicator(s) of performance in these businesses and set up some strategic measures on stocking and ordering issues.

"They should focus on providing shop owners with management skills and monitoring their progress." **MP**

Child labour: Exploitation, or essential socialisation?

DANIELLA POLLOCK

The institutionalised elements of international law on child labour are at odds with Southern African cultures. This is the view of Tendai Nhenge-Chakarisa, a senior researcher in the Children's Rights Programme at the Children's Institute, and a PhD law graduate.

Her thesis, *Application of the International Prohibition of Child Labour in an African Context: Lesotho, Zimbabwe and South Africa*, juxtaposes Western and African ideas of child rearing, and explains how, from one point of view, a child's working around the home or in the fields can be construed as economic exploitation; but, from another point of view, as beneficial socialisation.

"As children, we used to do chores at home," says Chakarisa.

"I believed that I had received a normal upbringing. It was only during my studies that I realised that some child-raising methods were – under international law – viewed as detrimental."

Being Zimbabwean-born and having studied at the National University of Lesotho and UCT, Chakarisa says that these countries have similar cultures, languages and child-rearing methods.

"The anthropological writings from these countries on this topic were easy to compare," she adds. "And there is a definite discord between international human rights instruments and these cultures."

Is it due to the moral failings of African society, or is it that in these cultures, the concept of 'child labour' does not exist? she asks.

"Some of these African languages do not even have the vernacular equivalent of 'child labour', and where they do, it doesn't have a negative connotation," she explains.

Chakarisa does not dispute that these international measures are in place to prevent exploitative child labour. Her primary concern is, rather, that these laws are based



African spin on Western norms: Tendai Nhenge-Chakarisa argues that international laws on child labour need to be Africanised, and then sub-regionalised to make provision for Southern African cultures.

on Western norms, and show little regard for African custom.

"At present, one law applies to all. Developing states seldom had much say in the process of drafting the human rights conventions, and then, all too often, they have had only a nominal commitment to implementation.

What is necessary here, she argues, is the sub-regionalisation of international law.

She suggests that member states of the Southern African Development Community play a leading role in doing this, so that there can be an understanding of what people at grassroots think; giving people a sense of ownership, and moral motivation to implement these laws. **MP**

We won't bore you with the details!

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Study bucks literature on AIDS orphans

DANIELLA POLLOCK

A study of some 5 254 households in one of the poorest municipal areas in the Free State suggests that, contrary to existing literature, AIDS orphans who are cared for by their grandparents may very well be better off than their non-orphaned counterparts.

Tsiliso Tamasane, who after Friday's graduation holds a PhD in sociology, conducted a census-type study of all the townships in the nine towns that make up Kopanong Municipality.

Tamasane, a postdoctoral fellow in the Child, Youth, Family and Social Development research programme at the Human Sciences Research Council, says he set out to examine the widespread assumption that extended families of AIDS-orphaned children are unable to provide adequate care for them. His research challenges the appropriateness of 'orphanhood' as a

screening tool for welfare assistance.

Using household indicators such as gender, age, education and access to grants, coupled with school attendance and meal frequency, Tamasane found that approximately 90% of these orphans were adequately looked after by their relatives, often their grandmothers.

"Homes with grandparents were better off than those without," said Tamasane.

"I chose Kopanong because of its unique qualities," he says. "Here, 40% of people are unemployed, more than a quarter of households have an income of less than R800 per month, workers traditionally migrate to major cities in the Free State and Gauteng and an already high incidence of HIV/AIDS is ever-escalating. Bringing up children is a burden, whoever the carers are. Welfare assistance creates divisions between families who all need support, whether they are caring for orphans or not."



Tsiliso Tamasane's study of AIDS orphans in the Kopanong municipality suggests that orphaned children are better off than their non-orphaned counterparts.

Tamasane's research revealed a surprisingly low uptake of social grants.

"Only 20% of eligible children receive social grants, despite a national uptake of 80% of eligible children. Access to birth certificates is often touted as the main problem, yet more than 80% of eligible children had birth certificates."

The real issue here is poverty, says Tamasane.

"Households with grandparents on old-age grants, whether they were taking care of orphaned children or not, fared significantly better. The introduction of a universal social grant would provide much-needed relief to all poor families; it's a policy that looks not only at the individual's status, but takes into account their home circumstances too.

"State intervention is paramount."

According to Tamasane, there is no mention of HIV/AIDS, orphans, vulnerable people or health in the Kopanong municipality's Integrated Development Plan, outlining a five-

year plan for local development.

Tamasane, who grew up in a farming community outside Hobhouse in the eastern Free State, has had his own fair share of adversity.

"I used to walk 10km to school every day," he says. "The school only offered classes up to grade seven."

To many this would signal an end to any formal education, but not for Tamasane. He persevered, cycling 20km to a secondary school in Hobhouse.

His never-say-die attitude paid off. He went on to do a BA at Vista University in Bloemfontein, honours and master's at Stellenbosch University, and ultimately his PhD at UCT.

"Only a few manage it though. But everyone deserves that opportunity."

"I am very attached to my background and my people," he adds. "My goal is to play a meaningful role in influencing, or indeed changing, policy for poor people." **MP**

The Lyons and the Rose



Twosome: Campbell Lyons, head of public relations at UCT, capped his sister, Rosemary Vickerman, on 12 June. Vickerman received a Master of Social Science in South African and Comparative Politics.

MYOLISI GOPHE

As head of public relations at UCT, Campbell Lyons has always been busy during graduation ceremonies, taking care of VIPs and honorary graduates, among others.

But last Friday's late ceremony was extra special as, in addition to his normal duties, Lyons CAP his sister, Rosemary Vickerman, who obtained her master's in political studies.

"I had to take care of all I had to do on the day and joined the procession

right at the last moment, just before the start of the ceremony," he explains.

It was an emotional moment that will be one of the highlights of the duo's lives.

Since early childhood, the two have been very close, and Lyons believes her graduation signalled "the end of an era for us".

"I'm very proud of Rose's achievement," said Lyons. "To me, she is just the best."

Vickerman said they were so close that Lyons had introduced her to philosophy, his academic background, when she was just 12 years old.

Like a number of youngsters, she went through a "trial and error" period, trying to settle on a career path before enrolling at UCT.

For her master's, she looked at how and why the Inkatha Freedom Party was so successful during the apartheid years, and why in the country's democratic context thus far, it appears to be in decline. **MP**

Life goes on in Zim, says Chimombe



Wordsmith: Shumi Chimombe.

MYOLISI GOPHE

In spite of the political and economic crisis, life is going on in Zimbabwe, and not every person living comfortably is corrupt or government-connected.

So says Shumi Chimombe, web editor at UCT's Communication and Marketing Department, who obtained her Master's in Creative Writing on 12 June.

For her dissertation, Chimombe has written a novel on family life in Zimbabwe in 2007, looking at how people were living in those challenging times.

"Not every Zimbabwean is a border-jumper," she emphasises.

"Families are still hosting celebrations, people are still falling in love, getting married, cheating on each other, getting divorced. Troubles are there but people are getting on with their lives, and doing the best they can under difficult conditions," she says.

As a Zimbabwean who has lived in South Africa for the past eight years, Chimombe has always been annoyed by people with distorted ideas on what it is like in her home country during the crisis.

"Some people think Zimbabwe is a wasteland where not even the airports work anymore, and they ask me the most bizarre questions," she explained.

She said many people there have persevered and are living relatively normal lifestyles under the circumstances.

The dissertation – her first full-length novel (she has published three children's books with Cambridge University Press) – is a dream come true.

For 35 years she has been trying to pen it, but life got in the way.

"You can spend your whole life wanting to write a book and not write one."

Doing the course was the only way she could manage as, in addition to learning about structure, it required her to be disciplined and meet deadlines.

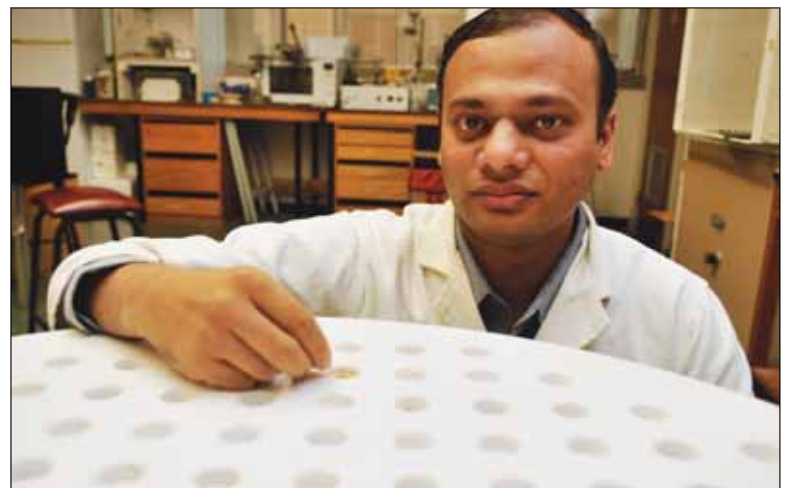
"It is also very helpful to have professional guidance in the form of a supervisor." (Chimombe's supervisor was Ron Irwin.)

"It was very taxing," she says of studying while having a full-time job.

"You work the whole day, and then when you go home, instead of stretching yourself out and watching *Isidango*, you need to at least write 500 words."

Chimombe is putting the final touches to her book and looking for a publisher before starting on the next one. **MP**

Alzheimer's cure in spice component?



Brainy stuff: Dr Amod Kulkarni's study on transgenic mice shows improved cued learning after Alzheimer's treatment.

DANIELLA POLLOCK

The outcome of his research could lead to the development of an effective combination treatment for conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, HIV dementia, and other neurological disorders. But a long, difficult process still lies ahead, says Amod Kulkarni, PhD graduate and now a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Human Biology.

In Kulkarni's thesis, *Delivery of Vaccinia Virus Complement Control Protein (VCP) and Curcumin to the Rodent Brain: Implications in Alzheimer's Disease and HIV Dementia*, he found that VCP, tVCP (a derivative of VCP) and curcumin, the component that gives the Indian spice turmeric its brilliant orange colour, treated some of the symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease in a transgenic mouse model carrying the abnormal genes responsible for this illness. These compounds may also be effective in the treatment of HIV dementia.

Interestingly, India has a significantly low incidence of Alzheimer's. Kulkarni, who hails from Akola (a small city near Mumbai, India), said that though there may be a link, one

would have to ingest substantial quantities of the spice for it to have some therapeutic effect.

Using a novel technology, known as quartz crystal microbalance with dissipation monitoring, Kulkarni showed that VCP and curcumin had a marked regulatory effect on the complement components (C3 and C3b) that are known to be activated in neuroinflammatory disorders such as Alzheimer's disease and HIV dementia. VCP is also known to inhibit the in-vitro activation of the complement system by amyloid proteins in the brain – the plaque-forming proteins that are present in Alzheimer's-affected brains, as they are in the transgenic mice.

As a second objective, Kulkarni investigated the effectiveness of non-invasive methods of delivery for these compounds to the central nervous system. Multiple doses of VCP and curcumin, administered through the nasal passages, were found to improve the ability of the model mice to navigate their way through a maze and to decrease anxiety levels. VCP treatment was also found to improve paired associative learning in a novel cheese board maze developed by Kulkarni. **MP**

RES reaches out



UCT charity project Operation Reach Every Street (RES) handed over a truckload of clothes, food and toiletries to the Adonis Musati Project (AMP), which assists refugees, at an event on 2 June. Launched by UCT

medical students to feed the hungry, Operation RES initiated a collection campaign on campus to assist the NGO. At the launch were (back, from left) Valmy Craffert, Dyllon Randall, Riaasat Khan, Isabella Fatti, Jacob

Hoffman, Shivani Pillay, Anja Reuter, Pauline Siame and Tendani Matoro, all of Operation RES. (Front) Gayle Macwalter and Alanna Rebelo of AMP. Contact Operation RES at email adonismusati.ores@gmail.com. **MP**

Course on teaching French a first for Southern Africa



Teachers learning: Attending a seminar on the honours degree in teaching French are (from right) Polo Lemphane, Kudakwashe Mahanya, (senior lecturer) Vanessa Everson, Sam-Hobbie Tembo, Jenette Reitsma, Salome Mutero, (lecturer) Sophie le Roux, Aimee Upshon and Sian Pierre.

The newly created master's by coursework for specialists in teaching French as a foreign language, offered by UCT's School of Languages and Literatures, is the first degree of its kind in Southern Africa.

The degree follows on the heels of its honours counterpart which was introduced in 2008, another first for the subcontinent.

"The degrees are aimed at training teachers," says course convenor Dr Vanessa Everson, "including both future teachers and those who have already entered the field but want to build their skills."

The degrees are the result of collaboration – both inter-institutional and inter-departmental. The University of Grenoble in France, which already has a similar

programme, helped during course development and continues to assist with quality assurance. The French Embassy's Bureau for Co-operation and Cultural Action for French is providing bursaries and books, and students receive practical teacher training at Alliance Francaise.

Both degrees are also supported by collaboration with UCT's Departments of Linguistics and English Language and Literature, and the Centre for Educational Technology.

"It's also resulted in African collaboration," notes Everson. "Master's students are now working on a programme to bring French studies to high schools in Lesotho, and we are assisting the University of Kenya to establish a similar programme." **MP**

Appointments

Helen Theron has been appointed Head: Publications and Information, Department of Communication and Marketing. A UCT graduate, she started her journalism career with the Argus Group before moving to the trade and financial sectors, first in media relations and then as a corporate editor. She is mother ship to four children, enjoys tai chi and the outdoors and is training to walk the Camino Francés, a pilgrimage between France and north-west Spain. She also pens a regular column for *go!*, an outdoor and travel magazine. **MP**



University events in the pipeline

The following university events have been scheduled for the second half of the year:

- Vice-Chancellor's Concert – 29 & 30 July
- TB Davie Lecture – 12 August
- Steve Biko Memorial Lecture - to be confirmed for either 10 or 14 September
- Long Service Awards – 1 October
- Fellows' Dinner – 15 October
- Ad Hominem Promotions cocktail party – 3 November
- Retirees' Dinner – 10 November
- Distinguished Teacher Award Dinner – 1 December
- Graduation – 14-18 December.

Call for sexual harassment advisors

The Discrimination and Harassment Office (DISCHO) is recruiting, appointing and training selected staff members as Sexual Harassment Advisors (SHAs), as required by UCT's Sexual Harassment and Sexual Offences Policies.

Successful applicants will be required to:

- receive complaints of sexual harassment from DISCHO
- assist, support, consult and liaise with complainants, alleged perpetrators and those initiating complaints into sexual harassment
- provide reports and records to DISCHO on all referred cases
- represent the best interests of a complainant or alleged perpetrator in formal communications with DISCHO, where such representation is required
- liaise with the case officer in relation to responsibilities that may arise from disciplinary hearings
- support DISCHO's educational work, where practical and reasonable.

If you have relevant experience, expertise and/or a passion for assisting in this area, please send an abridged CV with a letter of motivation to Rashieda. Khan at uct.ac.za or fax 021 650 5754. The closing date is 30 June 2009 at 16h00.

2009 UCT Fellows' Award

Nominations are invited for candidates for the 2009 UCT Fellows' Award. The Fellows' Award is offered annually in recognition of outstanding scholarly work by relatively young academics who have made significant independent contributions to research in their field, and who have been in full-time academic employment at UCT for not more than five years. A maximum of six awards will be made each year. Should there be no qualifying nominations, no award will be made.

Applications should include:

- The full CV of the nominee (including publications or equivalent scholarly outputs for the past three years).
- Statement of the nominee's scholarly accomplishments (one page).
- Contact details of three individuals who may be requested to provide referee reports. One referee must be international and only one referee may be from UCT.

Eligibility criteria for nominees

Nominations may be submitted by any UCT academic staff member, and the criteria for nominees are:

- Permanent or T3 contract UCT staff on academic conditions of service.
- Normally under 40 years (Nominees over 40 years will only be considered if accompanied by a strong written motivation).
- Have been in full-time academic employment at UCT for not more than five years.
- Nominators must be members of the university and may nominate themselves.

Please submit nominations to Essie Thomas: x5204, or email estrelita.thomas@uct.ac.za at the Department of Research & Innovation by 3 July 2009. **MP**

EVENTS

South African Transplant Congress

Thursday 24th to Sunday 27th September 2009
Spier Estate, R310, Lynedoch Road, Stellenbosch Janet Sirmongpong. Tel: 021 406 6733. Fax: 021 448 6263 Email: janet.sirmongpong@uct.ac.za

Beyond Reconciliation

Conference: Dealing with the Aftermath of Mass Trauma & Political Violence Wednesday 02 – Sunday 06 December 2009 Baxter Theatre & Kramer Building, UCT Middle Campus, Woolsack Drive, Rondebosch Janet Sirmongpong. Tel: 021 406 6733. Fax: 021 448 6263 Email: janet.sirmongpong@uct.ac.za

Celeste Coetzee, Doctoral student at the School of Economics funded by The David & Elaine Potter Fellowship invites you to attend a Seminar Programme entitled: "Living and working with HIV-Identifying the "unique" and "common" elements of re-entry into employment for HIV infected and non-infected individuals" on Monday, 22 June 2009 from 09h00 to 15h30at TB Davie Seminar Room, Postgraduate Centre and Funding Office3rd Level, Otto Beit Building University Avenue, Upper Campus University of Cape Town Refreshments and Lunch will be served. Kindly RSVP by no later than Friday, 19 June to: Stacey Moses at Stacey.moses@uct.ac.za or Tel: 021 650 5065

Kaplan Centre For Jewish Studies And Research, Faculty Seminar Daniel Mackintosh Postgraduate Law Student, University of Cape Town. Title: Speaking out against injustice? Re-examining the Jewish Board of Deputies in the 1950s and 1960s on Wednesday 17th June 2009 at 3PM. Venue: Beit Midrash Kaplan Centre, Upper Campus.

VACANT POSTS

EXECUTIVE AND ACADEMIC POSTS:

Co-ordinator, Programme for the Enhancement of Research Capacity (PERC), Closing date: 15 June 2009, Tel: 021 650 2192, tracy.moore@uct.ac.za

Lecturer: Occupational Therapy, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 24 June 2009, Tel: 021 650 2192, tracy.moore@uct.ac.za

Lecturer: Division of Physiotherapy, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 28 June 2009, Tel: 021 650 222, themba.mabambi@uct.ac.za

Senior Researcher (Ref: 2019) and Senior Researcher/Researcher & Advocacy Manager (Ref: 2020), Democratic Governance & Rights Unit, Faculty of Law, closing date: 22 June 2009, Tel: 021 650 2220,

themba.mabambi@uct.ac.za

Senior Lecturer: Computer Science, Faculty of Science, closing date: 24 August 2009, Tel: 021 650 2220, themba.mabambi@uct.ac.za

RESEARCH, PROFESSIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT POSTS (PASS)

Senior Technical Specialist/ Technical Specialist: Network Infrastructure: Closing date: 17 June 2009, tel: 021 650 3012, penny.thompson@uct.ac.za

Co-ordinator: Systems & Administration, Department of Student Affairs, closing date: 22 June 2009, tel: 021 650 2220, themba.mabambi@uct.ac.za

Risk Manager, Properties & Services, closing date: 30 June 2009, tel: 021 650 5405, edith.graham@uct.ac.za

Donations Officer, Development & Alumni, closing date: 3 July 2009, desiree.esterhuizen@uct.ac.za

Clinical Research Worker, Clinical Laboratory Sciences, closing date: 19 June 2009, tel: 021 406 6990, sd.adams@uct.ac.za

Professional Nurse, Clinical Laboratory Sciences, closing date: 19 June 2009, tel: 021 406 6990, sd.adams@uct.ac.za

POSTS FOR UCT STAFF ONLY:

All UCT vacancies can be viewed at: <http://www.uct.ac.za>, Click on "Vacancies".

PROPERTY

"Newlands: 2 bedroomed one bathroomed cottage. Lockup off street parking for 2 cars. R9000pm or for private sale at negotiable price. Contact: 0216743925 or 0833083898 or e-mail: roniramsay@worldonline.co.za"

Claremont: For sale - spacious top floor flat. 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, open balcony & private laundry area. Mountain views, communal garden, secure parking, in well-managed complex. R685 000. Phone Kathy: 0832916701.

Claremont: Holiday let dec to jan. Lovely old house, sleeps 7 in 4 bedrooms with 3 bathrooms. Pool and off street parking enquiries Bob Tait 0216503249 or robert.tait@uct.ac.za

"Rondebosch: Old Cape Farmhouse with self-contained, furnished apartments available (DSTV & broadband, fireplace, beauty salon, UCT Shuttle on doorstep. Wkly & monthly rates. Tel 021 685 174/ www.ivydene.homestead.com"

Crawford: 3 bedrms/bic/desk, chair, 2 bathrooms to share, kitchen, dining room, lounge to share R1500 plus R300 for elec.

& water. Contact: 08253 6653 or nmally@gmail.com

Accommodation wanted:

Garden flat or cottage or room to rent over the next year from 27 July 2009 - end June 2010, close to Jammie Shuttle route, I only need to use the place for 3 days a week because I am living in Johannesburg. Contact Vanessa: 0832819841 or 0113310470.

"Rondebosch: For Sale safe and secure, 1 bedroom flat with garage. R890 000. Phone Rose: 0826625948."

Three Anchor Bay: Available 1 July, 3 bed duplex, all carpeted, main with en suite, spacious cupboards & balcony, separate bathroom & toilet, garage, spacious lounge. R10500 + deposit. Contact: 0829217805.

Newlands: Close to Kirstenbosch, 3 beds, 2 bathrooms, well-maintained with lovely garden. R10 000pm. Phone Mandy 0833093822 or MandyF@netpoint.co.za

Rosebank: Quaint furnished two bedroom house available for 4-6 week rental from mid-July to end August. Rate R5500 pm (or part thereof). Close to public transport. Contact Stephen 0216503897 or 0825089750.

Rondebosch: Garden Flat. Suitable for quiet-living post-grad female student. R2500 pm, including L & W. Contact Andrew: 0833210221 or acarlyle@openmail.co.za

FOR SALE

For Sale: 2002 Mercedes A160. 180,000 km. Just serviced and in excellent condition. Automatic transmission, Power steering, AC, CD/Radio. All maintenance performed at Mercedes dealership in Claremont. Visiting scholar returning to the USA. Must sell. R65000. Contact: Dr Seth Pollack 0715346386; seth_pollack@csumb.edu

For Sale: Coricraft Large L-Shaped Sofa 4 Sale. Natural Colour. 1 Year Old. Value R8500 Selling For R6500 Neg. Contact: 0216502735 or Sm0832756939 or Belinda.Groenewald@uct.ac.za

"For Sale: Bar Fridge As New, White - R1150, Large Desk - R250, Computer Stand - R200. Contact Belinda: 0216502735 or Sms 0832756939 or Belinda.Groenewald@uct.ac.za"



Paraffin Safety Association
Southern Africa

Research Assistant Vacancy (Cape Town)

Are you a resident SA Citizen looking to make a difference through public health research? Are you interested in energy-related injury surveillance, community research, monitoring and evaluation? If you have a Masters degree in health sciences or in a related field, have strong research skills, working knowledge of Microsoft Office as well as familiarity with database software and knowledge management, this job is for you. Consideration will also be given to those with Bachelors degrees and/or relevant work experience. Visit www.paraffinsafety.org/jobs to apply. Closing date 12h00, Monday 22 June 2009.

For Sale: Freshly baked cup cakes made to order for kids parties, office teas, baby showers, special occasions etc. Phone Jean: 0829666158.

For Sale: Mecer laptop, P4, 3.0GHz, 480MB RAM, 60GB HD, CD/DVD reader-writer, original leather bag with all software. Battery and USB ports should be fixed. R2950 neg. 084 830 0113.

"For Sale: Roof Rack for Opel Astra 160 ie: R125. Hard Case, lined, for Spanish Guitar: R400. Portable Projector Screen (1050m by 1050) : R350. Contact: John. Rogers@uct.ac.za"

For Sale: Male and female perfumes at a very reasonable price. Contact: Adiel on 076 844 3668 or email: unoyumaildme@gmail.com

For Sale: White painted pine study-desk R1100, 380litre Whirlpool Fridge R1400, Baby Jogger R1100 and Rubyred 2-seater leathersuede coach R2800. Contact: 0839968318.

For Sale: Springbok /Saru/ Canterbury Top /Jacket Colours: green & gold Price: R450 new still gift wrapped. Contact: ext.4739 or 0716775061.

For Sale: Saru / Springbok / Canterbury T-shirt Colours: green & gold price: R70 new still wrapped. Contact: ext.4739 or 0716775061.

For Sale: Bed bunk including mattresses, R400. Kelvinator fridge 254 lt - no freezer R600. Phone Sandy 0832835751 email sandy.hill@uct.ac.za.

For Sale: Renault Scenic 2L: White, 2000 model, 150,000km. Full service record; Air-con, Bluetooth, tow-bar; New tyres/ battery; Never in an accident; Immaculate condition: R55000. Contact Betsie.Koch@uct.ac.za or 0836296975.

GENERAL

Housesitter: Responsible mature man; very caring for plants and animals. Available for short or long term. Excellent references. Phone Steve: 0843363797.

Lift club needed: 4 ladies looking for a lift from Portlands/ Westridge to UCT Upper Campus, contact Yolanda x2295 or yolanda.vanderrheede@uct.ac.za

"Reliable honest CHAR looking for work on a Thursday from beginning of July. Contact

Jean for refs 0216503184am or 0829666158."

Work wanted: Our domestic worker seeks 1-3 days extra work. She is reliable, fast and thorough. Please email me at jrstar001@uct.ac.za for references.

Reliable, hardworking and honest lady seeks employment as a Char. Available to work any day of the week. Good references. Contact Theresa Brink: 0781921064.

Have you had a heart problem or cardiac surgery? Do you have any risk factors for heart disease Consider joining the "Happy Hearties" exercise program in the sports centre on campus. Contact: Suzette 0822278812 or Joan 0832302518.

Zimbabwean Nanny looking for work: Jane (29yrs) filled in whilst my nanny was away. She is a real find: intelligent, literate, responsible, calm, good with children. catherine.kaschula@uct.ac.za. Jane 0734715043.

Debt Counselling – In arrears with repayments on your house, car, credit / store cards. Contact Tracey or Mark: 0217616097 or sms 0832670887 or tracey@creditmatters.co.za

"Responsible lady is available to look after your home while u are on holiday like animals plants and fond of kids also, Highly recommended please ph Nelly 0732814908 S/Suburbs."

"Spend a weekend at Grootkraal, our West Coast smallholding. Email hayleyhayes@mweb.co.za 0827327522."

S&R Power Cleaning - for all roof painting, cleaning, waterproofing and general home maintenance. Contact Shaun 0764040920 or Robert 0711178348. Contact Dorothy: 0214066385.

Adoption Discussion and support group run by clinical psychologist and adoptive mother. Discuss your concerns with other adoptive parents. Contact jean.luyt@uct.ac.za or 0846854839 for further details.

Considering adoption? Join the adoption support group run by clinical psychologist and adoptive mother starting in July. Contact Jean.luyt@uct.ac.za or 0846854839.

UCT Club
Lunch 12 – 14:30 pm Dinner 17:00 – 20:00

WHAT TO EXPECT?
Our famous club lunch buffet table
A la carte menu & selection of smaller meals
(Our menu is priced to suit everybody's pocket)

Contact us for all your Departmental Parties
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We deliver

Contact Craig, Haydn & Matthew
Ph: 650 3161
Email: uctclub@uct.ac.za

Web Address: uctclub.uct.ac.za

Tucker opens digital doors



Dr Bill Tucker, promoting access to digital communication systems.

For Bill Tucker, access to digital communication systems need not be held back by disability, computer illiteracy or even isolation and the lack of electricity.

Since 2003 Tucker has dedicated his PhD research to working on overcoming these obstacles, at Bastion for the Deaf, a deprived deaf community in Newlands, Cape Town, and between a rural hospital and an outlying village clinic in the Eastern Cape.

In the Eastern Cape the aim was to support rural telehealth, which is the delivery of health-related services and information via telecommunication technologies; and in Newlands, to support both deaf-to-deaf and deaf-to-hearing communications.

Using open-source software, Tucker implemented instant message systems in the Eastern Cape that ran over long-range rural networks, which were illegal at the time. He describes it as "kind of like Skype on steroids".

"It's strange that in a rural village where there is no electricity and

no running water, we can provide wi-fi access to the internet so easily by running everything on 12-volt bakkie batteries," says Tucker. "We used both solar panels and unreliable mains to charge the batteries, and at one point the rural wireless network ran without failure for more than two years."

Implementing digital communications in the deaf community presented a new set of obstacles.

"Many deaf people in this community use SMS, so we told them that they could send 3 000 MXit messages for the cost of one SMS," explains Tucker. "Five years later, there were less than 10 deaf MXit users in a community of about 2 000. Why? They had heard, probably from some newspaper targeted at the uninformed, that MXit is addictive, like a drug, and is used to disseminate pornography. So social misconceptions, combined with poor numeracy, prevented them from using a cost-effective service. Instead they pay for SMS, and for those horrible

newspapers!"

Using text-to-speech and speech recognition software, Tucker set up text relay bridges for the hearing to communicate by voice, and the deaf to communicate by text, on a variety of devices.

Technically, the systems were a resounding success.

"The problem in both field studies was that the users said they loved our stuff but actually didn't use it! The reasons for poor adoption were more social than technical. But they did adopt internet access successfully, so our prototype failures had positive side-effects. So we failed, but we didn't!"

Both projects are continuing, with communities now paying for and even installing the systems.

So where to from here?

"I want to start working with kids, and adapting education programmes like the international computer driver's licence for deaf and rural users. Yeah, there's plenty to do. But now, I just want to sleep!" **MP**

Right chemistry for PhD graduate

Often in the world of science when you're foraging around in the lab for one defining breakthrough, you end up, much to your surprise, with another.

That's pretty much what happened to Vincent Smith, who graduated with a PhD in chemistry last week, to the delight of supervisors Professors Mino Caira and Susan Bourne. (More on that later.)

In Smith's case, he was working on a way to create more soluble molecules for a group of herbicides. The poor solubility of some herbicides leads to problems – not least that they tend to change composition in sunlight, which could turn them toxic.

The way Smith was hoping to jack up the herbicides' solubility was via a doughnut-shaped sugar molecule known as cyclodextrin, a popular 'host' molecule in the pharmaceutical industry. Natural cavities in cyclodextrin make the molecule an ideal host in an inclusion compound (or inclusion complex, as it's also known), where one molecule (the guest) is slotted into

another (the host) to make an entirely new compound.

Also, for Smith's purposes, cyclodextrin is known to be highly soluble, making it the 'carrier' of choice for many drug compounds, allowing as it does for easy absorption in the human body.

Smith did create the sought-after inclusion compounds for the herbicides, also establishing the importance of controlling the preparation conditions for such variables as solvent, concentration and temperature.

Then there was the surprise find. In chemistry, cyclodextrin is known to be a very stable compound-partner, not given to much variation. In fact, there are only three cases on record where scientists were able to mint more than one form (two at best) of a cyclodextrin-based compound for one particular guest molecule. Dr Elijane de Vries, a former student of Caira's, was the last to do so, in 2003.

Smith went three better. For one herbicide, metobromuron, he found he could prepare no fewer than five

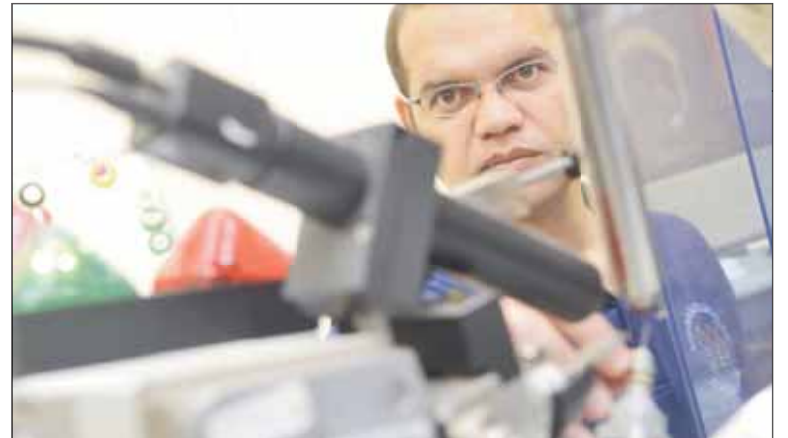
distinct complexes through minor changes in conditions. That has some dramatic implications for the pharmaceutical industry, not least for their cash-spinning patents.

"Now they have to start looking for multiple forms of cyclodextrin complexes," says Smith.

Smith already has three papers in the works. And to think that just a few years ago all this seemed a pipe dream.

Smith's first year as a UCT student was marked by anxiety-induced migraines and, just before final exams, the death of his dad, Gideon Smith, a security officer with the then Campus Control. Smith scraped through that exam (he wells up as he recounts that time in his life). The migraines followed him through that entire first degree, during which he had to work much of the time to complement the family's income.

After his studies, he landed a job as a research assistant in Caira's laboratories. And that could well have been that, except that Caira and Bourne lured Smith back into academia, even



Long road: Chemistry graduate Dr Vincent Smith came up with some surprise finds in his doctoral work.

managing to get him registered for master's studies without having done an honours degree. (His work experience stood him in good stead.) Smith would pass that part-time master's – he had to keep working – with a distinction.

That, in turn, won him a scholarship from the Equity Development Programme for his full-time doc-

toral work. The rest is, well, recorded above.

His final result is as much Caira and Bourne's – and everybody else in the labs – as it is his, says Smith.

Just after graduation, Smith left for a two-month stint in Hungary and Romania, after which comes, hopefully, a postdoctoral post at Stellenbosch University. **MP**



Dr Vanessa Everson.

Everson does it all

It's been a busy year for Vanessa Everson, who receives her PhD in education on 12 June. Not only did she submit her thesis, but at the same time somehow managed to scoop a Distinguished Teacher Award.

"It's all about commitment," she says. "You have to make your decision, set out your timetable, and not let anything interfere."

A senior lecturer in French in

UCT's School of Languages & Literatures, Everson received the award for her work in transforming the teaching of French at UCT, creating "a model for French as a foreign language at tertiary level", according to her citation.

After modernising the syllabus and retraining and mentoring the teachers, she designed courses on French and the media, on the practice of translation, and redesigned the course on teaching

business French. She also pioneered a new honours-level qualification, Teaching French as a Foreign Language, the first of its kind in South Africa.

Meanwhile, Everson tackled her thesis head-on. Titled *And Ever Shall Be? A model for teaching French as a foreign language in South African tertiary institutions*, the study traces the development of teaching foreign languages, explores how French is taught,

and proposes a model for "reforming" the teaching of French in South African universities.

"It also helped that I chose a topic that is closely linked to my day-to-day life as a teacher," she says.

Attending the graduation in support will be Everson's daughter, Camilla, and best friends Lolly, Maudie and Penny, whom she describes as "the sisters I never had". **MP**