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Jubilation, celebration ... graduation



A for away: It was good news for the 273 fledgling healthcare practitioners who gathered in the Barnard Fuller quad for the Faculty of Health Sciences' annual results on 30 November. Among the 168 new doctors who will graduate on 14 December is Nevadna Singh (above), who won the MBChB Gold Medal for her record of 75% or above throughout her medical studies.

Grad week stars a cast of thousands

This week, thousands of UCT students will file through Jameson Hall, capping their studies with one final ritual.

As the university intake has grown noticeably over the past few years, it's no surprise that the approximately 4 700 students – this was the tally at the time of going to print – who were eligible to graduate this year is a total substantially higher than the 4 507 in December 2007 and the 4 489 in December 2008.

The Faculty of Commerce, including the Graduate School of Business, will graduate around 1 310 students, awarding

over 700 bachelor's degrees, and more than 400 postgraduate diplomas.

The Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment will cap 650 students, awarding over 100 master's, 120 honours and 500 bachelor's degrees.

Graduates from the Faculty of Health Sciences number 450, and qualifications will include 25 doctorate degrees and over 70 postgraduate diplomas.

The Faculty of Humanities, still weighing in as the univer-

sity's largest faculty, will – cap 1 600 students over its three ceremonies. These include 330 honours and around 750 bachelor's degrees, while over 300 students will receive undergraduate certificates and diplomas.

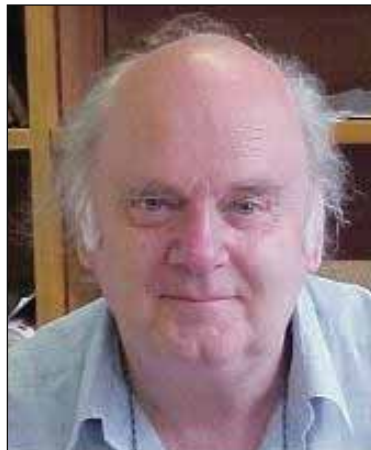
The Faculty of Law will award 130 qualifications, including three doctorates, 37 master's degrees and 87 bachelor's degrees.

And finally, the Faculty of Science will boast over 550 graduates, including 40 who will receive their doctorates, 159 honours-degree recipients and 300 bachelor's qualifiers. **MP**

Stellar academics Ellis and Warner receive high honours

This week UCT will confer honorary degrees (*honoris causa*) to two of its most distinguished scholars, Emeritus Professors Brian Warner and George Ellis, at the summer graduation ceremony. Although retired, the two are still active scientists (Warner in astronomy and Ellis in cosmology), who last year won Honorary Fellowships from the Royal Society of South Africa.

Warner stands out as one of the most distinguished scientists



Emer Prof Brian Warner

to have made South Africa his home. His career spanning some 50 years has produced a "prodigious" scientific output, with 400 scientific papers and 18 books to his name. At least one, Cataclysmic Variable Stars, is considered definitive in its field.

He has also written poetry and his collections were published under the titles *Dinosaurs End* and *Scatological Verse*.

Warner has vast work experience on lunar phenomena and astronomy.

During his brief years at the University of Texas, he collaborated with Edward Nather to publish the first proper light curve of a visible pulsar, that in the Crab Nebula. That same type of observation – high speed photometry – found its mark in the rapid variations of stars now termed Cataclysmic Variables, where matter streaming from one star builds up around its compact companion. Warner's initial interpretation of the physical situation set the scene for years to come, and he has held the highest status within that research specialty ever since.

He has influenced over many young people and supervised a numbers of doctoral and master's students, some of whom have risen to great success. Warner is regarded by many as foremost in his field, and against whom others may be judged.

In 1997 he was one of the three scholars to deliver an invited discourse at the International Astronomical Union's general assembly in Kyoto, the ultimate accolade the union can bestow upon an individual.

He has produced several researched books, and is considered one of the world's experts on astronomer William Herschel and his son, John. Harry Oppenheimer's Brenthurst Li-

brary commissioned him to bring out *Flora Herscheliana*, a collaborative effort with botanist John Rourke.

He has also served on numerous councils, boards and committees that integrate science with society, including the Council of the South African Museum (later Iziko) and the South African Library.

A UCT alumnus, Ellis is one of



Emer Prof George Ellis

the most distinguished scholars this country has produced. In his more than 40 years' work experience, he has produced over 350 articles or chapters in books, and 12 books spanning disciplines as diverse as cosmology, complexity, neural development and the brain, science policy, social development, science and mathematics education, and the relationship between science and religion.

A leader in the areas of general relativity and cosmology, the study of the large-scale structure of the Universe, Ellis has contributed in the development of the singularity theorems with Roger Penrose and Stephen Hawking, and he has worked on observations in cosmological models, in which he addresses the relationship between theoretical cosmology and cosmological observations. He has written on the topics of emergent universes and 'multi-verses'.

Ellis has also written and spoken extensively on topics pertaining to the relationship between science and religion. For that he was awarded the Templeton Prize in 2004. In his work Ellis advocated a balance between the rationality of evidence-based science on the one hand, and phenomena that lie beyond the ability

of science to explain. In recent years, however, he has turned his attention towards a complete understanding of the workings of the brain, and the relationship to human behaviour, the intellect, and emotions, and has become an established name in this multi-disciplinary area.

As a critic of the apartheid, he and three colleagues wrote *The Squatter Problem in the Western Cape*, a scathing review of the plight of homeless people. He also co-authored *Low Income Housing Policy in South Africa*, an analysis of how to transform the housing situation among black people in Cape Town.

Ellis has received a host of honours, including the award by former President Nelson Mandela of the Star of South Africa, the award of the National Science and Technology Forum for outstanding contributions over a lifetime in science, engineering and technology, the Mapungubwe Award (Silver) from former President Thabo Mbeki, and honorary degrees from three universities.

Ellis has worked in various institutions around the world, and was appointed Chair of Applied Mathematics at UCT in 1974. He left 14 years later but returned in 1993 before retiring in 2004. **MP**

A day in a life of the Student Records Office during graduation

The office is based in the Kramer Building on middle campus. It is staffed by manager Sigi Rich, coordinator Melanie Swinerd, expert user Lisa Belding, as well as records assistants Nobambo Mpengesi, Xolani Njecana, Sean Sivertsen and Maldwin Williams.

What do you do before and after graduation?

Beyond graduation, the office produces academic transcripts for UCT's current and past students, duplicate certificates in cases where the originals have been lost, verifies qualifications, ad hoc letters for students, and deals with general university queries. It also orders and distributes class medals, processes deferred examinations, deals with requests for extra time in examinations and re-admission appeals. The unit also processes the Higher Education Management Information data. "We deal with all the queries that no one else wants to deal with," Rich quips. In the run-up to graduation, three staff members are responsible for checking and printing degree certificates. Another co-ordinates nine temporary employees, who stamp and staple the academic transcripts and place them in order for the



Under pressure: Staffers (from left) Melodie Campell, Kristen Pryce and Kefilwe Pitsie and their colleagues in the Student Records Office move into high gear in the weeks prior to graduation.

graduation ceremony. They also assist with the preparation of the seating tickets.

What kind of challenges the unit is faced with over

graduation?

Graduation deadlines are very tight, and the pressure is on to produce accurate graduation programmes and well-run ceremonies. Faculty Examination Committees

meet on a Monday to qualify their students, just a week before the first of 11 graduation ceremonies. The only way members manage the work load under these circumstances is to work extra hours. "There are not

enough hours in the day and night to do everything, though," says Rich. "During this time staff have to forget about decent eating and sleeping patterns, and adrenalin levels skyrocket. Personal lives take a back seat."

What are the challenges?

It frustrates staff when students don't respond to the graduation mailings. Members try everything, from post to emails and SMSes, but some students leave it until the very last minute and "then expect miracles". Staff members also miss out on family events over this period, and not being able to enjoy the festive season is a low point of the job. "Getting through graduation week and the weeks prior to that is an achievement certainly, but the sheer stress of doing so obscures high moments!" Rich says.

What is the weirdest thing you've encountered?

At graduations they see some very interesting outfits and shoes, and, unfortunately, some spectacular falls from the platform as a result of high heels! But what tops them all is the memory of one student who tore up his degree certificate. "He obviously had some issues!" says Rich.

Triumph of hope over adversity

How a street kid turned opportunity into an electromechanical engineering degree

Michael Tladi began life on the wrong side of the tracks. Abandoned by his mother when he was five, he lived as a street kid in Pretoria for many years, eking out an existence and struggling merely to survive on a daily basis.

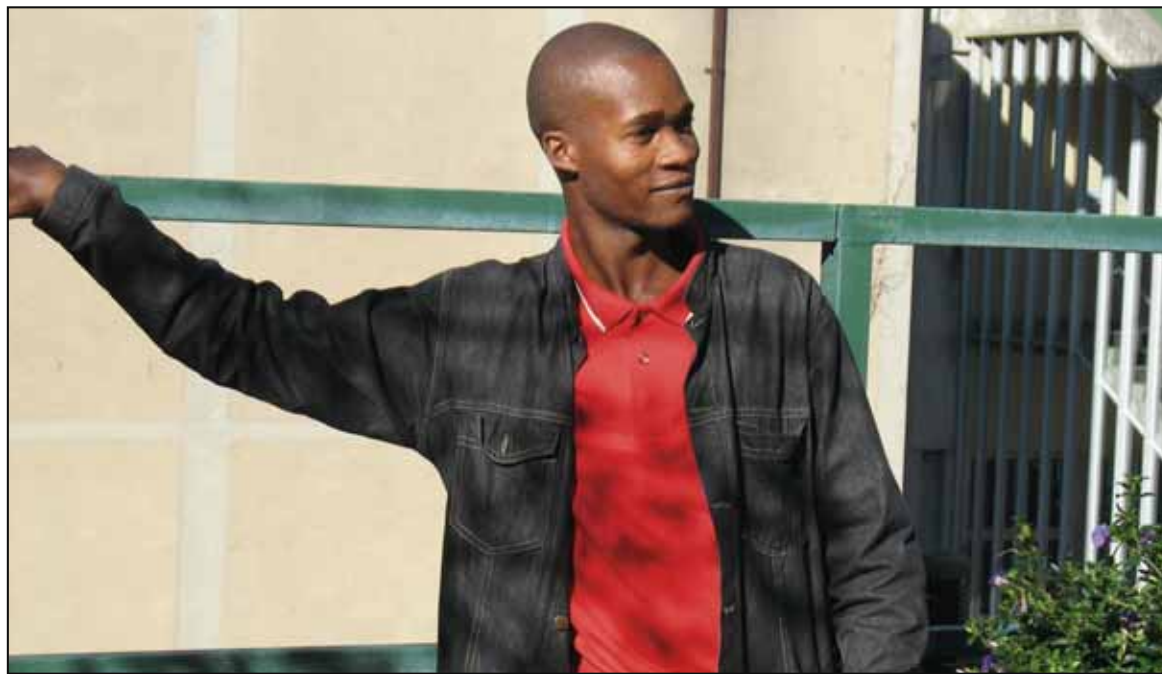
Today though, this fresh-faced 29-year-old is full of the proverbial joys of spring, standing as he does on the threshold of a degree in electromechanical engineering, despite the sort of odds that would have had lesser mortals running for cover.

If ever it could be said of someone that he is a self-made man, Tladi is surely a standout case in point.

From the age of five he lived on the hard streets of Pretoria, fending for himself in a hostile world. He turned to crime in order to survive and seemed destined more probably for the Numbers Gang at Pollsmoor than for life as an electromechanical engineer.

When it comes to homeless shelters, handouts, starvation and hardship, this young man has been there, done that...

But that is all in the past. This week, Tladi will join fellow graduates



from far more privileged backgrounds when he receives his hard-won degree at UCT. Few could deserve it more.

He came to UCT in 2001, having applied to various universities and colleges without success.

"I could not speak English when

I arrived in Cape Town, but I was determined to overcome that obstacle," he recalls.

He attributes his astonishing success in the face of extreme adversity to Dr Chris Parnell, who worked with a pastor called Ruben Mamatsinya,

running shelters for the homeless in Pretoria.

"He moulded me into a better person, supporting and encouraging me in all I did," says Tladi. Sadly, Parnell died in 2007, and Tladi regards it as the greatest regret of his life that

his former mentor did not live long enough to see him graduate.

Tladi is currently working for the Department of Public Works and says his plans for the future include "not disappointing those people who believed in me".

And, when it comes to thanking those behind his success, he reads off a list that would be the envy of any Oscar winner: Mary Hilton, who is in charge of communication in the Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment; Dr Howard Pearce, who helped him get psychological counselling in order to come to terms with his past; psychologist Rosanna Strauss; Adelaide Rooks, Jasmine Erasmus and Ethney Diedericks, who helped him get financial aid at UCT, to name a few.

Despite all the hardships he endured, Tladi says he always found the courage to move on. And always, there was something in his mind driving him towards the goal of a better education.

His is a classic tale of the triumph of the human spirit over suffering and hopelessness. **MP**

Results rain down on medical graduands



Gimme the good news.



We did it!



Uncork the jubilation.

don't have words to express my feelings."

Fellow graduand Kagiso Lekang said keeping his goal in mind had steered him home. He thanked the "fantastic" lecturers for their support.

The newly qualified graduates – doctors, physiotherapists, speech therapists, audiologists and occupational therapists – will now do their internships and/or community service in order to register as practitioners in South Africa.

Jacobs said most of the new crop of fledgling doctors and healthcare professionals had committed themselves to remaining in the country, where their services are desperately needed. Others want to get international experience first.

But the results had shown that the new MBChB curriculum is able to produce students who are "innovative, hold firm opinions and care for patients".

All graduating health sciences students in the clinical programme will take an oath committing them to ethical practice when they are admitted as members of the health profession.

The declaration reads: "I solemnly pledge to serve humanity. My most important considerations will be the health of patients and the health of their communities. I will not permit considerations of age, gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disease, disability or any other factor to adversely affect the care I give to patients. I will uphold human rights and civil liberties to advance health, even under threat. I will engage patients and colleagues as partners in healthcare. I will practise my profession with conscience and dignity. I will respect the confidentiality of patients, present or past, living or deceased. I will value research and will be guided in its conduct by the highest ethical standards. I commit myself to lifelong learning. I make these promises solemnly, freely and upon my honour." **MP**

Two hundred and seventy three final-year health sciences students danced, cheered and whistled as hundreds of pamphlets bearing their results rained down from the balcony at the Barnard Fuller Building on 30 November at the annual results bash.

The jamboree was led by dean Professor Marian Jacobs and faculty staff.

Among the successful candidates were four gold medal winners – those who scored an average of 75% or above throughout their studies. They were Nevadna Singh (MBChB), Simone Filies (BSc in Speech-Language Pathology), Jessica Suart (BSc in Occupational Therapy) and Sarah Smythe (BSc in Physiotherapy).

Among the 168 MBChB graduands was Chwayita Luwaca who said the long journey through medical school had its ups and downs – but was well worth it.

"This is a great achievement. I

On a learning curve... at 76

Penkin's love affair with knowledge



staff and eight partners at its peak. He also spent nearly a decade serving Cape Town as a councillor.

But the learning bug kept biting and in 1986 he obtained a Certified Public Accounting degree in Israel. When his son Jonathan, also a UCT graduate, earned his third degree, Penkin decided that it was a matter of pride to pace him.

He enrolled for the popular Master's in Commerce (MCom) and found the course hugely satisfying, thanks to lecturers Professors Mike Wormald, Glen Holman, Carlos Correia, Mark Graham, Peter Cramer and Colin Smith.

For his thesis, he explored the hot topic of remuneration committees and executive compensation, as little had been written on the subject.

Now what?

"After the gruelling master's degree, I have so much to catch up on. I'm in arrears on my reading and need to continue with my religious studies. I'm also looking forward to learning chess with my grandsons, updating my family tree, studying modern Israeli history, swimming, walking and travelling."

As to his main achievements in life, they are his four children: Jacqui and two granddaughters own Charly's Bakery, Beverley (BSocSci, 1983) manages a Cinémathèque in Jerusalem, artist Tammi is publishing a book and Jonathan is in Hong Kong.

The competition is now on for the grandchildren to outstrip the older generation with degrees. And Penkin needs to answer the question on everyone's lips: "When are you undertaking a PhD?" **MP**

Like a good red wine, some students just get better with age.

Take Kenny Penkin, a sprightly 76-year-old from Sea Point, who will be clinching his master's degree through the Faculty of Commerce on 17 December.

A chartered accountant by trade, Penkin made the decision to return to UCT when he was 74.

"I was inspired by my love of learning and also to overcome the bogey of my matric, when I had to write a supplementary examination in order to get a varsity pass. I thoroughly enjoyed my Bachelor of Commerce degree at UCT and obtained quite a few firsts and seconds, particularly in taxation, accounting, costing, and company law."

Penkin passed the CA Board exams a few days before his 21st birthday, breaking the record for the youngest person to qualify as a CA in South Africa. He then went on to build up a practice, employing 60

Seeing into the country's future

Pathfinders on the road to community eye health

Three UCT students are blazing a hitherto-uncharted trail in the important field of community eye health.

Elvis Chipili from Zambia, Simon Yuh from Cameroon, and Marie Ravelson from Madagascar will graduate this month after completing UCT's first-ever postgraduate diploma in community eye health.

The course is not only a first for UCT, but for South Africa itself. Indeed, only one other similar course exists in sub-Saharan Africa – at Tunjimi University in Moshi, Tanzania.

Course convener Professor Colin Cook, professor of ophthalmology at UCT's Department of Surgery, says the three had previously obtained certificates in the subject after completing a course in 2008, but this is the



Trailblazers: (From left) Marie Ravelson, Prof Colin Cook, Simon Yuh and Elvis Chipili.

first time a diploma course has been offered.

UCT advertised for the course throughout sub-Saharan Africa, and the response was encouraging indeed. No fewer than 22 applicants have

applied for next year's course, which can accommodate 20 students.

"The course is designed to develop capacity in the management of blindness-prevention programmes in Africa," Cook explains, adding that

the main causes of blindness in Africa are cataracts, glaucoma, trachoma and diabetic retinopathy.

He says the three will make a valuable contribution towards the management of blindness-prevention programmes in the future, on a continent where there is an urgent need for such skills.

"UCT wants to position itself as a truly African university, facing truly African challenges," says Cook. The community eye health course will play its part in furthering this objective.

The three students will take their newly-acquired expertise back to their native countries and, in Ravelson's case, she will be responsible for overseeing the co-ordination of a national blindness prevention programme

affecting a population of 18 million people.

Cook, himself an alumnus of UCT, describes himself as an ophthalmologist with an interest in community eye health, and has been at UCT for the past three years.

He says UCT is an exciting place to work, particularly as it is committed to being a relevant African educational institution, facing often uniquely African challenges, and partnering other leading universities on the continent in this important pursuit.

He believes the first three community eye health graduates are harbingers of bigger things to come in this vital area of health care. No doubt future graduates will grow and strengthen this noble cause even further. **MP**

Gone fishing? No, gone to graduation

Why prof, 80, loves going to grad



Same time next year: Patricia and Leon Kritzinger.

When it comes to marriage, the old joke suggests, the first 40 years are the hardest...

Evidently, the same cannot be said about graduation. Just ask retired Professor Leon Kritzinger, who is preparing to attend his 40th graduation this year.

He was appointed Professor of Accounting in 1969, and in 1986 he became a full-time dean in the Department of Commerce, where he remained until his retirement in 1993. After that, he was made Emeritus Professor, and

has kept contact with the Department of Accounting all these years.

Kritzinger, also a former warden of Smuts Hall, says Commerce teaching staff are not famous for their dedication towards attending graduation ceremonies, a tendency of which he does not approve.

"As Dean, I found it very embarrassing to have a half-empty stage at graduation. And when I retired, I continued attending".

He applauds the "remarkable changes" he has witnessed at UCT over

the years, recalling that he was not allowed to register black students during the apartheid era.

However, Kritzinger did register a black student in 1973, and the person concerned went on to become the first black chartered accountant in South Africa, and later economic adviser to former president Thabo Mbeki.

"Chris Hani's daughter went through a BCom and was among the top ten in the final exam for chartered accountants in South Africa that year," he recalls. **MP**

Like mom, like daughter

Graduation day this week will be a more-than-special day in the Rogerson household. Both mom and daughter will receive degrees – in two completely different faculties.

First, daughter Jennifer, 22, will receive her BA Honours in Social Anthropology. Then, a few hours later, mom Christine will receive her BCom Honours in Information

Systems.

Christine, who turns 50 next year, is systems support officer at UCT's Finance Department and had been studying part-time through UNISA before being invited to convert to a BCom Honours at UCT. She completed her degree with a first-class pass, and came top of her class.

Jennifer, for her part, is moving

on to a master's degree next year, and although Christine was accepted for her own master's, she decided against it due to work pressures.

Asked if her daughter was proud of her achievements as a "mature student", all Christine would say was: "Well, you know what kids are like... it's just mom."

Christine, who received a long

service award from UCT this year after 15 years at the university, was one of the oldest students in her class, and says many younger students treated her as a mother figure, turning to her frequently in times of crisis.

She says it was tough finding the time for her studies while employed in UCT's Finance Department, but it was all worth it in the end. **MP**



Dual purpose: Christine and Jennifer Rogerson.

Micu Narunsky's music plays on

How jazz artist became a master of his craft



Micu Narunsky has been a professional musician for 25 years of his 40-year-long life. He has performed with internationally renowned jazz artist and educator Dave Liebman, and at the Forbidden City Jazz Festival in China.

But surely the highlight of his already illustrious career will be when Narunsky receives his master's degree in music (MMus) at UCT this week.

Narunsky, who also studied in New York and Canada, didn't get around to completing his degree when he was younger. Then he met Professor Mike Rossi, at UCT's Jazz Department, and Liebman.

"Mike and I brought out a CD together, called *Common Ground*, and I was allowed to go straight into my master's, without having to finish my BA," says Narunsky.

He says half of his thesis was made up by a performance component (including four recitals), 25 percent by a dissertation and 25 percent by a composition portfolio.

Narunsky, who hails from Israel, is currently working at a wine company in Cape Town, having studied wine-making in France. He also has his own small label, called Micu Narunsky Wines.

His thesis is being considered for international publication by the pres-

tigious Advance Music, in Germany, with an endorsement by Liebman.

Narunsky says if he had a message for young people, it would be that it is extremely important to obtain a degree in this day and age.

"Besides all I learnt in the process, I could now go on to teach one day, if I wanted to," he says. It's not enough, he says, to be able to play an instrument well. These days, a sound education is also essential.

This mature student should know what he's talking about, and no doubt he will celebrate his own graduation with a glass or two of fine vino... Micu Narunsky, of course. **MP**

A family affair as prof caps daughter, and... ... son marries in Jammie Hall

Professor Peter Meissner is a man who believes in freedom of choice. So, when his children were of an age to go to university, he gave them carte blanche to choose any institution they liked... as long as it was UCT.

Who could blame him? After all, the place is in his bones, and in his blood. With a history at UCT stretching back many years, Meissner is currently Professor and Chair of Medical Biochemistry.

Indeed, the Meissner family's ties to this august institution run so deep that this week Meissner will perform the honour of capping his daughter, Robyn, when she graduates with a BSc in Occupational Therapy.

And, as if that wasn't enough, his son Bruce is to marry his sweetheart, recent UCT BA graduate Rebecca Blundell, at Jammie Hall next month. Blundell, 22, obtained her BA in English, art, history and media.

But the ties to UCT don't end there: Bruce is also a recent UCT graduate, having obtained his BA in Visual Arts. And younger brother Murray is a first-year BSc chemical engineering student. These truly are "the ties that bind..."

Asked about the capping, Meissner said it was a rare and special honour to be able to perform this



Ties that bind: (Front left back) Bruce Meissner, Prof Peter Meissner, and Murray Meissner. (Front) Rebecca Blundell and Robyn Meissner.

duty for his only daughter, Robyn.

"I have no doubt it will be a wonderful experience, and it's a wonderful gesture on UCT's part to allow family members to cap each other," he said.

Capping Robyn would not only be emotional for him, but also

"very satisfying indeed". An added dimension to the occasion would be that Robyn is graduating in the same faculty as her dad – health sciences.

On the subject of the wedding at Jammie Hall, Meissner says he suggested it "in jest" at first, but it wasn't long before the idea took hold

in the couple's minds, and the rest, as they say in the classics, is history.

Where did the happy couple meet, though? On the beach? In a coffee shop? On the internet? Where else, except at UCT!

Meissner's own association with UCT goes back "forever". He

became a student at the university in 1975 and, well, he never left.

Perhaps the only question that remains to be answered is where future grandchildren will be educated. If Meissner has his way, the answer will be short and simple: anywhere they like, of course...^{MP}

Famous Fagan family does it again



When Professor Johan Fagan, head of the Department of Otolaryngology in the Faculty of Health Sciences, caps his son Francois this week, it won't be the first time this family has taken centre stage at graduation.

Indeed, Francois hails from a long line of academically gifted Fagans, a hard act to follow if ever there was one.

Francois will receive his BSc degree in maths and applied maths – with distinctions.

Not so long ago, Fagan capped his daughter, Marijke, who qualified in chemical engineering and who is now doing her PhD at Cambridge.

But it doesn't end there. Another

Fagan brother – Professor Anton Fagan – is deputy dean of the Faculty of Law, and dad Hannes was awarded an honorary doctorate in law in 2003 for his outstanding work in the country's prisons system.

Uhm, it doesn't end there, either... Another Fagan brother, Eduard, received a doctorate in Afrikaans Nederlands at UCT and is currently working as an advocate in Cape Town.

But the brains in the family, Fagan insists, are on his wife Marion's side...

He says the Fagan blood runs deep at UCT, which he admires for its strong liberal tradition. The institution has also handled the integration process "superbly", he believes.

Any fledgling Fagans waiting in the wings? Well, none that he know of... yet.^{MP}

Family Business: Prof Johan Fagan with son Francois.

From physics to philosophy for PhD

Retired physics professor Robert Segall has embraced the concept of lifelong learning and will receive his second PhD this week.

At 74, Segall is to receive his PhD in philosophy and will be capped by his wife, Dean of the Centre for Higher Education Development, Professor Nan Yeld.

He is modest about his remarkable achievement though, putting it down to "hard slog" rather than brains.

But you will have to be really up

on your game if you want to engage him in even a brief discussion on the meaning of life. The man knows his stuff...

Segall found himself in the unique position of being older than his supervisor, and says he found the PhD to be "a wonderful education".

Um... so what was it all about, exactly? Well, not atoms and particles, or mathematical equations, that's for sure. Perhaps we should summarise it (purely for the sake of brevity, you understand) by saying

Segall's PhD dealt with a mix of things like moral realities, "mind-independent worlds", social constructs and moral philosophy.

Although the jump from physics to philosophy may be a big one in most people's book, Segall's long-standing interest in the subject made it a natural one for him.

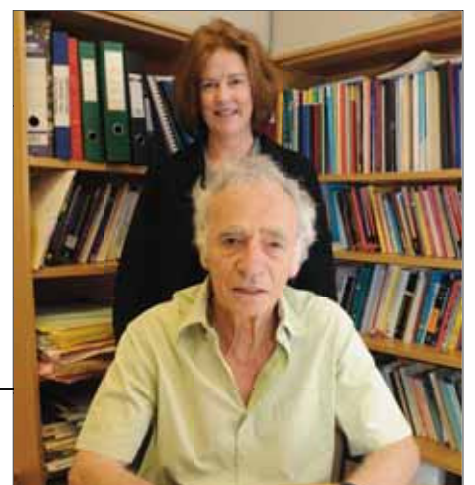
"I enjoyed it immensely," he says. "Philosophy is a subject that has always been close to my heart."

Segall has three children, Tim, Anna and Bill, and, although he used

to be a keen squash player, these days he spends much of his free time reading. Nobel Prize-winner JM Coetzee stands out as one of his favourite writers.

Is there another PhD in the offing? Well, you'll have to watch this space...^{MP}

Prof Robert Segall and his wife, Prof Nan Yeld.

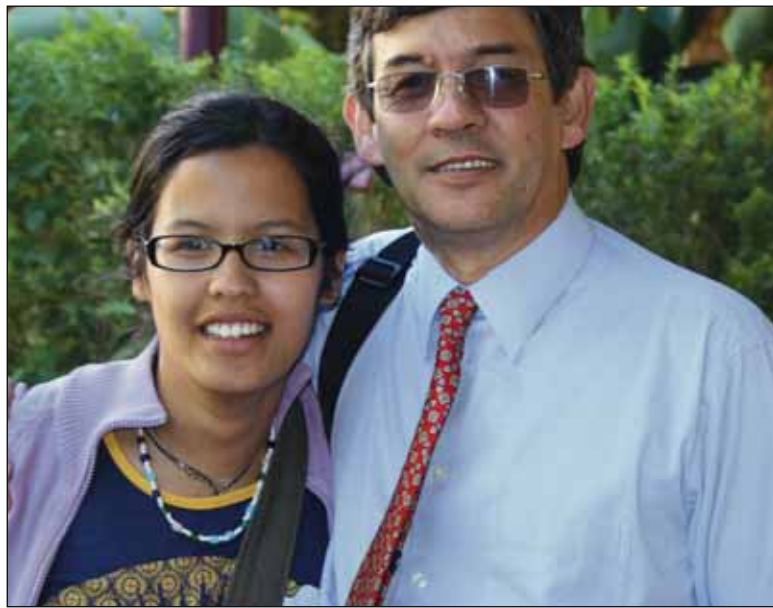


Maths a must for this family



Professor George Janelidze, of UCT's Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics, will cap his daughter, Tamar, when she receives her PhD. His son, Zurab, lectures in Pure Mathematics at Stellenbosch University. Zurab has been given a Y1 rating by the National Research Foundation, and his father is extremely proud of him and of Tamar. **MP**

Graduation revisited for Hussey



For everything, there is a season... In the turbulent, apartheid South Africa of the 1970s, severe limits were placed on the number of coloured and Indian students at medical schools across the country.

Professor Greg Hussey, Deputy Dean for Research in the Faculty of Health Sciences and director of the Institute for Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine at UCT, was one of the relatively few who got in.

But when Hussey earned his medical degree, in 1974, he never graduated. Instead, as a protest against the apartheid government's decree that coloured and black South Africans had to receive permits to attend medical school, Hussey refused to attend his own graduation ceremony.

Later this month, in what is bound to be a particularly emotional – not to say poignant – moment, Hussey will cap his eldest daughter, Hannah, 25, when she receives her own medical degree. How the times they are a 'chargin', to paraphrase Bob Dylan's famous ballad.

Hannah, he says, "is part of the new generation". She attended high school with no restrictions and, unlike black and coloured medical

graduates in her father's time, she can work wherever she chooses.

Hussey recalls that at the time of his graduation, coloured students were denied access to parts of hospitals where white patients were being treated. This rule was even extended to post-mortems.

Now, of course, so much has changed, and apartheid has been relegated to the scrapheap of history.

"Naturally, the most important change a democratic South Africa brought with it is that we all have the vote," says Hussey.

"Technically, coloured South Africans are no longer third-class citizens. But the new apartheid is financial discrimination. There is no doubt that this still exists, and the challenge now is to overcome it."

Hussey's wife, Cynthia le Grange, is also a medical doctor, and naturally, she also qualified at UCT.

Hussey says there was therefore a natural tendency for Hannah to choose medicine as well.

The memories of his own very different student days will no doubt come flooding back when this proud father caps his doctor daughter and sees her walk into a bright new tomorrow. **MP**

A feast of

Wedding

The doctorates (including a PhD or two for good measure) will be



Postgrad merger: The Department of Human Biology's Robert Lamberts and Nelleke Langerak will marry four days after their graduation.

flying thick and fast at the Faculty of Health Sciences graduation ceremony this week – and, shortly afterwards, two of the recipients will tie the knot at a ceremony of a very different kind.

Firstly, Professor of Biomedical Engineering Kit Vaughan will receive a DSc (Med), the most senior doctorate in the faculty, which is awarded for "substantive, original and scholarly contributions" to knowledge in one or more medical fields.

It is rarely awarded, and only to "persons of exceptional academic merit", on the basis of original published work, which must be of international standing and regarded as seminal. The subject of Vaughan's work is the biomechanics of human locomotion.

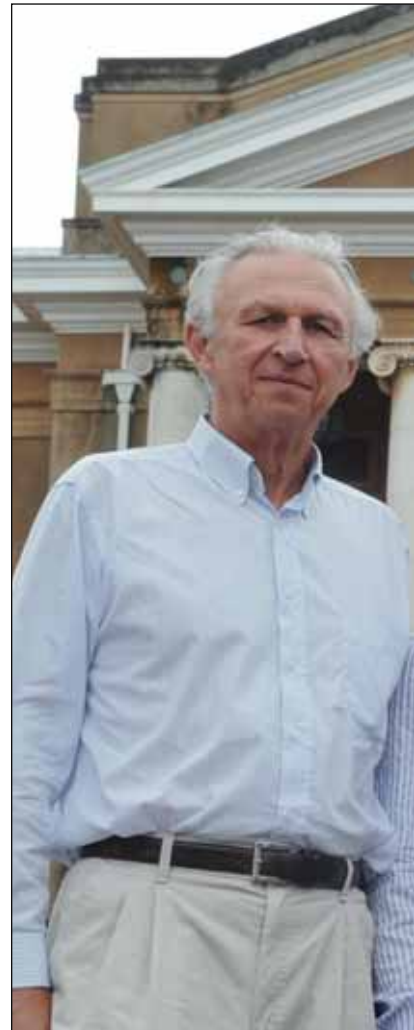
Secondly, Nelleke Langerak, who has Vaughan as a co-supervisor, will receive a PhD in Human Biology (biomedical engineering) for her thesis on the long-term consequences (sequelae) of the neurosurgical procedure of rhizotomy, the cutting of sensory nerve roots.

Her fiancé, Robert Lamberts, will receive a PhD in Human Biology (exercise science) for his work on a submaximal test for cyclists to predict performance.

But that's not all... Graham Fieggen, professor of neurosurgery and one of Langerak's co-supervisors, will receive a medical doctorate (ND) for his work on a pointing device which locates tumours in the brain.

Fieggen took over his position from Emeritus Professor Jonathan Peter, who was not only his supervisor but also Langerak's other co-supervisor.

On a lighter note, Lamberts and Langerak will attend a ceremony of a very different kind when they 'graduate' to becoming husband and wife at a venue just outside Cape Town four days later. **MP**



PhD feast: (From left) Emer Prof Jonathan Peter, Nelleke Langerak, Robert Lamberts, and Kit Vaughan.

Is there a docto



In the bag: Jennifer Steyn and dad Murray, with grandfather Pieter Steyn's doctor's bag and his graduating certificate.

It's literally true that MBChB g Steyn's bloodline on her father's way back to the founding of UCT.

It all started with her great-grandfather Tommie Steyn, a medical student at the American College (SAC) – now South African Schools or SACS – when parts of it came UCT in 1918. Not only was he the first captain of the UCT rugby team, but in that capacity would also be the university's first Student Representative in 1919.

Also in 1919, he captained UCT in an intervarsity against Stellenbosch 10 years after sibling Cecil had captained the first intercollege against Victoria College, Stellenbosch. (It's often overlooked, but the world, anyway – that Stellenbosch hospital was also established in 1918, springing from Victoria College, although SACS is the country's oldest school, depending on when you start counting.)

Tommie would spend much of his life at the Dutch Reformed Church's Maudslayi hospital – where he earned his locum tenens.



EDUCATION NEWS FROM AFRICA AND THE WORLD

(Sources: Independent Online, Reuters, Times Higher Education)

UCT is one of four Western Cape universities that are embracing soccer 2010 by offering facilities to fans. UCT hopes to make over 3 000 residence rooms available to accommodate alumni and other visitors. Jammie Shuttle buses will transport soccer fans to and from day match



games, airports and off-campus tours. The university is also offering big screen broadcasts of games, with refreshments available, in a "secure environment". The university's website, www.uct.ac.za, is carrying details.

A young, unemployed woman is suing the TSHWANE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (TUT) for R2-million. Although Sharon Kwadi can't afford the kind of lawyers the institution has, she is determined

to "see justice done" – to have the institution compensate her for the four years she spent studying towards a programme TUT was not accredited to give. In 2004 Kwadi enrolled at TUT to do a traumatology/criminology diploma, but just before she was due to graduate she learnt that the institution was not accredited to teach the course.

Former president Nelson Mandela received a hero's welcome at the Medunsa campus of the UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

recently when he attended his grandson's graduation ceremony. "Nelson Mandela ga go yo o tshwanang le wena [Nelson Mandela, there is no one like you]", the crowd sang as Mandela slowly moved to take his seat among the dignitaries before his grandson, Zinhe Dlamini, took an oath as a doctor. Speaking at the graduation ceremony, Dlamini's grandmother, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, urged the graduates to use their education to prevent diseases and

doctorates

to follow!



Dr Pieter, Robert Lamberts, Nelleke Langerak, Prof Kit Vaughan, and Prof Graham Fieggen.

Dr in the family?

graduate Jennifer's side goes all the way back to her grandfather, Dr

at the South African College of Medicine, which officially became the first team that also serve on the Executive Council in

UCT in the first University, eight years later, he became the SAC in Durban College of Medicine – this side of the family is a Bosch University graduate, coming out of the family claims bragging about by a few decent counting.)

of his career at Morgenster mission, a Shona name,

Murapi Wedu, meaning “our doctor” – in what was then Bulawayo, Rhodesia. He would receive an MBE (Member of the British Empire) in 1951 for his work at Morgenster.

Tommie and Annie Steyn's oldest son, Pieter, would carry on the family's medical tradition, graduating from UCT in 1953 alongside the likes of classmate Stuart Saunders, who would later become vice-chancellor.

The doctor gene then skipped a generation, as dad Murray, marketing manager at UCT's Department of Communication and Marketing, and aunt Jennifer, the well-known stage and television actress, opted for drama instead, as would big sister Lauren. Uncle Andrew taught in the African Studies section at UCT for a while, but now works in alternative healing. (There's family talk that the brothers deliberately forewent medicine as acts of rebellion.)

It's grandfather Pieter, however, who in part inspired Jennifer's medical ambitions. She recalls well the times they visited the family home in George.

“I can still remember that he would have his stethoscope around his neck hours after he had come home from work,” she says.

Jennifer still has that stethoscope. And grandfather's medical bag, which she's inherited alongside a few odds and ends of his trade, such as a blade (with that one-of-a-kind surgery smell), little pots of ointments and his ophthalmoscope.

“The bag's still got that old medicine smell, which reminds me so much of walking into his surgery,” says Jennifer.

The bag, now neatly stacked with her own professional and first-aid wares, will go with her to Kimberley Hospital in the Free State, where she starts her two-year internship next year.

She'll miss mom and dad, she says – although they'll probably miss her more – but thanks to that bag, she'll have a little bit of family with her no matter where she goes.

Expect some blubbering from dad before then, though.

“The one thing that is emotional and déjà vu-esque,” he says, “is visiting my daughter in her final year at the hospital and seeing her walk down the passage with her stethoscope around her neck.”

Don't be surprised if the next generation of Steyns follow suit.

(M.Morris@uct.ac.za)

Cap that!

Professors keep it in the family

It will be a rare and emotional moment when Professor Rob Dyer receives his PhD during graduation week.

The person capping him is not only a highly distinguished academic herself, with a PhD, but none other than Dyer's wife, Silke Dyer, associate professor and head of UCT's Reproductive Medicine Unit.

Silke said she was honoured to be able to cap her husband, which was a privilege given to academic members of the faculty, with preference given to spouses.

Having graduated with her PhD in 2005, Silke said doing a PhD was a privilege in itself, but being able to support each other so closely was “truly special”.

She added she was proud to be associated with a university such as UCT, which was without doubt the leading university on the African continent.

Meanwhile, Rob Dyer (who obtained his PhD in haemodynamic changes associated with spinal anaesthesia for Caesarian sections) said his capping would be “a very special



moment indeed”.

Asked why he had not capped his wife, Rob explained: “We thought about it at the time, but decided against it. We did not think it would be appropriate for a spouse who did not have a PhD yet to cap his wife.”

Rob, 57, said he was receiving his PhD relatively late in life, first having attended UCT as a student in 1971.

The couple has two sons, Martin, 15, and Oliver, 12. With parents like theirs, one can only assume their own academic futures are assured. **MP**

If the cap fits, do it again

Council deputy chair prepares for duty



bound to be emotional, but more than that, it's about a sense of achievement for the graduate, after so much hard work and dedication,” he says.

Petersen, who has been a member of UCT's Council since 2002 and who is also chair of the University's Finance Committee, says he always encouraged his daughters to “follow their own hearts,” and never tried to persuade them to walk in his footsteps.

“When parents choose what they want their children to do, or become, it's a recipe for a great deal of unhappiness,” he says.

As finance chair, he describes himself as “a member of a team of highly skilled and dedicated people” who have worked tirelessly to bring about good governance, strong financial management and participation in decision-making at UCT.

He says that together the team has built a model of financial sustainability that has put UCT on the right path in terms of strategic investments.

But this week, on Melissa's special day, his thoughts will no doubt turn away from balance sheets and financial statements to the pride he feels as his younger daughter earns her hard-won degree and plans a future career in the field she loves. **MP**

When it comes to graduation ceremonies, you might say UCT Council deputy chair Trevor Petersen has “been there, done that, got the caps...”

Which is in no way meant to underplay the significance of the moment when he caps his younger daughter, Melissa (22) this week, as she qualifies with a degree in occupational therapy.

It's not the first time Petersen, himself a UCT BCom graduate and distinguished chartered accountant (CA), has performed such an honour. A few years ago he capped his first daughter, Candice, when she graduated from the Faculty of Humanities.

“Something like this is always

create a better world.

In **MOGADISHU** a suicide bomber disguised as a veiled woman killed at least 19 people at a medical graduation ceremony in a city hotel earlier this month, including three Somali government ministers. It was the worst attack in the lawless Horn of Africa nation since June, when hard-line al Shabaab insurgents killed the security minister and at least 30 others in a suicide bombing at a hotel in Baladwayne.

When he first arrived in South Africa as a refugee from Cameroon, Novel Chegou started working at a Stellenbosch craft market, hoping to raise enough money to continue his studies. On Tuesday, five years after his move, Chegou graduated with a PhD in medical biochemistry from **STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**. Chegou, who lost both his parents at a young age, grew up in Bamenda in Cameroon. In 2004, he left for Stellenbosch, where his brother was

selling arts and crafts at a local market. His work had already been published in a peer-reviewed international medical journal.

A recent study estimated 1.2 million **AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL** students drop out of school each year, with more than half of 16- to 24-year-old dropouts facing joblessness as low-skill jobs disappear. Among black dropouts aged 16 to 24, unemployment soars to 69%, and 23% of black dropouts are incarcerated.

Dropping out “is no longer an option”, President Barack Obama told Congress earlier this year. The US graduation rate was a few percentage points below the OECD average. Germany ranked first, and seven other nations, including South Korea, Israel, Finland, and Japan, graduated at least nine out of 10 students.

UK UNIVERSITIES stand accused of hypocrisy over their claims to value teaching, after a major study of promotions policy

and practice found that many are still failing to reward academics for leadership in pedagogy. Research by the Higher Education Academy and the University of Leicester's “Genie” Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning examines the promotion policies of 104 UK universities. In the research-intensive Russell Group and 1994 Group universities, only 58% and 35% cent, respectively, feature criteria on teaching and learning in their policies.

From dissertation to diapers

There were two reasons master's student Abigail Kabandula almost gave up her studies, but it was a life-changing decision to continue

Abigail Kabandula got her MA in Historical Studies the tough way – changing her dissertation topic half way through and becoming a first-time mother.

But this week when she graduates with her hard-won MA in Historical Studies, she will know she has every reason to feel deeply proud.

"My husband, Singumbe Muyeba, and I were married in April 2007, the same month in which we have our birthdays," she says.

"One of our agreements before we married was that we should both do our master's degrees. We saved up, and also applied for scholarships. The University of Zambia, where we did our undergraduate studies, didn't have what we wanted to do at master's level.

The couple applied to universities in England, the US and at UCT and Rhodes in South Africa.

"When we received our acceptances without scholarships, we had to choose where we would get the best possible education for the value of the finances we had. UCT won hands

down, and it was also closer to home in Zambia."

But so much for the best laid plans of mice and men...

"I had started working on my dissertation early; but halfway through, in about June, my supervisor and I discovered that we couldn't continue on that topic and he couldn't supervise any of the other suggestions I made," Kabandula said.

"It was such a discouraging time. I had to start looking for another topic and supervisor. That's how I joined Associate Professor Anne Mager's customary law project."

But in February the couple heard Kabandula was expecting a baby.

"We were happy, but also felt it was not a good time because we were not financially stable and I didn't think I could go through the stress of academic work, financial stress and being pregnant. I almost quit, but my husband and supervisor encouraged me and told me I could do it."

Even fatigue couldn't hold her back and she finally submitted her dissertation on 17 July this year.



Happy family: Singumbe Muyeba and Abigail Kabandula with baby Christian.

"Two months later, on 21 September, our handsome son, Christian, was born, and I was told that I had passed my dissertation. It was a great day!"

Kabandula also holds a BA in Education, with majors in English and

history.

Muyeba graduated in June with an MPhil in Development Studies, and holds a BA in Public Administration and Development Studies. He has just started his PhD.

UCT is "a great place to study", says Kabandula.

"The diversity is awesome, and the opportunities for study are overwhelming. Also, opportunities to develop other areas of your life are endless."

Solomons beats ill health to graduate



Close-knit: The Solomons family of Zoe, Zane, Marilyn and Luke.

Not many people tackle an undergraduate degree at the watershed age of 40. Fewer still have to overcome life threatening cancer in the process.

Zane Solomons is a man who achieved both these feats.

Solomons' wife Marilyn, a research administrator at the Department of Pharmacology, says it was "a huge shock" when Solomons was diagnosed with colon cancer during his fourth year into a BSc in Audiology.

"It was the last thing we expected, and it was a very difficult time for us," she recalls.

But Solomons was operated on at Groote Schuur Hospital, with good results, although he still undergoes a check-up every six months.

A proud Marilyn says her husband will do his year's community service at the Red Cross Children's Hospital next year, and is looking forward to the challenge.

Solomons completed his matric in 1987, but didn't study further at the time.

"We decided that one of us needed a degree, and the responsibility fell on Zane," his wife says.

He was working as an administra-

tor at Telkom at the time, and it was a "huge challenge" to start studying, so many years after leaving school.

"It was very tough for both of us, but we are now so pleased we persevered to the end," she adds.

A dozen wild horses and a herd of angry buffalo couldn't keep her away from his graduation this week. And not only that, but she has obtained extra tickets for their two children, Luke (11) and Zoe (8) as well.

Now, Marilyn says, she is looking for another ticket – for Solomons' 83-year-old mom, who is as proud of him as his wife is. **MP**

How battle for life ended in a PhD

Janestic Twikirize's journey to a PhD in Social Development is an encouraging story of bravery in the face of immense suffering.

She survived a potentially fatal condition, which saw her lose her newborn baby, and was on life support for 21 days. But she overcame it all and will graduate with a PhD this week.

Twikirize, a Ugandan, says part of the reason she is alive today was timely access to medical attention. This inspired her to undertake research on innovative mechanisms to improve access to health care in Uganda.

"I was seven months pregnant in October 2004 when I developed hypertension (high blood pressure). The doctor suggested removing the baby before its term as I was at risk of losing my life and that of the baby from a condition known as pre-eclampsia," she says.

About two hours after leaving the theatre, she was discovered unconscious and lying in a pool of blood. Immediately the doctors diagnosed the problem as disseminated

intravascular coagulation, a rare condition associated with blood clotting failure due to loss of blood platelets.

"I barely survived. I was on life support for 21 days. Meanwhile, the baby had been placed in the Special Care Unit. He later developed some complication and died. I did not see the baby. That too took its toll on me. At the time I was discharged, I still could not sit properly, stand or walk and I still had a catheter," she recalls.

It was during her time of recovery at home that she began to reflect on Uganda's health care system and the importance of timely and effective access to health care.

"My heart was drawn to the rural folks. I began to imagine what would have happened if there had been delayed attention, or lack of skilled attention, equipment and other accessories when I was sick. I would be among the maternal mortality statistics," she says (It is reported that 435 women die in Uganda for every 100 000 births.)

"I was still literally in my sickbed when I developed the concept

paper for the doctoral research. I later focused on one of the innovative mechanisms to improve access to health care for rural households, i.e. community health insurance."

A friend from Makerere University in Uganda, who was already enrolled at UCT for her doctoral studies, prompted Twikirize's interest in applying to UCT for her PhD, and she was admitted in February 2007.

"I took the offer despite the fact that I had not fully recovered – emotionally or physically.

"With the skills acquired through my doctoral studies, I plan to intensify my research and publication activities, as well as become a better teacher and supervisor.

"I also plan to spend some time in counselling students and other people facing difficult situations, to help them understand that with God, all things are possible," she adds.

She pays tribute to "the commitment and humaneness" of her supervisor, Dr Constance O'Brien, the Department of Social Development, and says this relationship was one of the highlights of her stay at UCT. **MP**



It's not all fun and games anymore, says Ramugondo

PhD candidate Elelwani Ramugondo jokes that if you're looking for a photographic prop that best captures the findings of her doctoral research, a television set may be the most suitable.

An occupational therapist by trade, with an interest in the benefits, dynamics and philosophy of play, Ramugondo's work with one family in rural Venda gets her both fired up and worked up.

Over the three generations from grandmother to grandchildren, not only has the role of play in the family diminished, but it's also created a generational gap, she found in her study, *Intergenerational shifts and continuities in children's play within a rural Venda family in the early 20th and 21st centuries*.

As a young child in the 1930s, growing up in a family converted to Christianity, the grandmother's play was strongly influenced by her mission-school upbringing. Her family, school and the church collaborated to make sure that the activities she took part in fell within the bounds of what was proper for a Christian child. Her childhood play memories revolve around being a Wayfarer, the breakaway scout and guide organisation for black girls, run by strict rules and Christian principles. At the same time, 'heathen' children of the grandmother's age in Venda at the time played *mahundwane*, a very elaborate 'playing house' game, requiring big groups of children.

The church had a lesser influence on the games and play of the mother in the 1970s. Instead, the school exerted the greater power, as she dedicated most of her structured 'play time' to the majorettes.



Play time: In her doctoral study, Elelwani Ramugondo of the School of Health and Rehabilitation Studies describes the generational divide in a family in which the understanding of 'play' has become complex.

In the current generation – for her study, Ramugondo concentrated on the nine-year-old boy and 12-year-old girl who were the offspring of the mother and her current husband – the idea of play is the most ambiguous, Ramugondo found.

While the children do play, it's become more tricky to define what play is for them, she says. Is it the structured activities at school? What about the time spent on games on their parents' cellphones? Or the hours whiled away in front of the television?

Gone for the children, notably, was group play with the neighbour-

hood children, or even with other family members. Little wonder then that the grandmother described her grandchildren as a lost generation, reports Ramugondo.

In part, rapid social change – democracy in South Africa, the world invited into the house through the television – meant that there was little sense of a "collective authoring of the unfolding play narrative in the family", Ramugondo notes. "The older generation, in particular, is rendered unable to mediate their children's play engagements, and can't keep up with the technology with which the children are quite

comfortable."

That said, Ramugondo raises the notion of 'occupational consciousness', a concept borrowed in part from Black Consciousness.

"Even as adults are complaining, they are part of the problem," she says. "They bought that television, they're the ones who switch it on, and they're the ones who would come home and ask the children what they've missed on the soapies."

"People are not conscious of how what they do feeds into the hegemonies that surround them, and they inadvertently perpetuate those hegemonies." **MP**

My experience defines who I am, say young adults

Young adults want to tell someone about their experiences and understandings of intimate relationships and intimate partner violence. PhD candidate Adele Marais found that in doing so young women and men use the dialogue as an opportunity to define who they are, and how they want to be understood.

For her doctoral study, Marais, a clinical psychologist and senior lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, recruited 24 UCT students aged between 19 and 24 years to talk through their "meaning-making and knowledges" of intimate partner violence. Some had first- and second-hand experiences of intimate-partner violence, while others were interested in – and concerned about – the issue.

"My attention was directed at how participants actively imparted meaning to themselves and others, and how they negotiated, constructed and performed their identities through the situated interaction of the research interview," says Marais.

What she found was that, at least among her subjects, both women (19 of them) and men (five) take their intimate relationships very seriously, and that the nature, intensity and timing of these relationships have significant



Talk it out: PhD candidate Adele Marais.

implications for their ongoing identity work.

"Young adults are in danger of becoming involved and isolated in intense and abusive relationships at a

time of transition, growth and change," explains Marais. "Therefore, a violent relationship at this stage of their lives can have critical implications for how young adults experience and construct

their sense of self."

In the study, the participants all had clear self-presentation goals. The women both rejected and emphasised their victimisation at different points in their narratives in order to prove their insight, personal power, resistance and agency. "Young women are very concerned about how their story of partner violence can undermine how they prefer to present themselves to others," says Marais, "as well as how they choose to be perceived and judged by others."

In turn, the men constructed themselves as non-demeaning, caring and moderate men. In their interviews, the young men actively grappled with issues of gender, power and culture as they tried to define their masculinity and competence in relationships.

There's much for researchers and practitioners to learn from the study, Marais believes. The results show that young people make meaning of their experiences of intimate partner violence through dynamic and complex discursive processes. "Importantly," she says, "we as listeners must support young women and men to tell their stories in ways that will enable them to explore, revise and sustain their preferred narratives of self." **MP**

Zuze wins top PhD prize



Top class: Dr Tia Linda Zuze.

The Council of the Economic Society of South Africa has awarded Dr Tia Linda Zuze, a research affiliate of the South African Labour and Development Research Unit at UCT, the 2009 Founders' Medal for a PhD dissertation in recognition of her excellent research thesis, *Equity and Effectiveness in East African Primary Schools*.

Her PhD work, undertaken as a Graduate Associate in SALDRU, was enabled by a Spencer Foundation Scholarship awarded through the School of Education at UCT. She is currently working at the University of Witwatersrand.

Zuze said she was honoured that her thesis was judged not only the top PhD thesis in the School of Economics at UCT in 2008, but also emerged victorious from a strong pool of candidates from economics departments across the country.

"I'm honoured to receive this award. It's a real tribute to the excellent academic support that I received while at UCT. Writing a thesis is always a challenge but I feel that through this process, I've grown as a researcher. I'm still passionate about finding ways to make education and training fairer and more relevant for young people in Africa. So perhaps this is a first step in a longer journey."

Her supervisor, Professor Murray Leibbrandt, added: "It's a model of the kind of rigorous, evidence-based policy research through which SALDRU and many in the School of Economics make their contribution to South Africa and our continent."

Her thesis had drawn praise from three prominent international examiners. One examiner with extensive experience of educational research in South Africa and the rest of Africa wrote: "I have to say that this is indeed a remarkable piece of work. I have read a good bit of educational research produced by South African scholars, and this work shows a degree of methodological sophistication and engagement with the literature that is unusual and I would say surpasses that of even full professors carrying out research on education in South Africa."

Social networking loosens up traditional modes of instruction

Zimbabwean-born Patient Rambe has been spending a lot of time on Facebook.

Elementary, you might say, but for his PhD in Educational Technology, which he will receive on 18 December, Rambe has examined the dynamics of power and learning that exist in student/lecturer relationships via social networking sites.

In his thesis, *The impact of using social networking sites on academic relations and student learning in a university setting*, Rambe looks at how sites like Facebook have empowered students from disadvantaged backgrounds, many of whom have felt a sense of inferiority when faced with experienced educators and their more capable peers from privileged backgrounds.

"I assessed the asymmetrical relations of power between individuals; you know, the expression that all people are equal but some are more equal than others."

More importantly, Rambe found that, because of factors such as learning problems and language problems, learners "can't access the lecturer because of fear, lack of confidence and limited capabilities".

To top it off, class sizes are larger – some with up to 450 students – making it harder for lecturers to communicate with students on a one-on-one basis.

Rambe contends that educators can take advantage of social networking sites to interact better with their students, and use them as diagnostic vehicles to unpack the kind of problems that students often encounter.

The sites also present an opportunity for a shift away from the traditional instructivist mode of teaching towards constructivist generation of knowledge.

"My feeling was that social networking sites would provide a knowledge construction environment where students had control of what



kind of information they generate, who to interact with and in what dimensions."

Using a critical ethnographic method of inquiry, Rambe joined a large Facebook feedback group to study the way the students interacted with each other and with their lecturers.

"You might be surprised to learn that there were some students who were reserved and withdrawn in class, but very vocal online."

And different categories emerged. There were the 'cognitively proximate', or 'trailblazers' – a highly active and well-networked group that used a diversified range of social networking

platforms, not just Facebook, to find information. For this group the role of the lecturer for access to and validation of information was increasingly diminished.

Then there were the 'cognitively emergent' group who used Facebook only to socialise, and the 'cognitively distal' groups who were there because it was a course "requirement", but saw no real value to it; and finally the 'disciples or acolytes' group, who used Facebook only to acquire what the lecturer had provided.

These last three groups failed to leverage the balance of power, and actually increased their dependence on the lecturer for academic support.

"I strongly believe that social networking sites will become a permanent feature of the 21st century that will impact tertiary learning relations," Rambe said. "But it's up to the way we appropriate these sites that will determine the amount of academic leverage we will attain."

Older than language



You have to be on your toes when speaking about comics to Shathley Q, PhD candidate Shathley Abrahams' preferred operating handle.

Not for him the pedestrian concerns about Superman's origins or Batman's daddy issues, although he can wax eloquent on these topics too, if prompted. Instead, Q's talk and his doctoral thesis are peppered with references to Chomsky, Hume, Kant, Warhol, Benjamin Whorf and linguistic determinism, apophenia (seeing patterns in random or meaningless data, just like Neo did in *The Matrix*), manga master Osamu Tezuka, Marshall McLuhan, Stuart Kauffman, emergence, Freud, Foucault, Marx, Descartes and, just in case you're feel-

ing a little at sea, Stephen King.

As a South African pioneer in the study of comics and its relation to the philosophical canon – he was the first African comics scholar to present a paper at the Congress of the Americas, back in 2001 – Q is mixing it up in his doctoral thesis.

As a scholar of popular culture with an appreciation for its many interdisciplinary opportunities, the main argument of his doctoral thesis is that those perennial questions of philosophy on identity, meaning, self, space, duty, time, representation and a score of others could be tackled through the oft-disparaged comics medium. After all, Q says, humans told their stories in pictures long be-

fore anything resembling prose came along. (And what were the Pharaohs if not superheroes?)

So, if we understand the world through the constraints of language, as Whorf would have it, how would our knowledge of the world be different if we viewed it through sequential pictures and words, instead of just words?

"What would the philosophical conundrums that have come up look like if we saw them through comics instead of through prose?" Q asks.

"The subject matter is interesting, yes, and on the surface looks like comics, but there is something profound and deeper there."

And, to press his points home, Q closes his thesis with a little fiction in which a fictional character, also named Shathley Q (a comic-book writer, naturally), reinvents and, yes, saves the notions of popular culture and literacy in a dystopian world where the Renaissance never happened and Gutenberg's printing press was not even a footnote in history.

(For those with a more learned interest in the genre, find some of Q's writings at popmatters.com, where he reflects on the sociology of superheroes – a topic covered in his doctoral thesis – and comics in the age of social media, among other issues.) **MP**

Spiritually speaking



Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba has turned his attention away from matters spiritual (temporarily, of course) to complete a PhD in Business Administration.

This week he will be capped by his predecessor, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, and Ndungane's predecessor, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, will be part of the graduation procession.

Makgoba is a fellow of the UCT Graduate School of Business which, in collaboration with Duke University, runs an "excellent" programme on public values, called the Emerging Leaders Programme.

He says that during the fellowship programme, his intellectual curiosity was rekindled and he registered for doctoral studies. His thesis is titled *African workplace spirituality in South African mines*.

The thesis reflects on the workplace and is set in a mining context, looking at the plight of black miners

who sustain spinal cord injuries.

"Their resilience in the face of trauma, and the difficult workplace context, enables one to reflect on African-situated community spirituality, which draws strength from Ubuntu values," he says.

"These values are no different to Biblical values and principles. Therefore, they knit well with what I have studied in the past and with my daily reflections."

You have to be disciplined and work hard to complete a PhD of this nature, Makgoba says. In this respect, the Knowledge Commons staff, as well as colleague Victor Katoma, were very supportive.

But working with Professor Kurt April was his "greatest pleasure and highlight".

"He stretched and encouraged me all the way. Being Archbishop took its toll, especially in the editing stage, but Prof Kurt demanded more time and thoroughness from me."

And April encouraged him when the going got tough.

"Travelling from Washington and meeting the VC, and unwisely saying to him, 'Dr Price, I am your student', made me want to work even harder. Imagine an Archbishop dropping out!"

Makgoba says his PhD has enhanced his "culture of writing", and he hopes to co-author the thesis with April as a book.

Asked how he managed to find the time for a PhD in his busy schedule, Makgoba says: "Archbishops must pray hard, reflect deeply and work hard as well. And they must also work hard not to be swallowed up by work. So you just have to work hard!" **MP**

Three more USHEPiA PhDs for Africa

The University Science Humanities & Engineering Partnerships in Africa (USHEPiA) programme is celebrating the graduation of three more African academics who will receive PhD degrees this week through their Fellowships.

The three Fellows currently celebrating their achievement are Christine Noe (above right) of the University of Dar es Salaam, Richard Okoth (below right) of the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology, and Samuel Majalija of Makerere University.

USHEPiA was set up to promote collaboration among established Af-



rican researchers in the generation and dissemination of knowledge, and to build institutional and human capacity in

African universities.

UCT's partner universities are Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology, Makerere University, (Uganda), University of Botswana, University of Dar es Salaam, University of Nairobi, University of Zambia, and the University of Zimbabwe.

Since the programme's inception, 64

full degree Fellowships have been in operation. The three PhDs that will be awarded this week bring the number of successful Fellowships to 48.

Noe's PhD is titled *Bioregional planning in Southeast Africa: The creation and consequences of the Selous-Niassa Transfrontier Conservation Area*. Okoth's PhD is on the development of transgenic drought-tolerant maize, while Majalija's thesis investigates the impact assessment of antibiotic use in livestock on human health in the pastoralist farming systems of south-western Uganda. **MP**



Rogue seals cause havoc

The hours he spent baking in the sun on a group of seabird islands (Prince Edward Islands, off South Africa) produced some worrying findings for Azwianewi Makhado's doctoral research. Specifically that small bands (dare we call them gangs?) of adolescent Cape fur seals were decimating seabird populations on Malgas, Dassen and Dyer Islands, and at Lambert's Bay. It has been notably Cape gannets, Cape cormorants and African penguins that have suffered under the seals' attacks, Makhado explains. For example, over the 2004/2005 breeding season, the seals killed some 11 000 fledgling Cape gannets, totalling around 83% of chicks. That bodes ill for vulnerable gannet numbers when it's the chance of the (now) handfuls

of surviving chicks to breed four or five seasons later. In addition, in one year the seals killed some 8% of adult penguins, a group already under threat. (Penguin numbers have dropped from about 23 000 breeding pairs at Dyer Island in the 1970s to about 2 000 pairs since 1997.) In response, Makhado, a marine scientist (with Marine and Coastal Management, responsible for the management and conservation of seabirds on the islands), and his supervisors have come up with a set of recommendations. As the killing of seabirds is a learned behaviour (it's not for actual feeding), this will involve policing the islands and removing the offending seals. "These rogue seals are a small percentage of the overall population," Makhado stresses.



Fate sealed: Azwianewi Makhado has been monitoring the harm that Cape fur seals have caused to some local seabird populations.

Post-mortem of a massacre

James Simpson's master's thesis examines Boipatong and a covert war



June 17 1992 marked a grim day in South Africa's recent history when at least 39 people were killed in what later came to be known as the Boipatong massacre.

It was an event that shook the world, and brought South Africa to the precipice.

Now, 17 years later, UCT's James Simpson (27) will be awarded a master's degree in historical studies, with distinction, for his thesis on the massacre, which marked a major turning point in South Africa's history as the country edged ever closer to democracy and its first elections in 1994.

At the time, the massacre was widely portrayed as proving the ANC's claim that the then-National Party government was using the police and the army to wage a covert war against the ANC. The government lost all remaining legitimacy, and the ANC was increasingly able to dictate the terms of the transition.

But what proof was there of police involvement? Investigations by the Goldstone Commission found none. In 1993 a criminal court (on the tested evidence of 120 Boipatong residents) convicted IFP supporters, and ruled that the police had played no part.

The 1998 TRC Report, however, found the police culpable, basing its finding primarily on accounts put forward by a monitoring organisation.

But later the TRC's own amnesty committee, like the Goldstone Commission and the trial court before them, found evidence of police complicity to be "fraught with difficulties".

Simpson says one of the key features of the massacre was the amount of political capital the ANC was able to extract from it.

"They broadcast Boipatong to South Africa and the world as an event that epitomised state-sponsored violence. Yet evidence of police

complicity was thin and incoherent," he says.

Nevertheless, the claims of police involvement caused a global outcry, and the ANC was able to place further pressure on then-president FW de Klerk to move ahead more speedily with reforms that would lead to democracy in South Africa.

De Klerk started weakening his ties with the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), which at the time was involved in widespread armed conflict with the ANC.

Before Boipatong, says Simpson, De Klerk still nurtured hopes of actually winning the country's first democratic election. However, the massacre and its aftermath seriously undermined this ambition.

While evidence of police involvement in Boipatong is scant, Simpson maintains that there was nevertheless a degree of justice in the massacre's reception.

"Popular reaction to the massacre spoke to a broader context in South Africa, wherein the state had repeatedly sought to undermine the ANC using underhand, often violent tactics."

He observes that, in a somewhat ironic twist, the current Chief Justice, Sandile Ngcobo, handled the TRC case on Boipatong, in which 16 IFP

members asked for (and were granted) amnesty for their involvement in the massacre, claiming that police had not been involved.

Simpson could have chosen one of several massacres for his thesis, but he says that in many ways, Boipatong stood alone.

"I really just happened upon it as a topic, but it was fascinating right from the start," he says, "and the excellent supervision I received from Associate Professor Anne Mager of the Department of Historical Studies made the topic navigable."

Simpson is interested in studying the perpetration of such atrocities as the Boipatong massacre "with a compassionate eye". He says it is a sense of compassion that puts the leadership of former President Nelson Mandela in contrast with current politics in South Africa.

"There's a need to overcome crude distinctions between good and evil, between victim and perpetrator. So-called perpetrators have more in common with us than we'd like to admit.

"We place too much emphasis upon the 'evil' of their actions, and too little on the circumstances that have set their lives apart from ours. Understanding this will help to pave the way to greater conciliation." **MP**

SADC nations not on the same page

If the punchline of Laurie Nathan's doctoral thesis – that domestic stability is a necessary condition of a security community – would seem self-evident to many, it seems is not.

Much of the literature on security communities, Nathan explains, takes a different view. "The concept of security communities was developed principally by international-relations scholars who were more interested in relations between states, not relations within states," he says. "For them, a security community existed where there was no prospect whatsoever of a war between a group of states." (Think Australia and New Zealand, the US and Canada.)

But things are a little different in the South African Development Community (SADC), an agreement

between 15 Southern African states to boost economic, political and security co-operation. And in his thesis, Nathan explains what went wrong with the SADC. (Now a research associate at UCT and a visiting fellow at the Crisis States Research Centre at the London School of Economics, Nathan, then head of the UCT-based Centre for Conflict Resolution, was part of the international teams that developed many SADC policies.)

Three things undermined the SADC's ambitions. One: the lack of common values. A mixed bag of democracies and authoritarian states, there was little agreement on some key issues, such as the civil war in Angola and the troubles in Zimbabwe.

Two: SADC states are economically and administratively weak.

"Weak states necessarily set up weak organisations," says Nathan.

And, three: SADC states – in sharp contrast to those in the European Community, for example – do not want to relinquish sovereignty to the regional organisation. (Zimbabwe would just shrug off any SADC decisions with which it did not agree.)

It doesn't bode well for the organisation, then. But while one strong state – even South Africa – wouldn't have the clout to bring the others to heel, a small, strong partnership may, Nathan suggests.

A pity then, he adds, that the region's two potential powerhouses, South Africa – although still wary of the 'bully' label it earned during apartheid – and Zimbabwe, can't play that role. **MP**



Bringing order: Laurie Nathan's doctoral thesis, *The Failure of the SADC Organ: Regional security arrangements in Southern Africa, 1992-2003*, was undertaken through the Department of Historical Studies.

UCT scholars get country's highest honours

Two UCT scholars, Professor Johann Lutjeharms and Professor Bongani Mayosi, will be among the three South Africans – all academics – to receive the Order of Mapungubwe, the country's highest national order, from President Jacob Zuma, in Pretoria on 11 December.

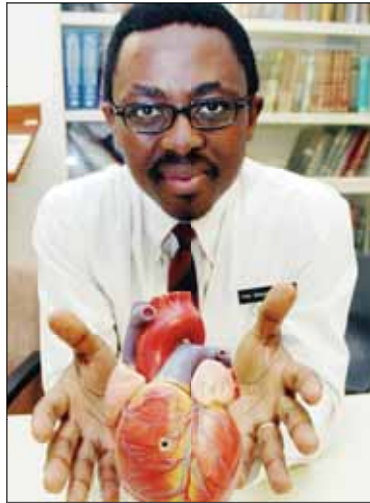
Lutjeharms and Mayosi, together with Emeritus Professor Hendrik Koornhof of the University of the Witwatersrand, will be awarded the Order of Mapungubwe (silver) for outstanding contributions in their respective fields.

Lutjeharms receives the award for his exceptional work in oceanographic science. In particular, he has become the foremost authority on the Agulhas Current – the main input of warm, salty water around the southern tip of Africa into the Atlantic – and the role that the Agulhas plays in the earth's climate and in climate change. In a paper in the



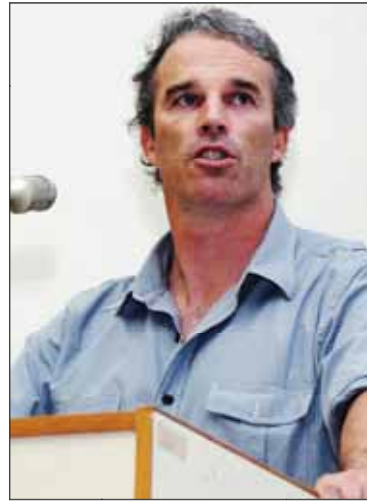
Trifecta: UCT's Prof Johann Lutjeharms, Prof Bongani Mayosi and alumnus Lewis Gordon Pugh have received national honours.

latest edition of the journal *Nature*, Lutjeharms and colleagues show that increased warm, salty water from the Agulhas Current may well offset any possible reductions in the Atlantic



deep-water circulation from freshwater inputs in the North Atlantic.

Mayosi, head of the Department of Medicine at UCT, will be recognised for his pioneering work in

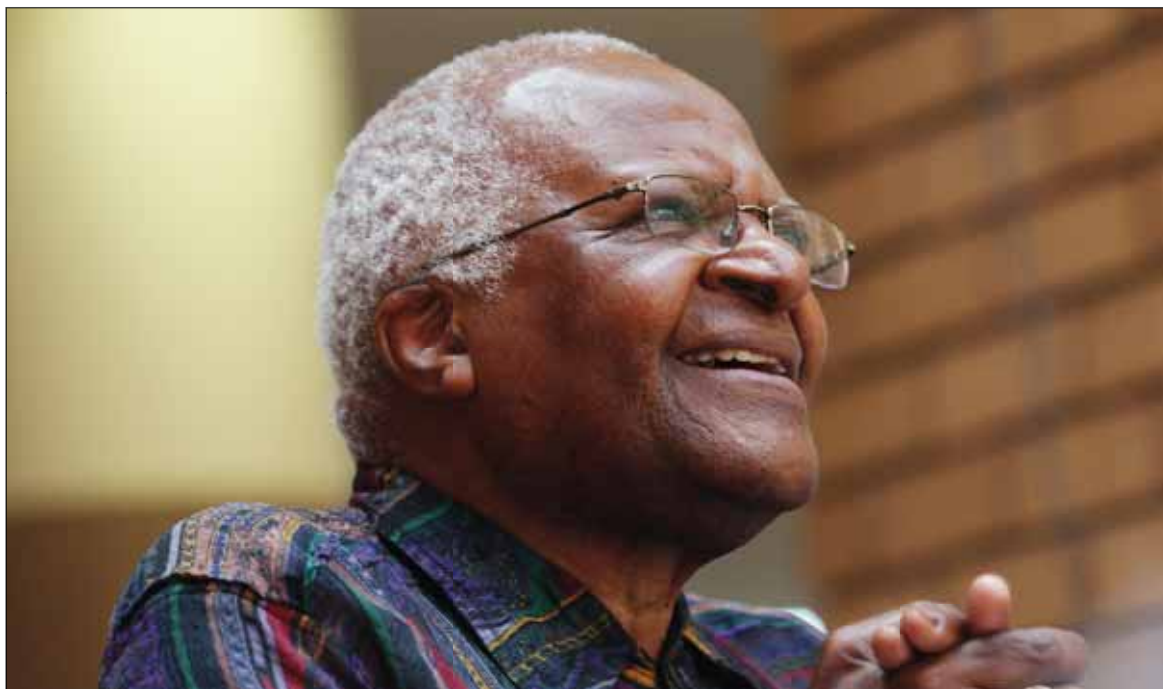


medical science. For many years, he has been sounding the alarm regarding the growing threat of non-communicable diseases in South Africa. He is one of the senior authors of the

seminal paper on the topic that appeared in the UK journal *The Lancet* this year, and will also play a leading role in two major South African health and research collaborations – the UCT-based Sub-Saharan Africa Centre for Chronic Diseases, and the Southern African Consortium for Research Excellence.

But Lutjeharms and Mayosi will not be the only ones with UCT ties to receive national orders next week.

UCT law graduate, environmentalist and maritime lawyer Lewis Gordon Pugh will be presented with the Order of Ikhamanga (gold) for his exceptional sporting triumphs. In 2007, Pugh became the first person to complete a long-distance swim at the North Pole, part of his efforts to raise awareness of the threat of global warming. (Next up for Pugh is a swim in a glacial lake under the summit of Mount Everest, in April 2010.) **MP**



Honouring the honourable: Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu received the Fetzer Prize for Love and Forgiveness, which he was awarded jointly with the Dalai Lama, for facing, over 50 years, "with great courage, a world that is weary of being in the grasp of fear and violence".

All South Africans damaged by apartheid

Apartheid damaged the humanity of all South Africans, black and white, said Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu at the recent Beyond Reconciliation Conference round table, organised at UCT. Tutu said one of the dangers of the post-apartheid society is that South Africans did not recognise that they had been damaged by apartheid. "Maybe we haven't got to the point of dealing with that," he said, pointing to "instances of poverty that are unacceptable, with Government ministers buying expensive cars when there are people going to bed hungry in this beautiful land". However, in response to a question by sociologist Professor Deborah Posel, Tutu was emphatic that the Truth and Reconciliation Commis-

sion, which he chaired, had been successful in the approach it adopted of moving the country towards healing from its apartheid past. "If you believe in Ubuntu – that my humanity is bound up in your humanity, whether I like it or not – then I can't just stand by and cogitate. And mercifully for us, most people behave that way. It's just that these others capture the headlines." Author and former TRC journalist Antjie Krog said the world struggled to understand the philosophical underpinnings of South Africa's reconciliation process because of the "dominant post-Holocaust discourse". "At the end of the 20th century, another way of dealing with the injustice of the past has been put on

the table by the black people of this country." She said that, by forgiving white South Africans, blacks had placed an imperative on whites to change, but whites had failed to accept this. During the conference, Tutu received the Fetzer Prize for Love and Forgiveness, which he was awarded jointly with the Dalai Lama, for facing, over 50 years, "with great courage, a world that is weary of being in the grasp of fear and violence". Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo applauded the "hugely important vision" of the Fetzer Institute, which sponsored the conference, in "infusing back into individual lives and community life the ideas of love and forgiveness and reconciliation". **MP**

New trust will benefit needy staff and students



Dr Mamphela Ramphela.

A group of alumni, led by former UCT vice-chancellor Dr Mamphela Ramphela, has established a trust to help previously disadvantaged staff and students.

The Ukukhula (to grow) Trust was formed under the guidance of the UCT Foundation, and has started a

long-term endowment fund to provide bursaries to students intending to pursue a tertiary education, and academics seeking further developmental opportunities.

To qualify for participation in Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBEE) initiatives under the terms of the Act, it was necessary to create a legally-separate entity that would be fully compliant in terms of its purpose, composition, and modus operandi.

Ukukhula is a vehicle for firms that are interested in BBEE and skills development. It seeks to provide a reputable organisation that fulfils all the requirements of a BBEE entity in terms of legislation, to enable previously disadvantaged South Africans to benefit from quality tertiary education.

Vice-chancellor Dr Max Price has appealed to staff and students to join the initiative by suggesting potential opportunities for Ukukhula to collaborate with businesses – both large and small – that are seeking a BBEE partner.

"Your support will be greatly appreciated, both by me and – especially – by the future generations of UCT students and staff who will benefit from support by Ukukhula," Price said.

For more information, please download the brochure from the Alumni and Development section of the UCT website. **MP**

Ad hominem promotion

Congratulations to Mills Soko of the Graduate School of Business who was promoted to Associate Professor in the latest round of ad hominem promotions.