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UCT to honour leaders in African art, archaeology and economics on 14 June 2016

First tranche of 2016 honorary doctorates to be conferred on Anatsui, Deacon and Wilson in separate graduation ceremonies

The University of Cape Town will award honorary degrees to three highly esteemed and world-renowned figures for their significant contributions in African-based art, archaeology and economics and social policy, during graduation ceremonies at Jameson Hall on Tuesday, 14 June 2016.

Highly acclaimed archaeologist Janette Deacon will receive an honorary degree as Doctor of Letters from the Faculty of Science. Ghanaian Emeritus Professor El Anatsui, described as “the most significant living African artist”, will be awarded an honorary degree as Doctor of Fine Arts from the Faculty of the Humanities. And Emeritus Professor Francis Wilson, who has focused his engaged scholarship on understanding how processes such as the migrant labour system have helped to underwrite South Africa’s poverty, will receive an honorary degree as Doctor of Letters from the Faculty of Commerce.

Honorands	Honorary degree	Faculty	Date /Time
Emer Professor Francis Wilson	Doctor of Letters (DLitt)	Commerce	14 June at 09h00
Emer Professor El Anatsui	Doctor of Fine Arts (DFA)	Humanities	14 June at 14h00
Dr Jeanette Deacon	Doctor of Letters (DLitt)	Science	14 June at 18h00

Background information on each honorary doctorate recipient for June is provided below. Additional honorary doctorates will be awarded at UCT graduation ceremonies in December 2016 and information on these will be provided later this year.

Emeritus Professor El Anatsui

Emeritus Professor El Anatsui has been described as “the most significant living African artist”. In 1968 Anatsui obtained his first degree from the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana. By 1975, he joined the faculty of University of Nigeria, Nsukka where in 1996 he became a professor of sculpture. He retired in 2011 and is now an Emeritus Professor. His work has had an important epistemic contribution in the training of artists nationally, in particular at South African universities, and his life’s work bears testament to the kind of scholarship UCT invites.

Anatsui is one of a handful of highly revered, internationally acclaimed contemporary artists whose inventive works are widely acknowledged. In 2008 he received the Visionaries Artist Award from the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City. He is also a recipient of the 2009 Prince Claus Award from the Netherlands. His work has been collected around the world by major institutions, including the British Museum, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo; Metropolitan Museum of Art and Museum of Modern Art, New York; Blanton Museum of Art, Austin; and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Seattle. In 2015, Anatsui received the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement Award at the Venice Biennale.

Dr Janette Deacon

Dr Janette Deacon, the well-published and highly acclaimed archaeologist, graduated from UCT with a BA (1960), MA (1969) and PhD (1982). Her award-winning work contributed significantly to the Bleek and Lloyd archive at UCT, which achieved recognition by UNESCO as a site of the Memory of the World. Her scholarship in the Later Stone Age in South Africa, rock art research and conservation, and a host of other activities has largely been carried out at the intersection of scholarship and public life and has helped to facilitate new understandings of the indigenous past, shape legislation for protection of archaeological sites and visual heritage of the San, and profile South African archaeology and rock art research in a global context.

She is regularly invited all over the world to discuss South Africa rock art, its management and its relationship to both archival sources and archaeology. Her commitment to the preservation of the rock art of San – a vulnerable pre-colonial archive – finds expression in a project which trains local people and amateur enthusiasts to record, document and clean rock art sites. From 1976 to 1993 she edited the premier South African archaeological journal, the *South African Archaeological Bulletin* and played a major role in shaping its character. Among her extensive publications are seven books.

Emeritus Professor Francis Wilson

Emeritus Professor Francis Wilson's exceptional achievement lies in his contributions to scholarship and the manner in which he has used scholarship to fight for social policies that are evidence-informed. He has offered UCT and South Africa an exceptional example of the practice of engaged scholarship. For over 40 years he has made a unique contribution to documenting and analysing key social issues affecting South African society. He has used his research and that of others to promote social change for good in South Africa. He has been an academic pioneer, embodying the vision of UCT, to produce rigorous, relevant, critical research promoting engaged scholarship and social justice.

Wilson has published three immensely influential pieces of research: *Farming 1866-1966*, a chapter in the Oxford History of South Africa; *Labour in the South African Gold Mines 1911-1969* published by Cambridge University Press out of his PhD; and a book, *Migrant Labour in South Africa*. These works describe the terrible social consequences of the story of the migrant labour system. Over time his contribution broadened to a focus on understanding how these processes and others underwrite South Africa's poverty.

In 1974 Wilson launched the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU). In 1993 Wilson and SALDRU, in partnership with the World Bank & others, worked on a survey to produce baseline evidence of the state of the nation, which was widely used in the 1990s for policy formulation. He has served as a zealous advocate for the cause of the public release of survey data and helped establish Data First for this purpose.

Wilson's influence and reputation has endured into his post-retirement. In 2012, he was appointed Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor for Poverty and Inequality at UCT, tasked with organising a conference to launch a national Inquiry into Strategies to overcome poverty and inequality. This event was sub-titled "Towards Carnegie 3", launching a process which has since developed into the Mandela Initiative.

Photo credits: Emeritus Professor El Anatsui/Photo supplied by Professor El Anatsui
Dr Janette Deacon/Photo supplied by Dr Janette Deacon
Emeritus Professor Francis Wilson/Photo by Michael Hammond/UCT

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