



Communication and Marketing Department
Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso
Kommunikasie en Bemerkingsdepartement

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa
Welgelegen House, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank, Cape Town
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5427/5428/5674 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 5628

www.uct.ac.za

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UCT introduces new law and leadership scholarship

The Everard and Joan MacFarlane Family Leadership Scholarship for University of Cape Town (UCT) law students was launched recently. More than just a funding grant, the R15 million endowment aims to support students who display both academic excellence and leadership skills, through a holistic faculty-based programme.

The scholarship runs for two years and will be made available on an annual basis to new cohorts of four or five students.

Taking the form of a true endowment – the scholarships are funded by interest revenue, while the capital remains untouched – this generous gift was bestowed by three siblings with deep roots in [UCT's Faculty of Law](#).

Brothers Roger and Stuart are both UCT LLB graduates while their sister, Lynne Jooste, is a UCT alum and married to Emeritus Professor Richard Jooste from the Law faculty. The scholarship has been set up in the memory of their parents, Everard and Joan MacFarlane. Their request was that the scholarship name would explicitly note two things: the MacFarlane family name, and the fact that leadership would be a key feature of the programme.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, an online launch event was held via Zoom. During the event, Roger said that the scholarship was inspired by the ethos instilled by their father, who from a young age had to work and provide for his widowed mother and elder sisters, during the Great Depression.

Despite the constraints this put on him, he managed to prioritise education and make a success of himself.

“He left us with three key messages that have affected the creation of the scholarship,” said Roger. “One of them is focusing on the value of education. Secondly, he taught us that you can succeed even if you have a modest background, through hard work and applying yourself. Finally, he instilled in us an idea that he wanted [each of] us to lead in whatever we [could], and be a changemaker.”

Dean of the Faculty of Law Professor Danwood Chirwa said that they were grateful to be able to offer deserving students an opportunity to further develop their leadership skills, while also receiving funding for their studies.

An inaugural cohort of four students has been selected, receiving R75 000 each. The Macfarlane Scholars are Jessica Jaftha, Ebrahim Khan, Sabelo Ndlovu and Lwazi-Lwandile Simelane. All recipients are in the intermediate year of their LLB studies.

As part of the programme, each student has been paired with a senior mentor in the Law faculty to offer them academic support and leadership advice. Apart from this mentorship, the students will also have the opportunity to participate in a programme of workshops, training and networking that over the two years of the scholarship will build skills beyond law and academic excellence.

Story by Nadia Krige, UCT News

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Aamirah Sondag

Media Liaison and Monitoring Officer
Communication and Marketing Department
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch
Tel: (021) 650 5427

Email: aamirah.sondag@uct.ac.za

Website: www.uct.ac.za