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UCT, DStv to launch project on second anniversary of the April 2021 fire

18 April 2023 | Molly Blackburn Foyer, Otto Beit Building, Upper Campus | 16:30-19:00

On 18 April 2021, the University of Cape Town (UCT) lost its leading collection of African stories housed in the Jagger Library. Two years later, UCT has partnered with DStv to launch the Stories from the Ashes project, which will retell some of those lost stories and write new ones.

The project includes the first book made from remnants and ashes taken from the Jagger Library fire, worthy of being placed in the newly refurbished library.

- [WATCH: Turning the Jagger Library ashes into the first book to be placed in the refurbished library.](#)

Since the fire, UCT and DStv embarked on a journey to resurrect the stories lost in the blaze for the benefit of the next generation. DStv collected five tonnes of ashes and remnants from the burnt stacks of African Studies literature in the Jagger Library. Working with specialists, they were able to turn the ash into a unique ink to write new stories. They collaborated with some of Africa's finest storytellers to begin the journey of helping to rewrite this lost history.

The book, titled *Stories from the Ashes – Africa's Story Through the Last Millennium*, includes visuals and reprinted extracts tackling different subjects such as African history and identity, politics, gender and identity, performing arts, literature, language and linguistics, African youth, migration and the African diaspora, environment and climate from surviving African literature in the Special Collections Library.

It also includes personal reflections by distinguished UCT alumni such as Justice Albie Sachs, Dr Mamphela Ramphele, Nkosinathi Biko, Carl Manlan, Musa Ngqungwana, as well as Professors Timm Hoffman, Joan Hambidge and June Bam-Hutchinson – some of whom are scheduled to attend the launch event.

UCT Libraries' executive director Ujala Satgoor said: "Working with DStv has been a creative and fulfilling experience. While we still have some way to go in terms of rebuilding the physical structure and space of the Jagger Library, this partnership, process and project has again as in April 2021 shown that with collaboration and creativity much can be salvaged, achieved and rebuilt in our beautiful country. As a memorial to the fire, this special book will forever form part of the new story of the Jagger Library, the story of literally and figuratively rebuilding from the ash."

According to DStv's head of consumer marketing and PR, Nondumiso Mabece, they were as equally thrilled to be part of this unique project.

"For us, storytelling is a key element that helps us share and shape human experiences. Being in the business of storytelling – many of which start off as a book, a note or an essay – rebuilding the UCT library means enhancing the lens through which our stories can be told, can grow and be stored for future generations to learn from."

The launch will include a tour of the Jagger Library construction site at 16:30. It is recommended that guests, including the media, wear comfortable shoes for the tour.

Note: Members of the media are kindly request to please confirm attendance by Monday, 17 April 2023.

ENDS

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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