

# THE EDGE

NEWS FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF WITS



## Celebrating a century

Dear alumni and alumnae  
As we end another year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, I am pleased to say we have successfully completed this academic year through the dedication and commitment of our students and staff.

I am very proud of Wits researchers, scientists, medical graduates and alumni who continue to make a significant contribution to tackling the pandemic. We have worked hard to put policies and mechanisms in place to ensure the safe return of students next year, but as new variants emerge, we know that the trajectory of the pandemic remains unpredictable.

One certainty is that we will be celebrating the centenary of this remarkable University next year. This milestone is an opportunity for us to celebrate the success and achievements of Wits and Witsies, to reflect on the impact that the University and our staff, students and alumni have had on society and the world, and to galvanise support for our next century.

I am extremely confident about the future of Wits and very grateful for the opportunity to lead this great University into its next century. Since I took office in January I have been humbled by the love, support and generosity that alumni have shown towards Wits. We look forward to celebrating Wits' centenary with you.

The envious reputation that Wits has developed over the past century was built on the shoulders of alumni, staff, students, donors, and friends of the University. We would very much like you to join us in celebrating this legacy and be part of shaping our next century.

I wish you a joyous and safe festive season.

**Professor Zebnon Vilakazi**  
Vice-Chancellor and Principal

You can read more about the Wits centenary [here](#)

## Wits COVID-19 Vaccination Policy



The Council of the University of the Witwatersrand discussed and approved the Wits COVID-19 Vaccination Policy at its meeting on 26 November 2021, following engagements with the Wits community over several weeks. The Policy will be implemented from 1 January 2022 and staff and students will have to either vaccinate or apply for reasonable accommodation.



## A child of darkness

An international team of researchers led by Professor Lee Berger (PhD 1994, DSc 2014), chair in palaeo-anthropology at the Centre for Exploration of the Deep Human Journey (pictured right), revealed the first partial skull of a Homo naledi child that was found in the remote depths of the Rising Star Cave in the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site. [Watch](#) the video



SEE MORE WITS NEWS [HERE](#)

## WITSIES WITH EDGE



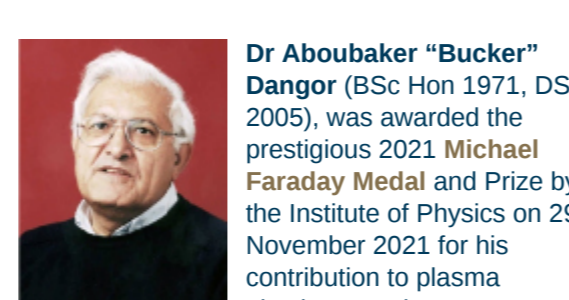
**Avital (Tali) Nates** (BA Hons 1994), director and founder of the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre, was awarded the 2021 Austrian Holocaust Memorial Award on 28 October 2021. This was the first time this award was conferred upon someone in Africa.



**Khensani Nobanda** (BCom 2000), deputy chairperson at the Nedbank Foundation, was awarded Industry Leader of the Year at the FM AIF Focus Awards, adding to her award in October as Loeries Marketing Leadership and Innovation Award winner.



Five Wits alumni were among the seasoned A-rated researchers celebrated at the prestigious 2021 National Research Foundation (NRF) Awards on 2 November 2021. Their internationally competitive work is assessed with a strong emphasis on its quality and impact. [Read more.](#)



**Dr Aboubaker "Bucker" Dangor** (BSc Hon 1971, DSc 2005), was awarded the prestigious 2021 Michael Faraday Medal and Prize by the Institute of Physics on 29 November 2021 for his contribution to plasma physics. [Read more.](#)



**Glen Pearce** (BCom 1987), chief finance officer of Sappi Europe South Africa, won the 2021 Finance Transformation Award at the 2021 CFO awards on 16 November 2021. Pearce has been the chief financial officer of Sappi since 2008.

SEE MORE WITSIE ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS [HERE](#)

## # WITSIES4LIFE



Justice Edwin Cameron



Professor Sibusiso Nyembezi



Max and Audrey Coleman

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has awarded four Witsies his office's highest honour for their services to South Africa. Professor Sibusiso Nyembezi (BA Hons 1947; MA 1950; Hon Doc 1982) was awarded the Order of Ikhamanga, gold; Dr Raymond Louw (LLD honore causa 2015) the Order of Ikhamanga, gold; Justice Edwin Cameron (LLD honore causa 2010) was awarded the Order of Baobab, gold and Max (BSc Eng 1949) and Audrey Coleman the Order of Luthuli, silver. The Colemans were the founders of the Detainees' Parents Support Committee, an organisation of parents formed to provide food, clothing and legal assistance to detainees under apartheid, as well as to monitor and publicise state repression. [Read more.](#)

## WITS MEMORIES

Whether you graduated last year or decades ago, share what you've been up to



**FLASHBACK**  
Alumni shared their favourite memories of Wits as part of the Wits Centenary celebrations. Take a walk down memory lane with them [here](#).



Wits Alumni Relations would love you hear from you. Send your updates to [alumni@wits.ac.za](mailto:alumni@wits.ac.za)

## PLACES TO VISIT

### WITS ORIGINS CENTRE

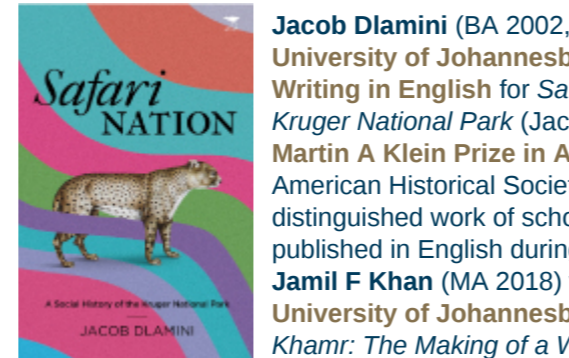
The Rock Art Research Institute (RARI) is hosting an exhibition on the story behind the South African National Coat of Arms and the National Motto titled 'Diverse People, United' at the Wits Origins Centre. The exhibition explains the link between San Rock Art and the now extinct Xam language. It is a collaborative effort between RARI and Canon and forms part of the Wits Centenary Programme. Thanks to a special arrangement with Iziko Museums in Cape Town, Canon South Africa arranged a large ultra-resolution facsimile to be made of the exceptional San Rock Art panel that contains the original painted image chosen for the national coat of arms.

### WITS ART MUSEUM (WAM)

"Seen, Heard and Valued: WAM celebrates 40 years of the Standard Bank African Art Collection" is the exhibition currently on display at WAM. It highlights the critically acclaimed and diverse Standard Bank African Art Collection which is integrated into the research and education programmes at the museum. It is on show until February 2022 and is accompanied by the publication of a book with the same title. A virtual walk-about is available from Straus & Co's Museum Moments [here](#).

The NEWWORKS21 project is an annual showcase of the graduating BAFA class. It features over 30 artists who work in a diverse range of media from photography and painting to sculpture and digital prints. It is free, critical, and experimental and runs until 12 February 2022.

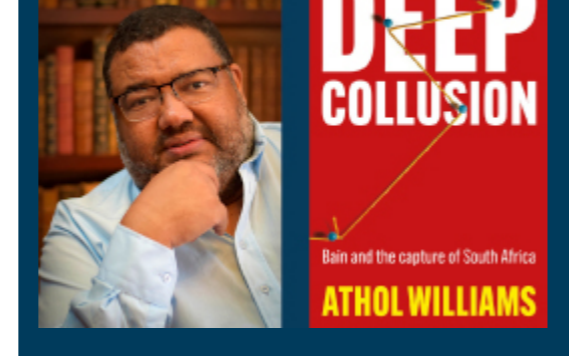
## BOOKS



**Jacob Diamini** (BA 2002, BA Hons 2003) was awarded the University of Johannesburg Prize for South African Writing in English for *Safari Nation: A Social History of the Kruger National Park* (Jacana, 2021). He also received the Martin A Klein Prize in African History, awarded by the American Historical Society, which recognises the most distinguished work of scholarship on African history published in English during the previous calendar year.



**Jamil F Khan** (MA 2018) was joint winner of the 2021 University of Johannesburg Debut Prize for his novel *Khamr: The Making of a Waterslams* (Jacana, 2020).



**Athol Williams** (BSc Eng 1992), who testified at the state inquiry into massive corruption allegations, shared why he has left South Africa. Williams has also launched his new book *Deep Collusion* (Tafelberg, 2021) about the inner workings of state capture. [Deign.](#)

Catch up on other Witsies with the writing edge [here](#).

## EVENTS

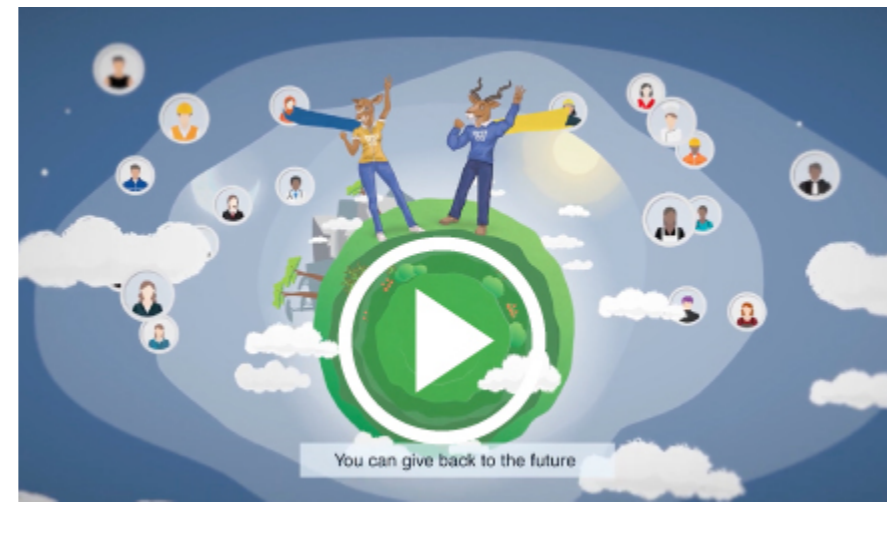


Pre-eminent climatologist Professor Francois Engelbrecht, who is distinguished professor of climatology at the Global Change Institute at Wits, shared insights with alumni during a webinar on 28 October 2021, ahead of the historic UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow. He warned of human activity increasingly changing the climate in unprecedented ways. [Watch](#) the video [here](#).



The Wits Health Sciences Alumni Week 2021 in October saw the Adler Museum of Medicine host the Borthale Orenstein Memorial Lecture (Borhale meaning wisdom). It was presented by philanthropist and alumnus Dr Patrick Soon-Shiong (MBChB 1975). [Watch](#) his explanation of how the immune system works and how its power can be harnessed. [Watch](#) the video [here](#).

## REMEMBER TO GIVE



Small, affordable donations are so important to the Wits Centenary Campaign. Just R100 a month can make a big difference. [Watch](#) the video to see how you can give back to the future.

[DONATE](#)

Wits Centenary | Wits Annual Fund