

THE EDGE

NEWS FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF WITS



Thank you Witsies

Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Zebon Vilakazi reflected on 2022 and thanked the Wits community for making the University's centenary year memorable. "I am hugely appreciative of the commitment to Wits that I have witnessed this year – from staff, students, alumni, donors, and friends of the University – both in South Africa, and beyond. Wits occupies a special place in the hearts of so many, and there is a real level of devotion to this University, as well as a genuine will to change our world, for good," he said in the end-of-year newsletter. [Watch](#) his message on YouTube.



Two alumnae honoured at recent graduations



An honorary doctorate in engineering was conferred on renowned biologist and Wits Fund Board member Professor Hazel Sive (BSc 1977, BSc Hons 1978). Professor Sive, who is Dean of the College of Science at Northeastern University, was honoured for her sterling career as researcher and mentor in higher education.

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Respected physiotherapist Professor Almee Stewart (BSc Med 1992, PhD 2003) received a Gold Medal for her pivotal role in curricular design and accreditation of physiotherapy in South Africa and beyond. Some of her notable contributions include receiving a six-year National Research Foundation grant.

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A futuristic dome

Wits University and Anglo American have collaborated to transform the Johannesburg Planetarium into a world-class digital research, training, and science engagement facility.



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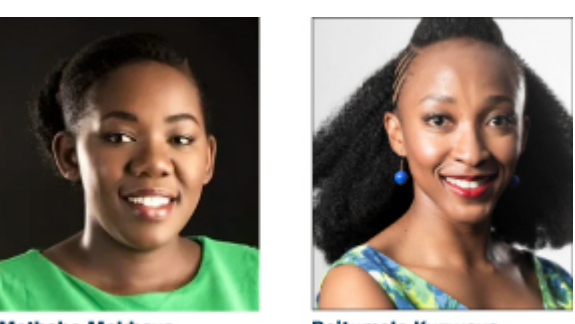
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WITSIES WITH EDGE



Athol Williams (BSc Eng 1992) was honoured with two international awards for his work as a whistleblower. He received the 2022 Special Recognition Award by Blueprints for Free Speech, a non-profit charity that works to promote the right to freedom of expression. On 17 November 2022, he was also awarded the Chairman's Award for 2022 by the SA Chamber of Commerce UK.

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Two Wits graduates walked away with top honours at the 2022 Top 35-under-35 Chartered Accountants Competition. **Mathabo Makhaya** (BCom 2012, HDipAcc 2013) was announced as the overall winner. **Boitumelo Kuzwayo** (BAccSC 2009, HDipAcc 2010) won the Game Changer Award. The awards recognise chartered accountants making meaningful contributions to society.

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Professor Yaya Choonara (BPharm 2002, MPharm, PhD 2009) was awarded the Olusegun Obasanjo Prize for Scientific Discovery and Technological Innovation by the African Academy of Sciences. The prize is the highest honour conferred by the academy to honour exceptional African scientists.

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Wits alumna Tamlyn Sasha Naidu (BSc 2014, BSc Eng 2016) took first prize in the 2022 Falling Walls Lab world finals. Naidu received the prestigious Breakthrough Winner award in the Emerging Talents category for her presentation "Breaking the Wall of Acid Mine Drainage" held in Berlin, Germany.

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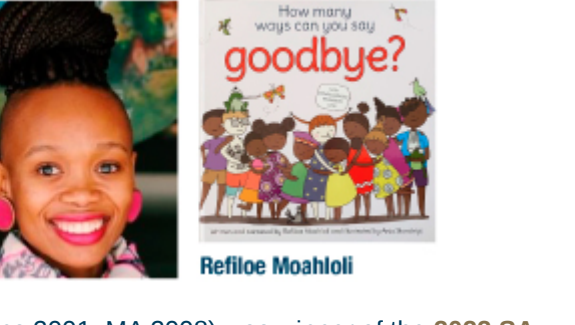
Wits alumni were among the 2022 Absa Jewish Achiever Awards winners. The awards, in its 23rd year, celebrate "the extraordinary, unique, exceptional and the brave". Founding director of the Paragon Group, **Anthony Ornelowitz** (BArch 1989, MBA 1995) was awarded the Art, Sport, Science, and Culture Award. **Advocate Carol Steinberg SC** (BA DA 1990, MA DA 1994, LLB 2006) received the European Women in Leadership Award. **Rob Leon** (BSc 2006, BSc Hons 2007), global co-lead of investment banking and specialised client segment at RMB, won the Absa Business Leadership Award. **Justin Blend** (BCom 2009) and **Greg Blend** (BCom 2011) Blend were acknowledged as Entrepreneur Award winners, along with Grant Friedman for the "rent to build" apartment estates with their business Africrest Properties. Several Wits alumni were also among the **nominees**.

[READ MORE WITSIE ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS HERE](#)

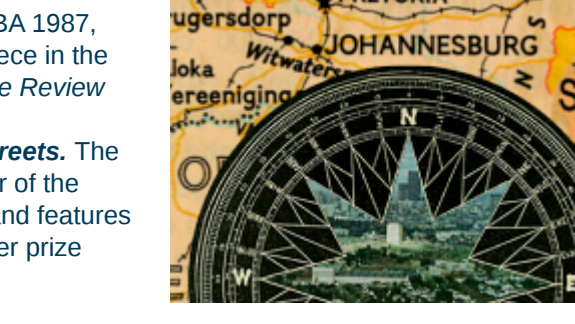
WRITING EDGE



Proud Wits alumna **Joanne Joseph** (BA 2000, BA Hons 2001, MA 2009) was winner of the 2022 SA Book Awards in the Adult Fiction category for *Children of Sugarcoats* (Jonathan Ball, 2022). **Refiloe Moahloli** (BCom 2009) was announced as the winner of the 2021 Children's Title Prize for the second year running with her title *How Many Ways Can You Say Goodbye?*, illustrated by Anja Stockigt (Penguin Random House, 2021). Catch up on this and other Wits alumni publications [here](#).

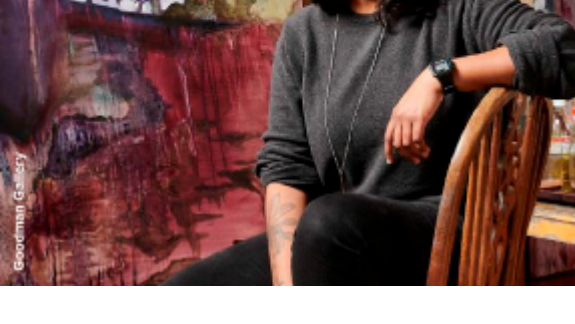


Professor **Ivan Vladislavic** (BA 1987, BA Hons 1979) published a piece in the Winter 2022 edition of the Yale Review titled *A Faceless Compass: Johannesburg's Haunted Streets*. The issue celebrates the tenth year of the Windham-Campbell Prizes and features new work by current and former prize winners, including this essay.

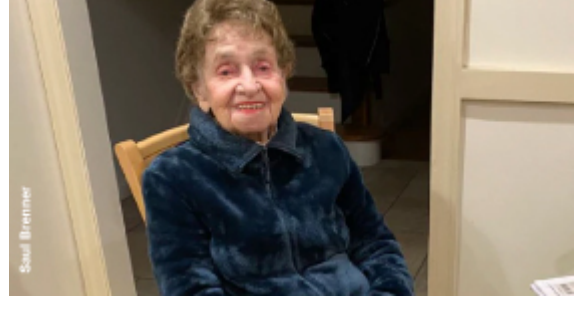


EXHIBITIONS

Ravelle Pillay (BA FA 2016) will mark her first large-scale solo exhibition in the UK at the **Chisenhale Gallery** from 23 February - 23 April 2023 as part of its Commissions Programme. As a recent recipient of the 2022 **African Art Galleries Association's Emerging Painting Invitational** for painters from the African continent, her work was hosted previously by the **Goodman Gallery** in Johannesburg and Prize 2022 in London. She was in **residence at Gasworks** in London from October to December 2022, and shared her thoughts on working towards the body of work that will be shown in the upcoming exhibition.



WITSIES4LIFE



Ninety-two-year-old **Dr Libby Lashansky** (MBCh 1954) was profiled in The Washington Post about her life as a diabetic – a diagnosis she received as a child. Before insulin was discovered to help diabetics in 1921, children who developed Type 1 diabetes had an average life expectancy of only three years after they were diagnosed. This great-grandmother has outlived the doctors who told her she would die young.

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Two senior scientists from the National Institute for Communicable Diseases Professor **Cheryl Cohen** (MBCh 1997, DTM&H 2000) and **Dr Anne von Gottberg** (MBCh 1993, DTM&H 1997, PhD 2013) were profiled by Sean Christie for the Centre of Health Journalism Bhekisisa about how they met at Wits in the 1990s. They share details about being at the centre of South Africa's health surveillance during the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of loadshedding.

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FLASHBACK



Social worker **Louise Grenfell** (BA 1988, HDipAdSoc 1989) shared her favourite memories of Wits. Take a walk down memory lane with alumni centenary stories [here](#).



Wits Alumni Relations would love to hear from you. Send your memories of campus to alumni@wits.ac.za

UPCOMING EVENTS

WELCOME TO WITS

"The Gateway To Success Programme" begins next month and introduces all first-year students to life on campus. The programme includes a "Welcome Day" on 5 February and the annual **Wits Spirit Game** on 17 February 2023.

Access glimpses of the fun via the alumni webcams [HERE](#).

DOCUMENTARY



A special treat for Witsies in Joburg

The film *I Am Here* (2021) by award-winning producer **Gabriela Blumberg** (BA FT 2017) will be screened at Ster-Kinekor Rosebank Nouveau from 27 January 2023. Don't miss this engaging documentary about Holocaust survivor **Elia Blumenthal**. **Witsie Blumberg** received the **Alumni of the Year Award** at the 2022 **Pioneer** awards in London last year.

CONVOCATION



In the recent Convocation election **Robert McCutcheon** (BSc Eng 1963, GDE 1965) was elected as a new member to the body that represents over 200 000 Wits alumni. Other members elected to serve a second term on the **ExCo** include: **Nomfundo Ngcobo**, **Dr Mottiso Godongwana**, **Fiona Kigen** and **Paul Taylor**.

REMEMBER TO GIVE

Your support is key to Wits remaining a national treasure. Find out how to make a monthly, annual or once-off contribution now.

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