

NWU&U

AS ALUMNI

ALUMNI magazine

We deliver
the "coolest"
teachers

Take hands
to face challenges together

MEET COUNCIL'S
NEW LEADERS



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

CON



FRONT PAGE:

Mr Leoka Mphuthi's grade five learners were quoted as saying he was the "coolest" teacher in Laerskool Vastrap in Rustenburg. With him is Mr Johan Benade, a colleague.



CONTENTS

8



26



12



28

EDITORIAL

- Message from the vice-chancellor 4
- Change is here to stay 5
- NWU experts know their stuff
- Messages from afar 6

NEWS

- Facing the challenges together 7
- NWU Council: new leaders take the helm 8
- Awards await alumni 11
- Survey results in awards for Career Centre
- Hop on the 2015 "FUN BUS" 12
- Cinderella plant – adapt or die 14
- Building a business – one wash at a time 16
- Campus news 18

PROFILES

- Making a little go a long way 21
- From court orderly to advocate: a leap of faith 22
- Setting an example to the next generation 24
- "Sweetheart" shows that life can be a fairy tale 26
- Following in a wise man's footsteps 28
- From school teacher to sheep shearer 30
- He's travelled far and wide 32

ARTICLES

- Do you attract or do you repel? 36
- Researcher puts Fanagalo in spotlight 38

EDITORIAL TEAM:

Staff from Institutional Advancement and communication officers on the campuses.

LANGUAGE EDITING:

Clairwyn van der Merwe.

LAYOUT:

Studio Chatnoir: Mercia Venter.

PRINTING:

Sun Media.

PHOTOGRAPHY:

NWU colleagues and service providers.

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES/ CORRESPONDENCE:

Nelia Engelbrecht - Tel 018 299 4937,
fax 086 614 3222.

The *NWU & U* is produced and published in English and Afrikaans by the Institutional Advancement Department of the NWU. It is distributed mainly in electronic format, except where we do not have valid email addresses for alumni.



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE BOPHIRIMA
HOORDES-UNIVERSITEIT

Message from the vice-chancellor

Dear alumnus,

BY THE TIME you read this message, the most important elements of the strategy review process at the NWU would probably have been completed and been considered by Council at its June meeting.

But let us first go back a few steps to see how this process of formulating a new strategic agenda for the NWU for the next 10 years has unfolded.

It started with a "Bosberaad" session in July last year and has since been driven by a strategy team comprising the institutional management team (including the three campus rectors) plus the campus vice-rectors.

This strategy team has held a series of meetings and workshops and has consulted with various NWU stakeholder groups. These groups included alumni, who were consulted during meetings with the executive committee of the Convocation on 21 November 2014 and again on 26 February 2015.

Throughout the process you, as alumni, have voiced your sincere concerns and made your inputs into the process. Your involvement is a sign of your commitment to engaging with change and of your heartfelt loyalty towards the NWU and its predecessors – something that we deeply appreciate.

One of the greatest concerns was about the possible change of our management model. First of all, you might ask why this formed part of the strategy review process, as convention normally dictates that structure follows strategy.

Well, in our case the current structure made it very difficult to envisage an alternative (and possibly better) future. Therefore it was necessary to consider structure and strategy in parallel. In other words, when developing a new strategy for the NWU, we had to free ourselves and our ideas from the constraints of the current structure.

When it became clear that the management structure (or model) would probably change, a lot of emotions, including fear and a sense of loss, arose. Some of the fears were that the Potchefstroom Campus would lose Afrikaans as a language of tuition and that the unique student life on the different campuses would cease to exist. (More about this on p 7.) Because things such as language and culture lie close to people's hearts, many of these fears soon

turned into unfounded perceptions, and a distortion of the facts.

In this regard, I would like to point out a few things. Firstly, I would like to reiterate the appeal made by Adv Johan Kruger, chairperson of the NWU Council. In a press release he said the following:

"I want to once again stress the fact that all stakeholders should refrain from speculating about the strategy review process or its content, including possible changes to the current structure. Creating suspicion or supporting unfounded perceptions about the process will not take it forward."

Secondly, I want to assure you that the management team will make responsible proposals to Council for its consideration. Council, comprising representatives of NWU stakeholder groups such as alumni, donors, community leaders and Senate members, will finally decide on the future strategy and management model for the NWU.

Thirdly, I want to make it very clear that we may deliberate and negotiate many things, but not the quality of our core business. The high standards that we currently maintain for our teaching-learning and research are non-negotiable. Whatever new management model may ultimately be approved, it will have to maintain and enhance the quality of our core business.

I hope that this will set your minds at ease and that you will continue to support and care for the NWU. Remember, as a university we thrive on different opinions and viewpoints, because from these diverse views and thoughts will emerge a united and resilient foundation to take this university forward with confidence.

Kind regards,

Dan Rgwadi



NWU experts know their stuff

The NWU's experts are often quoted in the media, which enhances the public image of the university as an institution that pursues knowledge and innovation in order to enable others to improve their quality of life. In this article we share some of our experts' comments that were published in the media.



"Anything that contains starch can be converted into glucose by the body. Wholewheat rusks for example. It may look healthy, but it contains sugar and fats, as well as refined starch, which is also converted into fat. Any excess sugar (or starch or fats) not used for activities (movement) is converted into fat, and excess fat in the body increases the risk for type 2 diabetes."

Prof Salomé Kruger, Faculty of Health Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus

"Jy boet vir die soet", *Netwerk24*, 18 May 2015



"Eskom is creating a vicious cycle by discouraging clients to use electricity, which affects its revenue, which forces it to increase tariffs, which discourages clients to use electricity."

Prof Raymond Parsons, Potchefstroom Business School, Potchefstroom Campus

"Eskompryse 'is 'n ramp'", *Die Burger*, 14 May 2015

EDITORIAL

Change is here to stay

Dear alumnus,

CHANGE IS PART OF LIFE – as the Greek philosopher Heraclitus famously said, "There is nothing permanent, except change".

However, change does not always come easily to us; we often prefer to stay safely tucked away in our comfort zones.

Unfortunately, life does not allow us that luxury. New developments and innovations keep the world in constant flux and sayings such as 'adapt or die' and 'go with the flow' become very relevant to our daily lives.

Being part of this ever-changing world, the NWU, too, is in a transitional phase. Now, 10 years into the merger, we are revising our strategic model and with it, perhaps, our management model.

Changes such as these may touch a lot of people who have an interest in the NWU, including you, our alumni. It is understandable that you may have questions and concerns about the strategy review and I trust that the vice-chancellor's message on p 4, together with the article on p 7, will address these.

After all, change has two sides: on the one hand it causes loss and on the other hand renewal.

Throughout the years many famous people have had a lot to say on the topic. Some were enthusiastic advocates of change:

Without change, something sleeps inside us, and seldom awakens. The sleeper must awaken. – Frank Herbert

It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad. – CS Lewis

... while others were a bit more cautious:

Nothing so undermines organisational change as the failure to think through the losses people face. – William Bridges

Change can be chancy. Two choices of action exist. If it's not broken, then don't fix it, or if change is truly needed, then change it sensibly. The solution, like virtue, lies somewhere in the middle of these two options. – Harry Mosley

Whatever your own thoughts about change, know that throughout any changes that might lie ahead, the NWU & U will be there to inform you and take you with us on our journey into the next 10 years.

Happy reading,

Nelia
and the NWU & U team





Please write and tell us where you are in the world and how your careers are progressing, or just write about anything that is close to your heart.

Email letters to nelia.engelbrecht@nwu.ac.za, fax them to 086 614 3222 or mail them to Nelia Engelbrecht, Institutional Office, North-West University, Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom, 2520.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!

It is heart-warming to read the letters from our alumni. We gladly share this one with our readers.

Dear fellow alumni,

The Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU takes the lead as home to those who have a yearning for a top-quality higher education but lack the resources, motivation and guidance.

As an ex-student of this institution, I would like to share my experience of goodwill, generosity and counselling offered at this institution.

This testimony seeks to explode the myths and stereotyping surrounding the admission criteria of students to this university. True to the saying "where there is a will there is a way", this institution is a home to those with serious academic ambitions, irrespective of their religion, culture, race or sexuality.

There is a perception that for a long time this institution selectively admitted white students of Afrikaner origin and Christian religion. Whether or not this was true, it is now water

under the bridge: This institution has thrown its doors wide open to everybody despite their financial or social status and attributes.

When I enrolled at this institution at the age of 47 to complete my BEd teaching qualification, I was armed only with an unrelenting determination and burning ambition to realise my academic goal to become a teacher. I had very little hope of making a success, given the above-mentioned obstacles that were heavily stacked against me. Unbeknown to me, I had arrived at an institution with a host of unassuming, kind and generous academic and administrative personnel.

Due to space constraints in this letter, all the virtues that this institution stands for cannot be accommodated. The wealth of skill, experience, level of education, sympathy and kindness that the staff at this institution and specifically at the Faculty of Education Sciences possess will enable everybody to realise their academic dreams.

At the end of 2013, after six years of study, I finally obtained my BEd degree. During 2014 I started my career as a teacher

at a school in my community where I hope to make a difference in the lives of my learners.

This letter was written by me as a token of gratitude to the NWU and the Faculty of Education Sciences at the Potchefstroom Campus. Without your support and empathy I would never be able to finish my studies.

Once again, thank you very much!

Yours sincerely

Elliot Mgwandi

If you are still receiving your copy of the *NWU & U* by post, but prefer to receive it via email, please send your email address to nelia.engelbrecht@nwu.ac.za. Thank you to the many alumni who have already forwarded their email addresses in order to receive electronic versions of the publication in future. In so doing you are helping us to reduce our carbon footprint.



Facing the challenges *together*

THE NWU'S STRATEGY review process has been going on since July 2014 and has elicited much debate among different stakeholder groups of the university.

During this debate, people have voiced opinions and raised questions about various matters close to their hearts. Some of these are the necessity for change, the future of Afrikaans, student life and the possibility of a new management model.

One of the first questions asked was: why change something that has been working for the past 10 years?

Adv Johan Kruger, chairperson of the NWU Council, explains: "The specific plan that was implemented at the time of the merger served the NWU well. However, 10 years later, we had to determine where the plan has worked and where change is needed."

According to Johan, there were definite flaws in the original plan, for instance the fact that the quality of academic programmes offered at the NWU was not the same across the university.

The future of Afrikaans

Another concern raised by stakeholders was the preservation of Afrikaans as a language of tuition on the Potchefstroom Campus.

Johan believes that Afrikaans will be used as a language of tuition as long as there is a demand for it. "I think Afrikaans can still exist while moving forward with transformation – the one should not exclude the other.

"However, I am 100% against using language and culture as excluding factors. Afrikaans should be a friendly, welcoming language. I don't like an aggressive approach when it comes to defending Afrikaans. We are in a situation where we should make friends for Afrikaans."

Prof Dan Kgwadi, vice-chancellor of the NWU, says there is no need to change the NWU's language policy of functional multilingualism. "We just have to make sure that we implement the policy in the spirit that was originally intended, namely to be more inclusive regarding other students

and languages. We should expand our language policy to all our campuses and use our translation services to translate either way round – from English to Afrikaans and also from Afrikaans to English."

Unique student life

A third concern that stakeholders voiced was about student life on campus.

During discussions with concerned students, Prof Dan assured them that each campus will still have its own unique student life. "Rugby will remain important on the Potchefstroom Campus and soccer on the Mafikeng Campus. But I want students from all campuses supporting the rugby and the soccer teams. In other words, I would like to encourage more support between the campuses, instead of competition."

However, Prof Dan believes that the quality of the university's core business, namely teaching-learning and research, should be the first things that attract students, not language, culture and student life. "Although these are important factors that determine the environment for your customers, it is the final 'products' – the students we deliver – that matters. The question is how ready these 'products' will be to function in a diverse world."

A new model for the NWU

A fourth concern raised by stakeholders is about the possible consequences of a new management model for the NWU.

Here, Johan agrees with Prof Dan. He too believes that whatever model Council decides on for the future, it should be based on the quality of the NWU's core business.

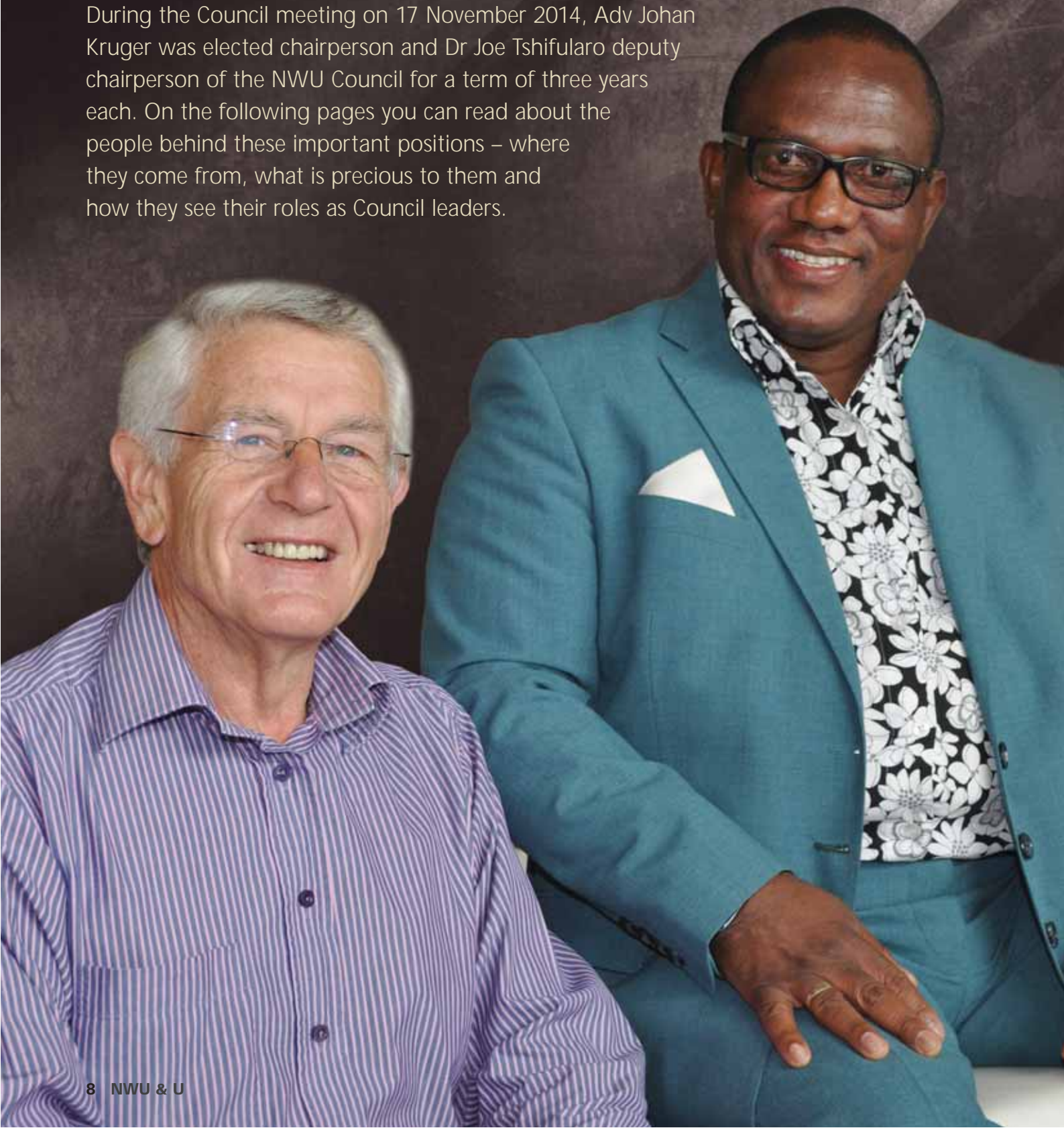
Council is open to any suggested models. "Everybody is entitled to his or her own opinion and it doesn't matter who suggested a particular model; Council should consider all models objectively before making a final decision."

He says greater integration on academic and management level is inevitable. "Let us find new channels to create unity and academic standardisation and make this university an institution that fulfils its academic role as an asset to the nation."

NWU Council:

new leaders take the helm

During the Council meeting on 17 November 2014, Adv Johan Kruger was elected chairperson and Dr Joe Tshifularo deputy chairperson of the NWU Council for a term of three years each. On the following pages you can read about the people behind these important positions – where they come from, what is precious to them and how they see their roles as Council leaders.



ADV JOHAN KRUGER, CHAIRPERSON

Both feet firmly on the ground

FOR A MAN WHO HAS rubbed shoulders with some of the foremost politicians and lawyers in the country, Adv Johan Kruger, the new chairperson of the NWU Council, has both feet firmly on the ground – preferably somewhere on Komarin, his retirement farm near Loskop Dam.

He and his wife, Hester, share their farm near Middelburg in Mpumalanga with rheboks, kudus, klipspringers, warthogs and bush pigs. That's not counting the blue korpers in the four dams and the leopards roaming around.

Not that there is much time for stoop-sitting on this particular farm. "Becoming chairperson of the NWU Council was not really part of my retirement plans, but I believe that one has to make one's contribution," he says.

His involvement as presiding judge of the Circuit Court in Potchefstroom during the first months of 2015 was probably not planned either, but is yet more proof of his willingness to serve.

Going way back

His relationship with Potchefstroom and the university goes back many years – to when he obtained his three law degrees at the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (now the NWU's Potchefstroom Campus).

He describes his student years as "pure joy with some swotting in between". He was primarius of Over de Voor men's residence (1969) and student council chairperson (1970). He also spent a lot of time wooing Hester, a library science student. This courting eventually led to them tying the knot in 1971.

After his studies he was an advocate in Pretoria for a while before returning to Potchefstroom where he was a professor at the Faculty of Law and specialised in human rights.

He also served as legal adviser at the constitutional negotiations in Kempton Park and later at Parliament in Cape Town, after which he returned to Pretoria for another stint as advocate. The last seven or eight years before his retirement were spent almost full time as a judge.

With all of this experience under his belt he is ready to face the challenges brought by his chairmanship of the NWU Council.

About balance and initiation

Balance is very important to him – for instance between the rights of some

students to be taught in their mother tongue, Afrikaans, and the rights of non-Afrikaans speakers not to be excluded. He is also passionate about the preservation of human rights. "Initiation and offensiveness passed off as tradition are unacceptable," he says.

A decade of success

Johan, who represents the Convocation on Council, believes that the NWU has successfully completed the first 10 years after the merger. "The challenge is taking from the past what is good and finding solutions for current problems."

He has great admiration for the NWU management and Prof Dan Kgwadi, the vice-chancellor, and believes that he will be able to cooperate with them successfully.

Interaction and the future

He feels very strongly about the role of the NWU Council. "The Council determines the broad policy according to which the university is run and where it is headed."

That is why he believes that interaction between the Council and all stakeholders is essential and that Council decisions must be communicated regularly.

And the future? "There are challenging times ahead. We can only succeed if everyone puts shoulder to the wheel and if everyone is willing to focus on the interests of the NWU as an excellent academic institution that is rooted in the South Africa of today."

Words and grandchildren

Johan's chairmanship is not the only thing that keeps him busy – he also works with words. He has published a number of youth novels, and then another novel, *Die vloek*. (In English it means "the curse".) He has already started on his next book.

But his grandchildren are the main reason for his limited time for stoop-sitting.

"We have two sons and a daughter, and one grandchild per family." These three quickly identified their grandfather as the weakest link and the one most likely to grant their wishes. "I'm in their service on an almost full-time basis," he jokes.

Grandfather, author, lawyer, and now also Council chairperson. It's a whole lot, but not too much. Because when both feet are firmly on the ground, the wind doesn't bother you much.



Adv Johan Kruger and his wife, Hester, live on a farm, Komarin, near Middelburg in Mpumalanga.



Dr Joe Tshifularo and his wife, Masala, are the proud parents of eight children.

A born leader

with a purpose

DR JOE "JG" TSHIFULARO, deputy chairperson of the NWU Council, believes that although people and their perceptions will always differ, it is important to bring everyone together.

As Vhamusanda* (royalty) of two Venda villages, Dr Joe Tshifularo lives up to his given name, Zwototea, which means the right person for the task, his task being to bring people together and to iron out barriers. This is exactly what he aims to do as deputy chairperson.

Joe was appointed deputy chairperson in November last year after serving on the Council since 2012. He is an appointee of the Minister of Higher Education and Training.

In his daily tasks as manager for inclusive Education and Psychological Services at the Department of Basic Education, he works with curriculum development, including for primary and secondary school children with special needs.

"I have to remove the learning barriers through counselling, guidance and assistance," he says. These same skills are invaluable in his capacity as deputy chairperson of the NWU Council, especially in helping to facilitate debate and unite people.

"I believe that the NWU is going to be one of the best universities. Internationally, differences between people have always been there. I have experienced it even in Japan and Great Britain; it is not unique to South Africa," he says.

Joe acknowledges that the process of changing perceptions and behaviour to establish a renewed, united institution is long and sometimes painful. "If we are moving together in the same direction, however, with a shared goal and respect for each other, and listen to each other, we can overcome all the challenges and reap the benefits."

Wise words ring true

As a child growing up in the home of a traditional leader, Joe did not initially know he was going to be the next chief. "In Venda they do not tell you that you are going to be a leader. When I learned later on in my life that I will follow in my father's leadership footsteps, my first reaction was to ask why the title of traditional leader could not rather go to my brother."

The answer was clear. Joe was the chosen one and just like a born leader he took it as his calling to make a difference in the lives of others.

"I have the wisdom my father passed on to me to guide me in my work. He says it is the values that his father taught him that will always be the foundation of his interaction with people.

"My father told me to love people and to accept them for who they are. He believed in sharing and caring for young and old, rich and poor, to be humble and reliable and to always treat everyone with respect."

Joe says he lives by his father's wise and important advice to make few enemies and many friends.

The family ties that bind

He is proud to be part of a big family. "My father had seven wives and more than 70 children. I am the eldest of my father and mother's six children."

Being part of such a big family and dealing with so many different people helped Joe to develop the people skills he now practises every day and has passed on to his own children.

Joe and his wife, Masala, are the proud parents of eight children, six girls and two boys. "I am extremely proud of my children; three of them are medical doctors and one is a chartered accountant. All my children are well educated."

The importance of education

Education is close to Joe's heart. He obtained his BA and BAHons from the University of Venda, an MA from the University of Limpopo and a PhD from the University of Venda. He also obtained a diploma in educational management from the Hiroshima University of Japan in 1997.

He says his favourite subjects at school were mathematics and biology and he initially wanted to pursue a career as pharmacist. His true calling was education, however, and after starting out as a teacher in 1977, he was promoted to inspector of schools in 1992.

After that he did a PhD in curriculum studies and is currently also working on a PhD in neuro-psychology.

His PhD in curriculum studies enables him to appreciate the importance of quality and appropriate education. This, paired with his love for people, his deep religious beliefs and values and his leadership qualities, makes him the right person at this crucial time to serve as the NWU Council's deputy chairperson.

** An educational pioneer in the Vhembe District, Dr Joe Tshifularo was inaugurated as Vhamusando of two villages by the Tshivhase Royal Council in 2004. He is responsible for the Tshifhena and Tshatharu villages, which are also under Khosi Vho-MF Lusanzu of Tshikombani. His inauguration follows the passing of his father, the late Vho-Thanyani Tshifularo.*



Survey results in awards for Career Centre

Earlier this year, the NWU Career Centre won two prestigious awards based on their 2014 participation in the annual Universum South African Student Survey.

THE CAREER CENTRE came first in the category "Most active survey engagement on campus" and third in the category "Best career service rating".

Universum is a global employer branding company and this specific survey examined the career preferences and expectations of students and professionals in South Africa.

For the survey, Universum gathered responses from 44 650 students from all higher education institutions in South Africa. A total of 3 720 NWU students took part in the survey.

What NWU alumni prefer

In 2014 the NWU also participated in a Universum survey that focused on NWU alumni. A total of 1 991 alumni participated in the survey.

The average age of these respondents was 37 years, they had on average 11,2 years work experience and they received an average salary of R417 702.

Here are some interesting facts and findings from the survey:

A competitive base salary is the most important attribute that NWU alumni are looking for in their ideal employer. They have also identified professional training and development, and leadership opportunities.

The top three most represented industries

- in which NWU alumni are employed are:
- educational and scientific institutions
 - public sector and governmental agencies
 - auditing and accounting

What NWU students want

These were some of the results of the 2014 student survey:

Respect for people

is the most important attribute that NWU students are looking for in their ideal employer. They have also identified leadership opportunities and a friendly work environment.

Top three most preferred industries are

- healthcare services
- educational and scientific institutions
- banks

R247 604

expected annual salary in a first job

The top three career goals of NWU alumni are:

- to have work/ life balance
- to be competitively or intellectually stimulated
- to be secure or stable in my job

Awards await alumni

ON 9 OCTOBER, during the NWU's annual Alumni Awards ceremony, the spotlight will once again fall on those NWU alumni who boast outstanding personal and career accomplishments and have made exemplary contributions to society.

An exciting new development is that, for the first time since the awards were introduced in 2013, a Young Alumnus Award will also be presented to an alumnus aged 35 or younger.

In another first, the Alumni Awards (for alumni older than 35) will be made in six categories. One recipient will be chosen from each of the following categories: education, research, community involvement, business leadership, arts and culture, and sport. The recipient of the Young Alumnus Award can be from any one of these categories.

From the nominations received for the Alumni Awards, the Exco of Convocation may choose to award the Lifetime Achievement Award to an exceptional nominee. This award is only made on rare occasions where the candidate or candidates have truly demonstrated exceptional and meritorious service to society.

How the process works

Alumni and other stakeholder groups were invited via email, SMS and newspaper advertisements in the *Sunday Times*, *Rapport* and *City Press* to nominate deserving alumni.

These nominations were submitted electronically to the Institutional Office. After nominations closed on 15 May, extended management structures on the campuses had to choose one Alumni Awards nomination in each of the six categories plus one nomination for the Young Alumnus Award.

In other words three nominations in each of the six categories plus three nominations for the Young Alumnus Award will be supplied to the Exco of Convocation. Exco will then choose one winner in each category and the recipient of the Young Alumnus Award.



Alumni have already experienced a fun-filled first half of 2015 and it seems as if the “alumni fun bus” will take them on more joyrides during the second half of the year. So, without further ado, contact your alumni office to find out what is in store for you, buckle up and enjoy the “ride”.

Alumni offices:

Mafikeng Campus 018 389 2388

Potchefstroom Campus 018 299 2768

Vaal Triangle Campus 016 910 3250



There are currently 28 569 Mafikeng alumni profiles in the NWU alumni database, of which 27,1% have valid contact detail. Profiles are continuously being updated and a total of 8 345 have been updated by the end of May this year. Ms Thandi Ralekgetho and Ms Louisa Vermeulen are the team members behind this achievement.

Student leaders meet

During a tour of the Mafikeng Campus on 21 April, former student representative council members were excited to witness the latest infrastructure developments on campus. They also met with current student leaders and were treated to a gala dinner that evening.

Hop on the

The more *the merrier*

Preparations for establishing regional and faculty-based chapters for Mafikeng alumni are well under way. So far, three alumni have been identified to drive the establishment of regional chapters in Botswana, Klerksdorp and Pretoria, and the establishment of faculty-based chapters was discussed with the various deans on the campus.

GET THE BALL *rolling*

In August the Soccer Institute's alumni will visit the campus, and in October the alumni office will put into practice the idiom “as the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined” when they start their relationship with the final-year students – and future alumni – at the rector's farewell dinner for these students.

Alumni listen attentively to the guest speaker, Mr Etienne le Roux, during the Alumni Business Breakfast.



Blending breakfast

On 27 February the Alumni Office of the Vaal Triangle Campus hosted its first Alumni Business Breakfast for 2015.



Well-known economist, academic and economic commentator, Mr Etienne le Roux, took to the stage just two days after Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene delivered his National Budget Speech. The theme of Etienne's address was, “SA Budget Speech: talking rand and cents”.



Potchefstroom Campus
Facebook page



The trophy winners of the NWU-Puk Golf Championships are Jaco Fourie (B section), Hennie Kruger (club captain), Jan Greyling (club champion), Elzané van der Wath (women's champion) and Kobus Nagel (C section).

Tee time

On the golf course, alumni participated against alumni from the universities of Cape Town and Pretoria and triumphed over the Pretoria alumni in the Varsity Cup competition. During the remainder of the year, they will take on alumni teams from the universities of Rhodes, Stellenbosch and the Free State.

2015 "FUN BUS"

Don't miss this "bus"

So far, the "fun bus" has taken Potchefstroom alumni on several joy rides. They attended reunions, tasted wine and played golf – with more of the same to come during the rest of the year.

The weekend of 31 July to 2 August will see two women's residence reunions. Klawerhof will have their

60-year reunion and Heide their 45-year reunion.

Other get-togethers include one in Nelspruit (28 July), another – this time for distance-learning alumni – in Durban (15 September), the Faculty of Law's 50-year reunion (25 to 26 September) and the 1965 first years reunion (6 November).

Feasting on fine wine

During the rest of the year, wine connoisseurs will be able to enjoy wines from estates and cellars such as Zonnbloem, Oranje Rivier Cellars, Marianne Wine Estate, Gabriëlskloof and Jakkalsvlei.

and business

During his speech, Ettienne said the South African economy can be repaired by curbing government spending, changing the tax policy and putting a stop to the use of taxpayers' money to capitalise state-owned enterprises such as Eskom and the Post Office.

Then, on 10 March 2015, the campus's Alumni Advisory Committee met with Prof Dan Kgwadi, vice-chancellor of the NWU. At this event Prof Dan gave them an overview of alumni relations at the NWU and feedback on the current strategic process that the NWU is engaged in.

Elvis will chase your blues away

The annual gala dinner for Vaal Triangle alumni, with the theme "Year of impact" and guest artist Elvis Blue, will be held on Friday 21 August 2015 at the Quest conference estate.



Vaal Triangle Campus
Facebook page

Cinderella plant

PITY THIS POOR PLANT and its offspring. Deliberately subjected to all sorts of hardships, from water-logging and drought to chemical bombardment, insect infestation, bacterial blitzing, heat blasting, freezing and light deprivation, their lives at the Mafikeng Campus's Plant Biotechnology laboratory are not easy.

Still, many somehow manage to survive – and just how they do it could provide valuable clues for the possible improvement of food production in a world grappling with food shortages and climate change.

The *Arabidopsis thaliana* is a member of the broccoli-like brassica family and has much to recommend itself as the plant of choice for the laboratory's research, says Prof Oziniel Ruzvidzo, the project leader of Mafikeng Campus' Plant Biotechnology Research Group.

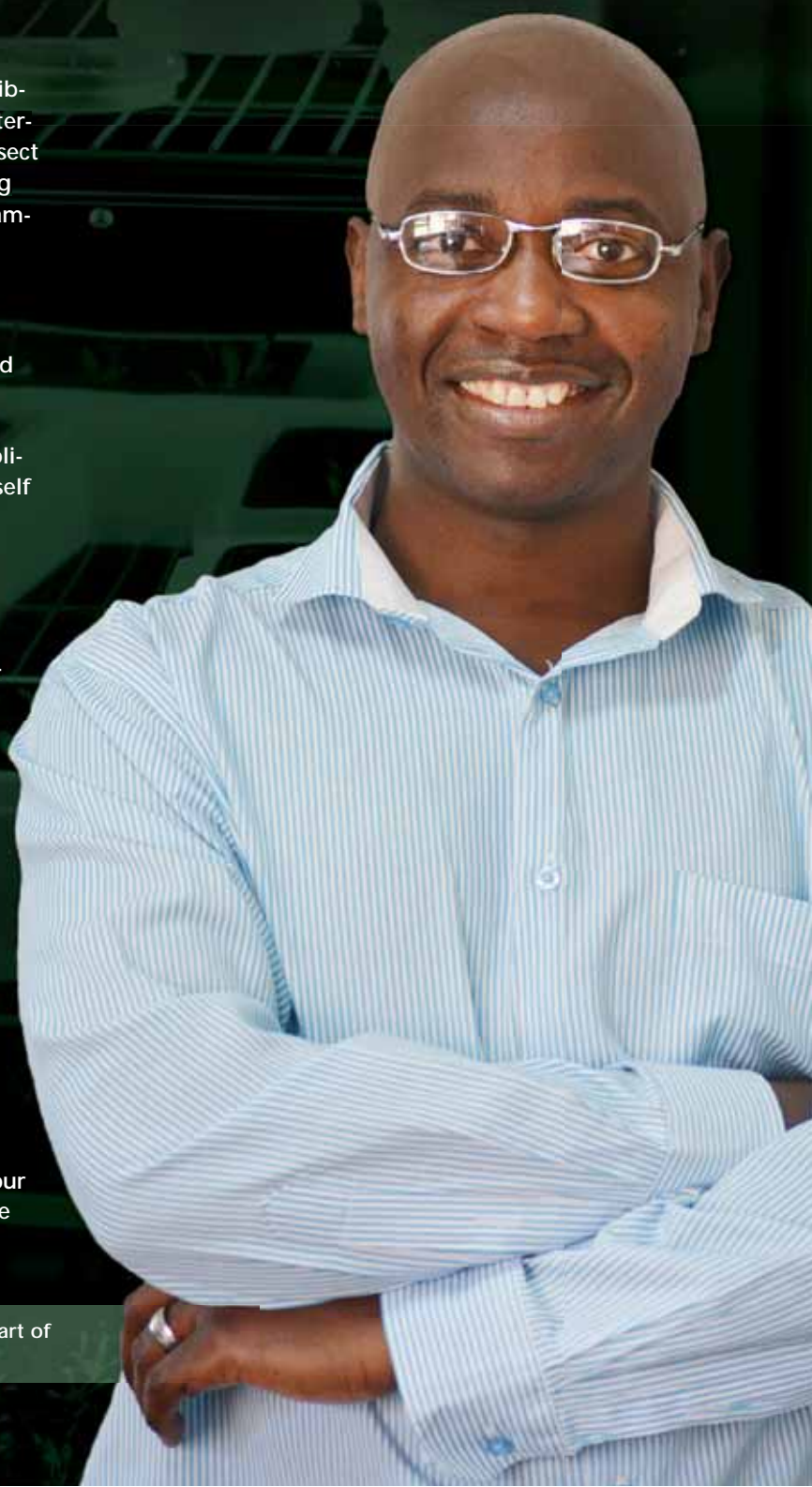
Its lifespan is short, its genes are few and its propagation process is simple, enabling researchers to test for its physiological responses to the various stress factors (biotic and abiotic) at every stage of its lifecycle, from seed germination to fruiting.

Adapt or die

Above all, the *Arabidopsis thaliana* is supremely resilient and adaptable to various environmental stressors. "So far, we have already identified 14 candidate proteins involved in stress response adaptation mechanisms," says Oziniel.

His work, fully funded by the National Research Foundation, entails studying and establishing the exact genetic mechanisms this plant potentially uses to respond and adapt to stressful conditions. The knowledge gained can then be ploughed into our own agronomically important crops for the ultimate improvement of food production.

Studying plants' survival mechanisms is an important part of Prof Oziniel Ruzvidzo's research work.



– adapt or die

Contribute towards food security

"The world's population is increasing and the climate is changing, but the issue of food production is not being fully addressed to go along with these changes," he says.

"Through this project, we aim at systematically contributing towards food security and the ultimate eradication of hunger and poverty. Climate change goes along with a lot of drought or flooding, for instance. If we can therefore understand what makes model plants like this *Cinderella* of ours survive in stressful conditions, then we can sustainably transfer these mechanisms to more economically important crops."

This is the point of subjecting the *Arabidopsis thaliana* to all sorts of environmental stimuli.

The work is done under simulated conditions in one of the newest and best-equipped plant biotechnology laboratories in the country, with the assistance of an army of eager postgraduate students and research assistants.

Imitating drought and flooding

"For instance, we withhold water and extract proteins to see which class of these proteins is being expressed under drought conditions and also making the plant adapt.

"The same applies when we overwater the plant to imitate flooding, lower the temperature to imitate winter conditions, expose it to osmotic shock and so on. Different proteins are expressed under different conditions," Oziniel says.

"The question is, do other vegetables – the ones we eat also have these genes? If the genes are not available in other crops, can we solve this by transferring them from a model plant? Alternatively, if the genes are there, are they switched on or off? If they are off, can we then switch them on?"

Switching genes on and off

Identifying "molecular switches" is an important part of Oziniel's research work.

A molecular switch would be used to regulate a plant's survival mechanisms by activating specific genes when needed and switching them off when no need exists. "If a gene is for drought-resistance, there would be no need for it to be expressed when rainfall is high, so it could be switched off."

The molecular switches he has in mind would be produced from plant material placed in water in very small quantities and sprayed onto the plant to activate the desired survival mechanisms. The switches would be biodegradable and non-persistent in the environment, unlike other substances like fertilizers and pesticides that cause pollution.

He has already produced some switches and is testing them in the laboratory. "I am looking at issues such as how much switch do we need to apply to turn on a gene, how long does it take to switch on a gene, and how long does a particular switch take to biodegrade in the soil."

Attracting attention

The first publication on the laboratory's work was published online in 2013 (www.TAIR.org) and immediately attracted the attention of various plant biotechnologists internationally.

"We are the only specialist group on this kind of work – plant adenylate cyclases on stress response and adaptation mechanisms," Oziniel explains. "The last time this type of work was attempted was in 1971, before the scientists involved abandoned it. They thought genes of this kind (adenylate cyclases) did not exist. Apparently, we have already identified a set of 14 such genes."

News that a South African research group is tackling this type of research, and making insights into the bargain, has certainly re-ignited interest and breathed fresh life into a once-dormant field.

Building a business – one wash at a time

Ms Sibongile Cele



After completing the Enterprising Women programme, entrepreneur Sibongile Cele now lives her dream as proud owner of a mobile carwash business.

PROGRAMME makes dreams come true

After a stringent selection process, 17 aspiring entrepreneurs are taking part in this year's Enterprising Women Programme (EWP).

During the course of the programme, participants are guided through a process in which they explore entrepreneurial ideas, develop sound business models and subsequently initiate their business with confidence and entrepreneurial know-how.

Participants become part of a close-knit peer network of women, sharing experiences and learning from one another and established female entrepreneurs through workshops and group sessions.

For more information about the EWP programme and to obtain the application documents, contact Leonie at leonie@aequis.co.za.

YOU ARE NEVER too old to learn – or in the case of 44-year old Ms Sibongile Cele, never too old to turn your entrepreneurial dream into reality.

This mother of three and former professional nurse was one of the first graduates of the Enterprising Women Programme (EWP) hosted by the bhive Enterprise Development Centre (bhive EDC) on the Vaal Triangle Campus (see next page).

From dream to idea

Sibongile has always dreamed of working for herself and after seeing a newspaper advertisement about the first Enterprising Women programme in 2013, she signed up for the eight-month programme.

One day while waiting in a long queue to have her car washed, Sibongile started to think about the advantages of a mobile carwash service that would go to the customers instead of expecting the customers to go to them.

"I realised that such a business would be able to render services twice as fast, and by doing so, save customers time and effort."

Then and there, the idea for Spick and Span Carwash was born.



Business

More about the bhive EDC

The bhive Enterprise Development Centre is a unit within the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Information Technology. Its aim is to produce graduates who find employment or self-employment in the labour market.

Building businesses worldwide

It is estimated that 98 million women around the world are running established businesses. Across the regions, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest average intention rate, with 52% of women having the desire to start a business within the next three years.

From idea to reality

After completing the programme, she joined the Young Entrepreneur Business Organisation (YEBO) on campus and set about realising her entrepreneurial dream. (YEBO is a unique student organisation within the bhive EDC that motivates students to heed the call of entrepreneurship.)

"Starting a business can be very daunting – especially for a new entrepreneur," says Sibongile. "I would not have been able to overcome all the challenges, if it was not for the support and advice from the YEBO team."

She says there are no words to describe the feeling of being self-sufficient. "Because of the knowledge and skills that I acquired I will now be remembered as a woman who lived her dream."

Spick and Span Carwash was officially launched in 2013 and Sibongile and her team have been active on the campus since 2014, serving staff and students.

With this mobile carwash unit, members of Sibongile's team take the business to the customers instead of expecting the customers to come to them.

This member of the Spick and Span Carwash team is ready to tackle the next job.



Entrepreneurs get in the ring

THE SO-CALLED "OLYMPICS" for entrepreneurship, Get in the Ring: The Investment Battle, is about to hit South African shores and hundreds of budding entrepreneurs will be competing for their share of an investment of up to €1 000 000.

The bhive Enterprise Development Centre on the Vaal Triangle Campus is part of the South African organising team that will host the local version of this global competition.

This year will see several institutions of higher learning heed the call of entrepreneurship by hosting so-called Local Opportunities for entrepreneurs to enter the competition. These Local Opportunities will be hosted in Johannesburg, Durban, Bloemfontein, Vanderbijlpark and Cape Town.

After a strict paper selection process, the top participants will be invited to the South African semi-finals in October. This two-day event will take place in Pretoria in the form of a seminar and a pitching event (also referred to as a "ringside battle").

The final stage of Get in the Ring: South Africa will take place in November. The winners of this event will join entrepreneurs from around the world during the big Investment Battle in January 2016 in Columbia in the USA.

Get in the Ring is a non-profit event concept, initiated by the Erasmus Centre for Entrepreneurship to bring the most promising entrepreneurs from around the world in contact with investors and to inspire people to start their entrepreneurial journey.

GET IN THE RING
THE INVESTMENT BATTLE



Discussing the implementation of the programme are, from left, Prof Coen Marais, programme leader of Policing Practice, Prof Manie Spamer, director of the Unit for Open Distance Learning, Prof Herman van Schalkwyk, rector of the Potchefstroom Campus and Prof Jan Swanepoel, dean of the Faculty of Arts.

Kickstart your career with a policing practice degree

EVERYBODY WORKING IN the safety and security field, including officers in the South African Police Service, can now enhance their careers with a bachelor's degree in policing practice.

The School of Social and Government Studies on the Potchefstroom Campus offers this degree by means of open distance learning.

The degree programme aims to equip participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to manage policing initiatives and operations at junior, middle and senior managerial levels. Learning support and contact classes will be delivered via interactive

whiteboard technology, broadcast to 58 learning centres countrywide. Exams will be written at NWU examination centres across the country. There are no closing dates for applications and the tuition fees are R18 500 per year if a student registers for all the modules per academic year. Tuition at open distance learning centres will be conducted in English only.

For more information, contact Ms Santie du Plessis at 018 299 4548, or santie.duplessis@nwu.ac.za.

You can also contact the call centre at distancepotch@nwu.ac.za or 018 285 5900.

100% pass rate for future chartered accountants

ALL EIGHT MAFIKENG Campus candidates who wrote the challenging South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) Initial Test of Competence (ITC) exam passed on the first attempt.

This gives the campus a 100% first attempt pass rate for two years in a row. The ITC exam is the first of a series of board exams candidates have to pass to qualify as chartered accountants (CAs). In the past three years, the Mafikeng Campus has produced 27 candidates who have written and passed this exam.

Learning *is child's play*



ALL WORK AND no play makes Jack and Jill dull. This old saying rings true for Prof Mary Grosser, a researcher in the Optentia research focus area on the Vaal Triangle Campus, who recently attended the Lego Idea Conference in Denmark.

The purpose of this conference was to redefine play and reimagine learning, thus building a future where learning through play empowers children to become creative and engaged lifelong learners.

According to Mary the current strong focus on academic performance disrupts learning and be-

comes a barrier to optimal learning. Parents might think that critical skills such as reading, writing and mathematics require early and intense instruction, but researchers contend that creativity, critical thinking and the ability to learn from failure are just as important and can only be learned through play.

Play encourages a child to develop flexibility (saying or doing something in a different way); elaboration (being able to provide more detail about what is being said or done), and originality (being able to think of ideas and thoughts no one else has).



Prof Mary Grosser from the research focus area, Optentia, believes that play is inherently part of a young child's nature, which makes it a much better path to learning compared to a classroom context where the focus is strictly on academic work.

Securing rugby players' future

THE POTCHEFSTROOM BUSINESS School and Unit for Open Distance Learning on the Potchefstroom Campus have partnered with *MyPlayers to ensure that rugby players have a future once the glory years are gone and the final whistle has blown.

Because of the taxing nature of their career, rugby players also seldom have the opportunity to further their studies while actively playing.

In view of this, courses were specifically developed for sportsmen and women, taking into account the time at their disposal, current and future needs that they might have, and possible career paths that might interest them.

The University Preparatory Programme will also aid players who might not have university exemption.

**MyPlayers is the official organisation of professional rugby players in South Africa and manages their collective interests.*

Law Clinic helps indigent communities

FOR THE PAST 32 years, the Law Clinic on the Mafikeng Campus has been rendering services to those who cannot afford legal fees.

Back in the days of the former University of Bophuthatswana, the clinic started as a small advice office with student volunteers.

In 1993 the Attorneys Act was amended to enable candidate attorneys to serve their articles of clerkship at a properly constituted and accredited law clinic.

Many candidate attorneys have since been admitted as attorneys after being trained at the clinic.

Today, the clinic is part of the Faculty of Law on the Mafikeng

Campus and assists clients with various matters.

These include custody disputes, domestic violence cases, labour matters, contractual claims and land-related matters.

Clients are represented in courts ranging from the District Magistrate Court to the High Court.

"When the clinic is unable to assist in a particular matter, the client is referred to another organisation better suited to deal with the problem.

"There is no charge for the services rendered by the clinic, but in some instances clients may be asked to contribute towards certain expenses," says Mr Simon Rasikhalela, director of the Law Clinic.

Their fingers are on the pulse



The conference, which afforded healthcare practitioners, educators, scientists and students across the globe the opportunity to share their knowledge with one another, was officially opened by Prof Mashudu Davhana-Maselesele, rector of the Mafikeng Campus.

THE DEPARTMENT OF Nursing Science on the Mafikeng Campus hosted a very successful international conference on health science education from 15 to 17 April 2015 at the Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg.

Prof Wendy Sword, one of the keynote speakers and director of the School of Nursing and associate dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Ottawa in Canada, addressed delegates on trends in higher education and preparing practitioners of the future.

Other topics that were discussed include capacity development in health-care sciences, innovation in scholarship, and leadership and nursing practice: an Ubuntu-informed approach.

Dignitaries attending the conference included Ms Qedani Mahlangu, MEC of Health in Gauteng, Dr Magome Masiike, MEC of Health in the North West Province, and Ms Daphney Mohube, executive manager for strategic planning in the Department of Education in North West.

Design your own mobile apps

AFTER LESS THAN two years since its inception, the NWU Vaal App Factory on the Vaal Triangle Campus is already proving to be a force to be reckoned with in harnessing and commercialising the power of mobile technology.

Part of the School of Information Technology, this dynamic unit not only conducts groundbreaking research into mobile applications, but also enables entrepreneurs to retool their technical skills set and enter the market as technology-savvy knowledge creators.

The App Factory teaches students to develop their own mobile applications. The interactive sessions are free of charge and cover the skills needed to develop workable and commercially viable applications.

The free training modules span various topics including computer, web and mobile programming, as well as web, graphics database and electronic design.

The App Factory has already developed and implemented several business and social apps. These include Cluedapp (an online crossword generator and gaming portal), Peepzklk (a student-student and student-student leadership communication app), the Lobola Calculator app, a parking reservation system, a hospital meal menu app and the MyPark music distribution app.

Xenophobia is damaging our tourism industry



THE RECENT OUTBREAK of xenophobic attacks has left an indelible mark on the South African tourism industry.

This was confirmed in a study undertaken by Dr Lindie du Plessis from the research entity Tourism Research in Economic Environs and Society (TREES) at the Potchefstroom Campus.

Lindie's research culminated in nine factors perceived to contribute to the country's competitiveness – in the eyes of 271 tour operators from

around the globe. These factors are, from most important to least: stability, economic benefits, brand and image, cuisine, the African experience, attributes, tourist services, location and entertainment and activities.

"Our results show that stability is the most important factor contributing to South Africa's competitiveness. However, it goes without saying that incidents like the xenophobic attacks prevent us from marketing ourselves as a stable country," she says.

Dr Lindie du Plessis believes it is going to take an immense effort to repair the damage done by the recent xenophobic attacks to the country's brand.

The Senne family members are proud dad, Obakeng, mom Refilwe and their "little princess", Obafilwe.

Obakeng Senne

Making a little *go a long way*



WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH, employers want graduates who can make a little go a long way, saving them money without ever skimping on quality.

One such graduate is procurement specialist Mr Obakeng Senne, who acquired the ability to make every cent count as BCom student and student leader on the Vaal Triangle Campus.

"My mom was the sole breadwinner and I was the youngest of four boys, so I received a very small allowance for everything, including my food, and I had to make it last," says Obakeng.

Smart with money and with a cheerful, outgoing personality to match, Obakeng was elected sport officer of the Thuthuka residence in 2009. Next he was elected primarius of Thuthuka, enabling him to further hone his budgeting and fundraising skills. It wasn't long before he became elected treasurer-general of the Campus Student Representative Council (SRC), and then took on the Arts and Culture portfolio of the Institutional SRC.

Unfazed by life's little knocks

Another skill that Obakeng learnt while at university was to "be comfortable with being uncomfortable". This lesson started with his decision to move from Potchefstroom, his hometown, to the Vaal Triangle Campus in Vanderbijlpark.

In his second year, his mother passed away. "I was busy writing exams for the second semester, and I just had to carry on."

Hard though the experience was, it made him resilient, unfazed by life's little knocks. The first day of his first job is an example. "I joined Eskom's graduate programme as a buyer, and was sent to Kendall power station in Witbank. It turned out that the personnel manager at Witbank wasn't expecting me!"

Luckily he had his employment contract with him, and before long was sourcing gear boxes and bucket elevators, organising cleaning services for cooling towers and arranging for the refurbishment of buildings, dams and cranes.

Purchasing power

After 18 months at the power station, Obakeng worked briefly as a senior buyer at Eskom-owned Rotek Engineering before joining his current employer, Times Media Limited, which publishes *The Sunday Times* and *Sowetan*.

This is another position where his understanding of purchasing power comes into play.

In collaboration with the company's finance system manager and finance general manager, Obakeng designed the procurement process and system, which is used to source everything from courier contracts and security to media and IT equipment, as well as building renovations.

When not making his employer's resources stretch as far as they can go, Obakeng relishes time spent with his wife, Refilwe, whom he says is "my primary school crush, my high school sweetheart, my desire, my friend, my sister, my wife, mother of my I'il princess".

The "little princess" is their baby daughter, Kgolagano Obafilwe Senne, born the day before Christmas 2014.

No doubt she too will grow up with that enviable ability to go out there and get things done, and make a little go a very long way.

As a young student, Mr Obakeng Senne learnt how to make a little money go a long way and today he is using these skills to make his employer's resources stretch as far as they can go.

HIS STUDIES



Obakeng obtained a BCom degree in economics and international trade in 2011 at the NWU's Vaal Triangle Campus.

HIS CAREER

He started his career at Eskom's Kendall power station in Witbank, followed by a short stint at Eskom-owned Rotek Engineering. His current employer is Times Media Limited.

ADV SEDIRWA OSUPILE

From court orderly to advocate: A LEAP OF FAITH

Studying at night and working by day as a court orderly and later a police detective, Adv Sedirwa Osupile's passion for the law motivated him to overcome huge obstacles and obtain an LLB degree after 16 long years of study.

RESPECT FOR THE LAW and faith in the people who uphold it inspired Adv Sedirwa Osupile, a former court orderly, to complete a law degree in the face of daunting challenges.

One such role model for Sedirwa was Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng, a former NWU lecturer and Judge of the North West High Court and now Chief Justice of South Africa.

"He was one of the people who inspired me while I was working as a court orderly in Mahikeng. You look at them, how they conduct themselves in court, and they inspire you. I developed a passion for the law."

Against all odds

That was in 1996 and Sedirwa was already in his early 30s, with a wife and four children to support on the salary of a court orderly with the South African Police Service (SAPS).

Against the odds, he set his heart on obtaining an LLB degree, studying part time.

The easiest thing about that decision was that the University of the North West, as it was then, was conveniently located just up the road from the court building in Mahikeng.

"It was a stone's throw away. I would work from 08:00 to 16:00 and then attend lectures until 22:00," says Sedirwa.

More challenging, perhaps, than working by day and studying at night was the financial load he was carrying.

"I paid for my studies from my own pocket. That is why it took me so long to complete my LLB. My wife was not working and I had to pay the bond and our other costs. When I didn't have money, I had to pause my studies to accumulate some monies. It was tough, it was exhausting and it was an uphill climb, but what you have started really has to be completed."

Finish what you start

It may have taken him 16 long years but he did it. In 2013, Sedirwa graduated with an LLB degree. Not content with that, he applied to the High Court to be admitted as an advocate, achieving that distinction in August 2013.

In the meantime, his family has grown up. "My eldest son is doing an electrical engineering internship and I have a brilliant daughter in matric who wants to study medicine."

Career changes

His career has also undergone some changes. In 2006, after 11 years as an SAPS court orderly, he was made a detective in forensics. Three years later, he resigned from the SAPS with the aim of serving his articles and eventually becoming a practising attorney.

"However in 2010, the Minister of Police called on those who had resigned to come back and in 2011 I was reenlisted," Sedirwa says. Since then, he has served as a "designated police officer" responsible for firearm and liquor licensing, based at the Makgobistad police station about 60 kilometres outside Mahikeng.

Sedirwa says it concerns him that South Africans are not always as law-abiding as they could be. "We need to learn to respect the law. The dispensation we have now is different. Today, we are all equal under the law and we must respect it."

"I have offered my legal services to the SAPS to use and hope to be able to make a contribution in that capacity," he says.

Through it all, his passion for the law is undimmed. "While studying, I learnt about how the Constitution works and how the administration of South Africa is being run. I feel proud."

Sedirwa, carrying a double dose of respect for the law, as a member of the SAPS and as an advocate, makes sure he practises what he preaches.

He does not, for example, indulge in that all-too-common South African habit of talking or texting on a cellphone while driving. "I'm a policeman – I must keep my eyes peeled!"

Adv Sedirwa Osupile

HIS STUDIES



Sedirwa obtained an LLB degree from the NWU's Mafikeng Campus in 2013.



HIS CAREER

Starting out as a court orderly, Sedirwa later became a detective in the SAPS. He resigned from the police to serve his articles, but re-enlisted in 2011.



SETTING AN EXAMPLE

LEOKA MPHUTHI

for the next generation

In a country where race often defines how people see each other, Mr Leoka Mphuthi is a refreshing change.

HIS STUDIES



Leoka completed a degree in psychology and tourism management at the NWU's Potchefstroom Campus, followed by a postgraduate certificate in education.

COLOUR COULDN'T BE less of a concern to Potchefstroom Campus alumnus, Mr Leoka Mphuthi and his primary school learners at Laerskool Vastrap in Rustenburg.

"For me, where you fit in is your own choice. It's about the person who can do the job. The children have long surpassed seeing me as a black teacher," says Leoka, who teaches English to five classes of grade fives and also coaches rugby, cricket and athletics.

"I told the principal at my interview that I was there to do a job. The point of being a teacher is to make a difference to the children, to be a father to kids who don't have fathers and mothers. That is why I want to be the Minister of Education or the MEC for Education one day. I want to make a difference."

He already is, judging from his teaching career and the other facets of his life so far. From an early age, Leoka had a talent for reaching out to people from all walks of life.

Taking change in his stride

"I was born in Bethlehem in the Free State and started my schooling in Welkom, where I attended Tinktinkieland Pre-Primary, which was mostly Afrikaans and white dominated. In grade four in 2001, my family relocated

from Welkom and the next area which we would call home was in Carletonville, where I attended Westfields Primary School until the end of my grade seven year and was also elected as a prefect."

Hoërskool Monument in Krugersdorp was the next destination in his schooling career.

"It was my choice," says Leoka, whose home language is Southern Sotho and who speaks seven South African languages altogether. "I wanted to learn more about the Afrikaans language and culture, and what better way than to go to an Afrikaans boarding school?"

He spent all five years there as a boarder, starting in grade eight at the tender age of 12.

"It was a little tough settling in at first. I was a year younger and I'm black – the only black person in the residence in grade eight – but knowing the language and traditions gave me an edge. It became my second home and I was comfortable there. That's where I learnt my sense of order from."

By the time he turned 14, Leoka already knew that he wanted to study psychology and he knew where he wanted to study it – at the



HIS CAREER

Leoka teaches English to grade five learners at Laerskool Vastrap in Rustenburg.



Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU. "My dad is an academic. He studied nephrology (the study of kidney functioning) at the NWU where he is doing his doctorate," he says, explaining the connection.

So, immediately after matriculating at 17, Leoka enrolled for a degree in psychology and tourism management at the campus.

Freedom and diversity

"I was overwhelmed by the freedom and the diversity at the NWU. I clicked well with my fellow students and fitted in easily," says Leoka, who was elected to the house committee of the Thaba-Jäh day residence for the 2011/12 and 2012/13 terms. "I was also on the Rag committee and did some debating. Potch was a good place. It was everything I would have liked it to be."

Leoka was only 20 when he graduated. "My parents asked me if I was going to start working and I said no, I'm far too young."

Instead, he enrolled for a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) at the Potchefstroom Campus, completing it in 2014 and attending his graduation ceremony as recently as 5 March this year (a few weeks after he turned 23).

"Next I would like to do my honours in education, and eventually get my doctorate, hopefully in education management," says Leoka, showing how serious he is about realising his dream of becoming the Minister or MEC of Education.

Kindness is key

Meanwhile, the Laerskool Vastrap is turning out to be an excellent training ground for putting his values about life and education into practice.

"We need people who care about each other and are kind," says Leoka. "I get along with people who know what they want to do, and I have no time for slacking, dishonesty and lack of integrity."

He strongly believes that the children he teaches are partners and not subordinates, and has no time for the outdated notion that youngsters should be seen and not heard.

"Children are part of us and we as adults and teachers are their mentors and coaches. I learnt this from my parents, with whom I have a very good relationship. It's about the way you speak to children and how you interact with them. At break, if I'm on duty, I play with the children and

kick a soccer ball with them. I never raise my voice, and I am always willing to help and listen. I believe it's the little things that make a big difference."

Leoka also believes that children should learn to look deeply into life and the questions that hold society back and can move it forward. "I tell the learners that they mustn't just look, they must see; they mustn't just hear, they must listen and observe and understand. I tell them we are part of our environment, and that where you fit in is your own choice."

He plays these lessons out in the classroom and on the sports field. Apart from being responsible for a rugby team at the school, he is manager of the under 13 Leopards Rugby team in the North West province, as well as coach of the province's under 12 cricket team.

All these things probably explain why, in a recent article in *News24.com*, some of Leoka's grade five learners were quoted as saying he was the "coolest" teacher in the school.

"Why do they say that? I can't answer that!" he says. "It's like calling yourself a legend! Ask the children. Everyone knows that kids are very honest."



"Sweetheart" shows *that life can be a fairy tale*

It may seem as if Ms Verona Goslett is living a fairy tale, but in reality her achievements are the result of a lot of hard work and her willingness to grab the opportunities that came her way.

FOR MANY PEOPLE, appearing in a well-known TV series, reaching the finals of a TV reality show and presenting your own series on TV might sound like a modern-day fairy tale.

Yet this is real life for Ms Verona Goslett, a 'princess' who did not inherit her 'royal role' in the fairy tale but earned it through hard work.

Verona, alumna of the Vaal Triangle Campus, was the runner-up in the 2013 reality series *Jy is my Liefeling* (meaning You are my sweetheart) on kykNet. The producers of the film *Liefeling* used this series to select the female lead in the stage production of *Liefeling*.

500 put their best foot forward

For the reality series, 20 young women were chosen from more than 500 entrants. They were judged on their singing ability and stage personality, and then narrowed down to six. Eventually Verona was one of the top two contestants, but the sought-after role was snatched away by Liza Brönnner-Nel.

This was not Verona's first time in the public eye. The previous year, in 2012, she played the role of Brionay in a couple of episodes of the popular soapie, *7de Laan*.

Verona says that she has always loved theatre. "My parents took me to many musicals.

I always looked longingly at the actors and decor on stage and told myself that was where I wanted to be."

No to this role

Where she did not want to be was behind a microscope in a laboratory. "In 2010 I started to study BSc Biological Sciences at the University of Pretoria, but I soon realised that it was not meant to be."

Aptitude tests showed that she had a talent for languages and from 2011 she studied BA Communication Studies and Language Practice at the NWU's Vaal Triangle Campus, followed by an honours degree in journalism in 2014.

One thing she enjoyed very much at the Vaal Triangle Campus was that the classes in her third year and honours year were small. "The eight honours students were from totally different backgrounds and we became very attached to one another. We also became friends with our lecturers – bonds of friendship that we will cherish for many years."

Busy, busy, busy

Verona sees herself as a tomboy who loves the great outdoors and likes to watch the animals on the family's game farm.

"I enjoy target shooting with my bow and arrow and with my father's hunting rifle. I also



For ever and ever

In her honours year the energetic Verona tackled a TV production together with her friend, Llewellyn du Plessis, an events coordinator.

They were the producers, directors, presenters and marketers of the production, *Vir Ewig & Altyd*. This programme is about everything related to weddings: from venues and invitations to legal advice and marriage counselling before the big day.

They do not plan a follow-up programme, but are busy with other productions such as advertisements and music videos.



HER STUDIES



From 2011 to 2013 Verona studied BA Communication Studies and Language Practice at the NWU's Vaal Triangle Campus and she obtained an honours degree in journalism in 2014.



HER CAREER

She currently works at the regional radio station 90.6fm in Vanderbijlpark.



Once upon a time there was a little princess...

Verona was born in Vereeniging and grew up in Meyerton.

"I was a real nerd and the dux pupil of the school from grade four to 11. However, I also participated in many other activities such as hockey, school choir, South Gauteng Youth Choir (Colla Vocé), drama, singing and piano."

At university this bright student was also named best first-year student of the Faculty of Humanities.

like to try out new fads that come along – from quilting and knitting to painting, mosaic work, cycling and dancing."

However, she is not too busy to dream about the future. "One day I would like to star in a musical like *The Sound of Music*." Another item on her wish list is her own corporate communications company – something she is currently working on.

And at the bottom of the wish list there's... chocolate?

"Yes," she admits, "I am addicted to the stuff. I cannot resist any form of chocolate. This has caused many a tiff at home, as my father has the same weakness."

However, for someone who lives a fairy tale life, a chocolate on a velvet pillow is surely not too much to ask?

PROFILE



The world beyond the books

Verona says her last year at the NWU definitely prepared her for the work environment. "That was the most difficult but also the most informative year of my entire time at the NWU and I wouldn't trade that for anything," she says.

However, her hard work paid off quickly, because in December 2014 she was appointed as news writer and reader of radio station 90.6fm. She regularly does voice-over work for advertisements and when an opportunity arises she auditions for stage and TV productions.

The world of work – and especially journalism – is not for the faint of heart. "One thing that studies do not prepare you for is the reality of a routine.

"For instance, getting up at four or five in the morning to prepare for work and only getting home after dark. In case of a journalist the hours vary and you sometimes work late into the night."

Following in a wise man's footsteps

When Mr Pule Mothibe started his career, he was the first black African with a CTA qualification at the law firm he joined in Mahikeng. Today he is the head of Human Capital and a partner in the audit firm, PwC.

HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED in the accounting profession since the days when Mr Pule Mothibe, head of Human Capital at PwC, was still studying to become a chartered accountant.

"In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there were only a handful of black candidates coming through with Accounting Honours. Even a few years back, if 20% of our intake at PwC was black it was a stretch. Now, more than 50% of our candidates in Gauteng are African, Coloured or Indian, and we are moving in the direction where intakes will reflect demographics."

Pule himself has been part of the profession's transformation in more ways than one.

While money and opportunities may be what motivate many young people today to pursue a particular career, Pule's motivation in choosing accounting was to honour the country's very first black African chartered accountant (CA), Prof Wiseman Nkuhlu, by following in his footsteps.

"I remember a career guidance session while I was still at Mmabatho High School. A guest came to speak to us about chartered accounting and he mentioned Prof Nkuhlu. We wondered, 'Why should this be a profession of white people? Let's go and join him!'"

Changing course

Sure enough, after a brief spell studying Engineering at Wits University, Pule enrolled for a BCom degree at the former University of Bophuthatswana (Unibo) in Mahikeng.

Unfortunately, like other 'black universities' in pre-1994 South Africa, Unibo was not accredited with the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA). As such, it could not offer the honours-level Certificate of Accounting Theory (CTA). For this reason Pule moved to the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg.

His BCom studies were not his last encounter with Unibo, however. Between 1993 and

1995, while doing his articles in Mahikeng, Pule returned as a part-time lecturer in accounting. "The university was running short of lecturers and came to ask me to help out. This was my alma mater, and it was very fulfilling for me to give something back."

Being the first

His role as a part-time lecturer was not the only thing that made his articles memorable. When he arrived at Coopers Theron du Toit (which later became PwC), Pule was the first black African with a CTA qualification.

"That made me an instant role model and mentor, which comes with its pressures but taught me a lot," says Pule, who qualified as a CA in 1997.

In 2003 PwC made him a partner and then, five years ago, they asked him to serve on the firm's executive committee for Southern Africa.

"That meant quite a lot to me," says Pule, explaining that the executive committee consists of 10 partners whose task it is to take the business forward in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

"Being on the committee means you are bringing value to

HIS STUDIES

Pule obtained a BCom degree at Unibo. He completed the honours-level Certificate of Accounting Theory at the University of Natal and qualified as a chartered accountant in 1997.

HIS CAREER

Pule started his career at Coopers Theron du Toit which later became PwC, one of the 'big four' audit firms in South Africa. He became a partner in 2003 and five years ago became a member of the firm's executive committee for Southern Africa. He is currently the head of Human Capital.

"HOW YOU CONDUCT YOURSELF IS CRUCIAL. YOU CAN'T COME ACROSS AS A CONDESCENDING KNOW-IT-ALL, FOR EXAMPLE. HUMILITY IS VERY IMPORTANT IN LIFE."

— MR PULE MOTHIBE —

Valuable lessons learnt

Early on, Pule learnt several valuable lessons that have stood him in good stead throughout his career.

One such lesson is that while there's no substitute for solid technical skills in the accounting profession, the softer skills are essential too – especially teamwork, getting along with people, conflict handling and the ability to read situations accurately and handle them accordingly.

"How you conduct yourself is crucial. You can't come across as a condescending know-it-all, for example. Humility is very important in life. I believe there is always something you can learn from every other person in the room. To quote *Desiderata* (a 1920s poem by Max Ehrmann): 'Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have a story to tell'."

Another lesson he has taken to heart is, "You should not compare yourself with others. If you do, you either fight to catch up with someone you consider better, or think you've arrived when you consider someone lesser.

"To quote again from *Desiderata*: 'If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.' Rather find your own place in the sun and look to that."

the business and are seen as having the potential to continue bringing value."

Pule is also a board member of the Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors (IRBA), a statutory body which, among other objectives, regulates audits performed by registered auditors with the aim of protecting the public.

Green fingers

There is also another side to him – as a husband, father of twin daughters and keen gardener. "I grow my own spinach; I haven't bought any from the supermarket for years," says Pule, who says the principle of growing one's own food and practising sustainable farming has strong appeal.

This love of gardening has its roots in childhood.

"After school, my mother used to get us to tend the vegetable garden; these days, I go into the garden to unwind. I don't garden as often as I'd like to during the week, but on weekends I spend at least two hours a day gardening."

When he retires one day from accounting, he might swop his calculator for some farming equipment and try his hand at sustainable agriculture. It's a logical step: having helped grow the accounting profession, why not help grow food for the nation?

Her own little flock: Naudé and Luné are full-blooded farm kids and also love the sheep.



ADELE ROSSOUW

From school teacher to sheep shearer

Eight years ago, Ms Adele Rossouw swapped the classroom for the sheep kraal and today her enterprise, Il Paradiso Shearing Services, boasts a solid client base and a good reputation.

SHEEP FARMERS ARE NO longer taken aback when this petite blonde shows up on the farm with her team of sheep shearers.

It's not just Ms Adele Rossouw's charming smile that wins over her clients; she is also known for her business acumen – and of course for the fact that she can catch a sheep when necessary.

She explains: "You catch the sheep by its left hind leg with your right hand. Pull the sheep towards you with some force so that it is off balance. Then you put your left hand under its neck and place it in an upright, sitting position."

For Adele, a day on the shearing floor is just another day's work. She is not one of the shearers, although her foreman has taught her all the finer points of sheep-shearing.

If you are skilled, fit and not out of practice, you can shear a sheep in about three minutes, she says.

From blackboard to sheep kraal

Adele has always had a passion for sheep and sheep farming. After all, she grew up on a farm, and farming is in her blood. However,

after matric she decided to study teaching and to swap the family farm near Clarens in the Free State for the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PU for CHE) – today the NWU's Potchefstroom Campus.

She was part of the first group of first-year students in Minjonet women's residence (2001) and remembers her student years with nostalgia. "Student life was a wonderful, carefree time. Potch was simply wonderful," she says.

She joined the committee of the Student Rag Community Service in her first year. She completed her BEd studies in 2003 and started teaching in Witbank the following year.

However, before long she was scooped up by Francois, a farmer from the district. Eight years ago, with the birth of her first child, Naudé, she left the classroom behind, but opted for farming instead of housekeeping.

Carpe diem – seize the day

In 2011, Adele started her own sheep-shearing service in Mpumalanga. The service was based on the one that her father had started in the Free State a year earlier.

HER STUDIES

Adele obtained a BEd degree from the former PU for CHE in 2003.



HER WORK

After a stint as a teacher in Witbank she started her own business, Il Paradiso Shearing Services.

Keys to success

Making sure that you are competent in whatever you do is one of the most important keys to success, says Adele. And this applies not only to herself but also to her shearers. It's not enough for shearers to be well trained, skilled and fit – they must also love animals, because "then they handle the sheep gently".

Her advice to other entrepreneurs? "Never give up, even if things don't work out as planned. Take heart and continue. Aim high. Give it your best shot," she says.

Challenges and highlights

"Challenges will inevitably be thrown at you on a daily basis; the question is how you deal with them and solve them. My work is absolutely rewarding. Being passionate about something makes it easier to find solutions."

Adele's tasks include administration, classing sheep, buying rams and inspecting the floor in shearing time. She obtained a Springbok head in wool classing – which she describes as a highlight in her career. This is the highest qualification in the identification, typing, grouping, classing and packaging of wool.

She has completed several courses, including two sheep-handling courses at Grootfontein Agricultural College. Adele is also a junior Dormer and Dohne Merino selector. (Dormer and Dohne are Merino sheep breeds.)

Another highlight was being chosen as one of the top five in last year's Sanlam and Landbouweekblad Women in Agriculture Entrepreneurs' Competition. (The *Landbouweekblad* is an Afrikaans magazine focusing on agriculture.)

She readily admits that it was a challenging time, but an opportunity that she seized with both hands. "When we first started, I was afraid and uncertain, but I got over it quickly. I knew that great things were bound to happen because Jesus was at the helm of our business."

In the first days of Il Paradiso Shearing Services, she worked with borrowed equipment and three shearers; today her two teams of eight shearers each shear more than 100 000 sheep every year.

Sheep children and real children

Over the years Adele has established her own flock of sheep and one of her favourite things is to call them to the kraal in the evening. "They know my voice. I call them to the kraal like children," she laughs. "I believe that every ewe in my flock has her own personality."

Her own children enjoy life on the farm, playing among the dust and the sheep. Her daughter, Luné, is five years old and is growing up with the business.

Adele and Francois will soon be celebrating their 10th anniversary and with this pillar of strength at her side she looks forward to expanding the business and reaching even greater heights. She says that "Never say die" is the most important lesson she has learnt.

That's apart from sheep catching, of course.



Adele has had to catch her fair share of sheep to convince sceptical farmers that she means business.

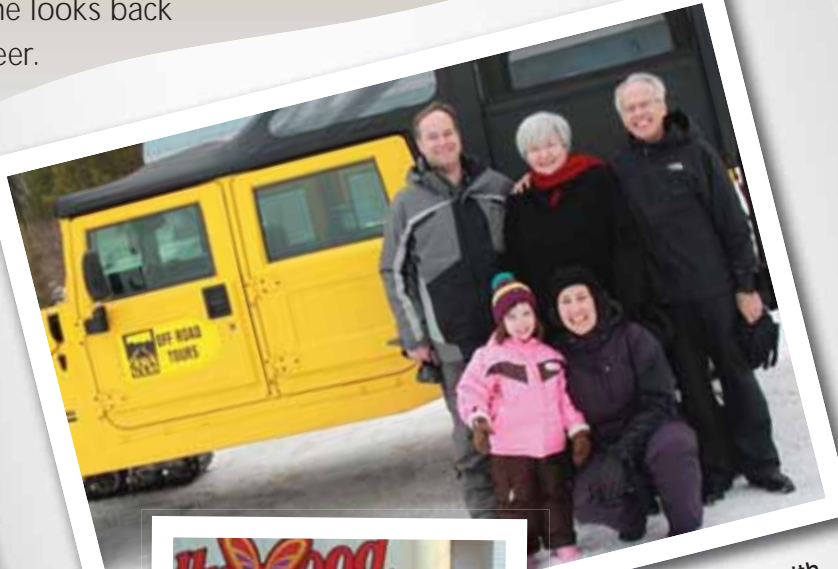
DR PIETER BARNARD

He's travelled far and wide

Since completing his studies in Potchefstroom, Dr Pieter Barnard has made the world his home, building a career spanning several continents and cultures. Today, he looks back at a long, fruitful and cosmopolitan career.



Pieter and Elza Barnard live in St Albans, Missouri, in America.



Pieter and Elza visiting with their children, Marika and Johan Mitchell and their grandchild, Carissa. While the Mitchells were still living in Canada they all spent a week vacationing at a lake in the mountains.



Pieter, Elza and their granddaughter Carissa on vacation in Dollywood in Tennessee's Smokey Mountains.



Granddaughter Carissa while they were still living in Canada.

On the banks of the Mooi River

Pieter reminiscing about his Potchefstroom days: "I lived in the Sakkie Meyer residence of the former Potchefstroom Teachers' Training College (known as POK), because I had an education bursary. I participated in Volkspole and served on the POK's Cultural Council. I also played hockey for the POK's second team."

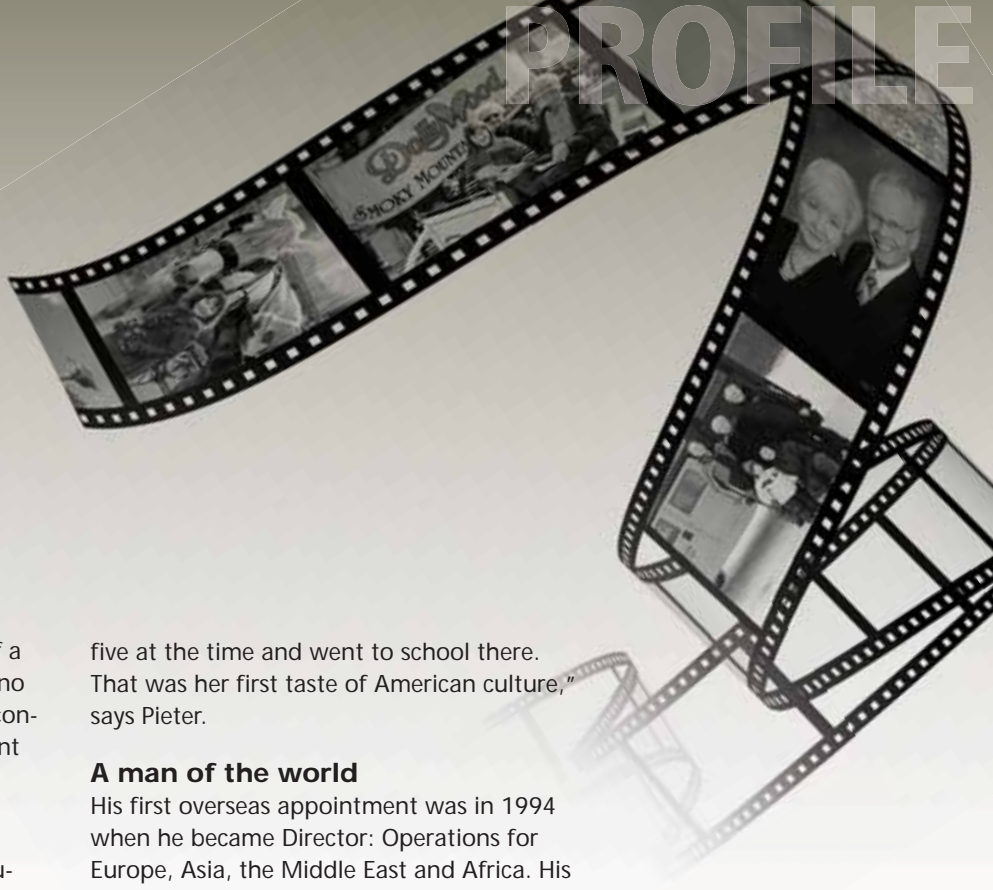
HIS STUDIES

- BSc in geology (1971), Hons BSc in geomorphology (1974) and MBA (1978), former PU for CHE
- DCom in business management, former Rand Afrikaans University (1990)
- A course in financial management, Stanford University, California (1996)



HIS CAREER

Pieter started his career in Meyerton in 1972 as a quality control engineer at a company that would later become part of GrafTech. He ended his career as CEO for the Industrial Materials section of the international giant GrafTech International.



HAVING BEEN AT THE HELM of a US\$1,5-billion international business, it's no wonder that Dr Pieter Barnard wishes to continue sharing his experience as a consultant – even after retirement.

Pieter, an alumnus of the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PU for CHE), was CEO of GrafTech International's Industrial Materials section for seven years until his retirement in November last year.

He and his wife, Elza, now live in St Albans, Missouri, from where he does consulting work for private equity companies. (These companies invest in other companies by providing working capital for things like expansion or new product development.)

First steps

Pieter studied at the PU for CHE via the former Potchefstroom Teachers' Training College (POK or "Pote").

In 1968 he set foot on campus for the first time as a young BSc student and in 1972 he started to work as quality control engineer at EMSA Pty Ltd in Meyerton. During this time he completed his honours degree in geomorphology and an MBA at the PU for CHE – both on a part-time basis. EMSA was a joint venture of Samancor and Union Carbide, and the graphite division of the latter later became GrafTech International.

Pieter had his first international exposure while still working for GrafTech in South Africa.

"In 1986 and 1987 we lived in Columbia, Tennessee, where I underwent management training. Our daughter, Marika, was in grade

five at the time and went to school there. That was her first taste of American culture," says Pieter.

A man of the world

His first overseas appointment was in 1994 when he became Director: Operations for Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. His office was in Paris, France, where the Barnards lived for three years until they relocated to Tennessee in America.

While working for GrafTech in America, he was promoted several times and eventually became CEO of GrafTech Industrial Materials in 2008.

The Barnards spent eight years in Tennessee and nine years in Ohio. They now live in St Albans.

Home is where the heart is

"St Albans is a historic little town on the banks of the Missouri River, which is a tributary of the Mississippi River. We live about 15 kilometres from our children. Our daughter, Marika Mitchell, her husband, Johan, and their daughter, Carissa, live in Wildwood," says Pieter.

Marika and Johan moved to Canada in 2009; they lived in Mississauga, just outside Toronto, for three years. In 2012 they relocated to Memphis, Tennessee, and in 2013 Johan was transferred to St Louis, Missouri.

The Mitchells also have their roots in Potchefstroom. Marika studied theology at the former PU for CHE. She obtained an honours degree in marriage and family counselling in Vanderbijlpark and then went on to do a master's and then a doctoral degree in pastoral counselling in Potchefstroom.

Johan obtained a diploma from the Potchefstroom Agricultural College, followed by a

TO PAGE 34



Uncle Sam, the Eiffel Tower's people, and us

“The culture, the food and the work ethic of the Americans are very similar to what South Africans are used to. Consequently, South Africans don't find it particularly difficult to adapt to the business world over here.

“America is a big country and has a huge variety of products to choose from and interesting places to visit. The adjustment process wasn't hard for us and we enjoy living here.

“The French are more theoretically inclined than South Africans and Americans. They question just about everything. However, as soon as they un-

derstand why something needs to be done, they tend to do it better than most people in the world.

“It takes a long time to make friends in France, but once they are your friends, they are your friends for life. We still have many good friends over there and we love the country.

“There are not many countries in the world that can offer such a variety of high-quality things as France can (architecture, history, art, music, sports, natural beauty, food, infrastructure and even refined strikes!). But the cost of living is much higher than in America or South Africa.”

FROM PAGE 33

degree in agriculture at the former Pretoria Technikon and an MBA at Unisa. He is currently the vice-president for credit management at RABO Bank in St Louis. (RABO Bank is the largest agricultural bank in the world.)

Pieter's wife, Elza, studied at the former POK and used to be a biology and home economics teacher. Elza is very artistic and loves gardening. She even obtained a Master Gardener certificate in Tennessee.

Community work

Pieter and Elza are also volunteers at eight-year-old Carissa's school. “Community involvement is very important to us,” says Pieter.

Before they left South Africa he was a member of 17 different boards and associations. He also received the Paul Harris Fellow Award from Rotary International for his contribution to the community.

Looking back at Pieter's illustrious career, it is clear that he has made his mark far and wide, both in big business around the world and in the hearts of the communities he serves.

GrafTech's top management team celebrated the 125th anniversary of the company in 2012. Pieter is in the front row, third from the left.



THE TOP RUNG OF THE LADDER

As CEO of GrafTech Industrial Materials, Pieter was ultimately accountable for this billion-dollar company.

Pieter was one of the top five management members of GrafTech International and chairperson of three of the international subsidiaries, namely Italy, Mexico and South Africa.

GrafTech: then and now

The National Carbon Company, GrafTech's predecessor, was founded in 1886. Today GrafTech's operations are divided into two lines of business, namely GrafTech Industrial Materials and GrafTech Engineered Solutions.

The company, headquartered in Independence, Ohio, has the most advanced carbon and graphite research facilities in the

world. They provide products to the following industries: steel, ferroalloy, petrochemical, energy, graphite, oil and electronic (for computers, cellphones and TVs).

GrafTech sells products in more than 80 countries and has manufacturing facilities in America, Mexico, Brazil, France, Italy, Spain and South Africa. They also have offices in Switzerland and China.



As part of an academic project, Mr Liam Longland tested people's reactions to various stereotypes by posing as a hipster, a nerd, a bad boy, a farmer and a sporty young man.

PROJECT
FREQUENCY OF
ATTRACTION

PROJECT
FREQUENCY

Do you attract OR DO YOU REPEL?

MAN OR MOUSE, STALLION OR LOUSE? We are bombarded every day with different stereotypes, either by the media or as a result of the human tendency to put people in boxes.

Last year a final-year graphic design student from the School of Communication Studies on the Potchefstroom Campus decided to study and question stereotyping and its effect on romantic relationships.

A closer look at biases

Mr Liam Longland's project, "Frequency of Attraction", involved performing arts as well as a physical work of art.

"The first part of my project was performing arts – each month I lived and acted as another stereotype. The second part of the project is a conceptual self-portrait of each stereotype based on the results of each month's research," he says.

Book inspired project

The project was part of the fourth-year students' illustration module. The students were

asked to produce one conceptual work of art over the course of an entire year. "We had to produce the equivalent of five artworks. We had free rein to do whatever we wanted."

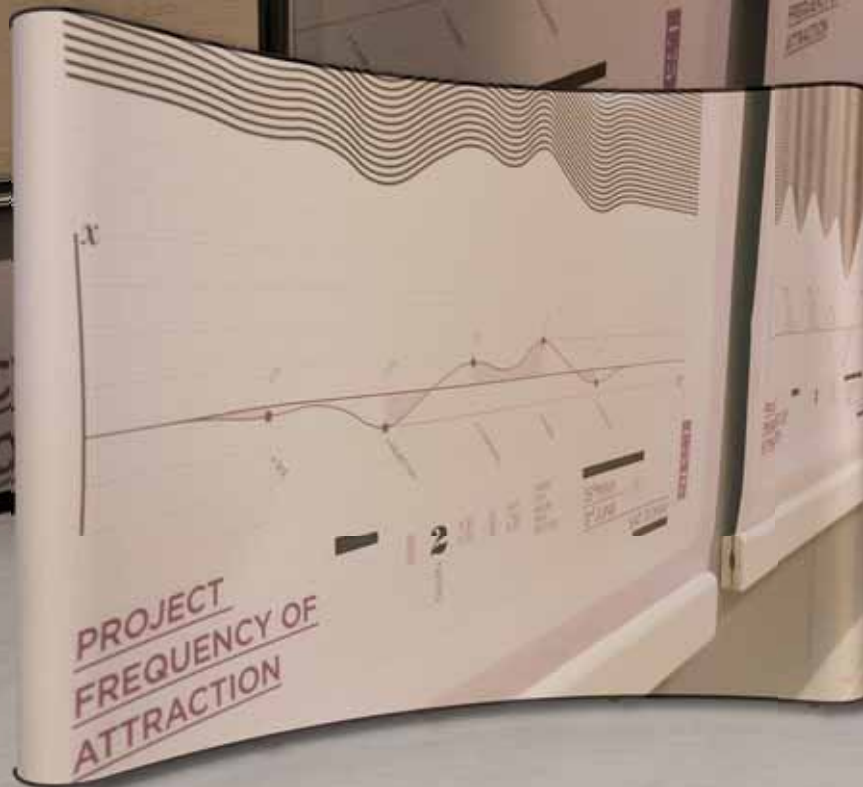
Liam says the book *Laws of attraction* by Rhonda Byrne was the inspiration for the project. "She argues that everything on earth emits a certain frequency. The frequency emitted by your thoughts attracts to you whatever resonates with that frequency. Like attracts like."

After reading the book he started to wonder why some men are more successful than others when it comes to the romantic side of life. "I wanted to know what makes the successful ones more popular and attractive. If one stereotype attracts more girls or guys than the others, they must, according to Byrne's assumptions, emit and attract different frequencies.

"I wanted to know if I could measure this frequency, and whether or not it would make a measurable difference to my attractiveness to others if I could pass myself off as these different stereotypes."

TO PAGE 36

Liam Longland's self-portraits illustrate the attraction people feel towards different stereotypes.



Liam tried to make a visual representation of the research results. "I used a graph to plot the results. The line on the graph was used as an optical illusion within which the self-portrait was hidden."

FROM PAGE 35

Stereotype becomes temporary way of life

Liam selected five stereotypes for his project. During the project he walked the proverbial mile in the shoes of, respectively, a hipster, a nerd, a bad boy, a farmer and a sporty young man.

Each of these stereotypical characters had a unique wardrobe and he even went for acting lessons to master all the different accents and attitudes.

The preparation required more than just good acting; Liam even changed his own physical appearance to enhance his credibility. "I ate very little so that I could be a skinny nerd and readjusted my diet and started to exercise to become a credible sporty health-conscious young man.

"It required a lot of preparation and planning, because a credible and convincing character had to be created for each stereotype. I tested my peer groups' reactions on campus for three weeks before I finally went out for an evening to test strangers' reactions."

He tested other people's reactions by meeting them and flirting with them to see if they found him attractive. The results were measured based on the

number of cellphone numbers he was able to collect on a particular evening from people who flirted back.

"People are superficial"

He says he found out that people are very superficial. "Even the clothes you wear have an effect on people's reactions towards you."

He says he used a scale of positive and negative experiences to determine the measure of success of each stereotype. This scale was not only based on the number of successes chalked up by each of the stereotypes but also on the feedback that he received from his peers.

"When I compare the stereotypes with each other, the bad boy was the most successful and the sporty, health-conscious guy the least successful. The hipster was second, the farmer third and the nerd fourth."

Interesting findings

Liam says he had hoped to prove general stereotypes wrong. "However, it would seem that I just confirmed them with this project."

He was rather surprised by the unpopularity of the sporty guy.



The hipster was very popular. He was the only stereotype that appealed to both men and women, and Liam received attention from both sexes when he adopted this persona.

He says when he lived as a nerd he was rejected by a girl who made advances to him when she encountered him again as a hipster.

Project leads to self-discovery

The project had a great personal impact on Liam. "I learnt a lot about myself. It gave me an opportunity to get out of my comfort zone and to determine which characteristics of which stereotype appealed to me personally."

Afterwards he could decide which characteristics to hold on to, as it were. "It was a journey of self-discovery during which I got to know myself much better," he says.

"I believe that the project has proved that a human being can change. If there are some things about you that you don't like, it is within your power to change."

He hopes the project will remind people that we live in a society where, even though stereotyping is unfair, it plays a significant role in how people see each other.

Looking ahead

Liam says that he would like to continue his project.

"There are many possibilities for similar projects to study and analyse people. Seeing as the object of the project was to produce a conceptual work of art, not much attention was given to the science behind the research.

"If such an experiment could be approached in a more controlled manner, I believe that the results could make a better contribution to both psychological and anthropological subject fields."

Researcher puts *Fanagalo* in spotlight

Ms Natasha Ravyse's master's study on the status of Fanagalo in South Africa earned her the Vice-Chancellor's medal during the NWU's 2014 Research Awards ceremony.

Fanagalo, the language spoken by South African mineworkers, recently became the topic of a master's study at the NWU.

MS NATASHA RAVYSE, a PhD student on the Vaal Triangle Campus, did a first-of-its-kind master's study on the use of Fanagalo, the language spoken by mineworkers of various nationalities and mother tongues in their day-to-day conversations across cultural boundaries.

Fanagalo is a simplified language that was developed in the second half of the nineteenth century to facilitate communication between speakers of English, Afrikaans and Zulu.

Almost every sub-culture has its own language. Golfers, truck drivers, waiters, research scientists – they all have a code of their own, a language that defines their community. Natasha believes that so much theory about the preservation of language is based on mainstream languages that subcultural languages such as these are often overlooked and marginalised.

Three reasons for study

"I decided to research Fanagalo as a subcultural language for three main reasons," she says.

"One is that I believe Fanagalo's status needs to be reconceptualised. My research showed that Fanagalo is a functional subcultural language."



Fascinating findings about *Fanagalo*

Natasha completed her study and her master's degree in one year.

Her findings offered a conceptual model which explains the preservation of Fanagalo. It showed that despite the lack of institutional and mainstream support for Fanagalo, it continues to be used in a particular context because it is part of the speakers' mining culture.

"It is, however, not part of their identity or culture outside of the mining context, which reinforces its subcultural status."

She says regardless of some of the speakers' negative attitudes towards Fanagalo, they will still teach it to new miners for the sake of efficient communication, which, according to the speakers themselves, is vital for safety.

"One must bear in mind that the mining context is quite multi-lingual, including foreign languages, and that is why Fanagalo was established as a lingua franca between speakers of various languages."

Natasha says the one finding that surprised her was that foreign nationals who are employed in the mines choose to learn Fanagalo over English, a language that is internationally recognised and respected.

Natasha says the second reason is that most existing research on Fanagalo is largely linguistic in terms of structure and lexical qualities. "My research provides evidence about the attitudes and identity aspects of actual Fanagalo speakers, which provides an insider's point of view – something that is not commonly reported, if at all."

The third reason is that Fanagalo is heavily stigmatised by some members of the population. She says it is fascinating to discover how and why it continues to be used.

Facing challenges

One of the greatest challenges Natasha had to overcome during her study was to gain access to a specific mine in Rustenburg, exactly one year after the Marikana massacre, which claimed the lives of 47 miners.

"I had no idea just how many officers, managers and human resources personnel I would have to propose my study to in order to gain access."

She says permission was granted after approximately six months of communication. "Once I was granted access, the managers of

the mine were extremely accommodating and supportive, for which I am still very grateful. Without them and the participants, this study would not have been possible."

Language and culture are her passions

Her love of language has now inspired her doctoral studies on Tsotsitaal, which is a mix of various local languages and is spoken mainly in townships in the Gauteng province.

She plans to investigate the factors that promote the vitality of languages that are not in mainstream use.

"I plan to empirically test and develop operational variables that dictate linguistic vitality, disposing of the 'ethno' as a central component, in order to accommodate subcultural language."

She plans to apply this subcultural language vitality measuring instrument to Tsotsitaal.

■ *Ethnolinguistics, which is sometimes called cultural linguistics, is a field of linguistics which studies the relationship between language and culture. It is a combination of ethnology and linguistics.*

NWU honours excellence in journalism



For the sixth consecutive year, the NWU has sponsored the National Press Club – North-West University Newsmaker and Journalist of the Year awards.

- ❖ The Oscar Pistorius trial has been declared the **Newsmaker of the Year** for 2014.
- ❖ **The Journalist of the Year** award is shared by a Carte Blanche team: Mr Graham Coetzer (photograph), Ms Sasha Schwendenwein (photograph) and Ms Susan Comrie.
- ❖ Carte Blanche also took top honours in the **Editor of the Year** category with Mr George Mazarakis scooping the award.

Prof Dan Kgwadi (photograph), vice-chancellor of the NWU, presented the awards to the winners during a special ceremony at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research's convention centre on 15 May 2015.