

# JANUS



**Why Janus?** In Roman mythology, Janus represents beginnings, endings, transitions, and time. According to the *World History Encyclopedia*, Janus presides over "every entrance and departure", and because every door and passageway looks in two directions, this Roman deity is usually depicted as two-faced. With our alumni newsletter we thus celebrate another year of the Department of Journalism as the entryway to a career in the media. At the same time, we look back to the successes and lives of alumni who have crossed the threshold of our building over the past 45 years.

## Public engagement a key focus

Prof Herman Wasserman | Chair of the Department of Journalism

This has been a busy year at the Department of Journalism, as we worked to increase our teaching offering, increase our public engagement and deepen our research.

On the teaching front, this year saw the introduction of our first undergraduate offering – to more than 1,500 students from across the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, as well as some students from Theology, Law, and the Health Sciences. The Knowledge Skills module was designed to equip students with the types of literacies they need for a successful journey through university – specifically Computer, Information, Academic, and Digital Literacy. The inclusion of a basic overview of AI in education and academic writing made the Digital Literacy component of the module especially relevant this year. We have also

started discussions on broadening our undergraduate offering to a full programme in the near future, and offering an additional Honours course in media studies – but this will still need some time to come to fruition. We also launched an exciting new free online course in Media and Digital Policy in Africa aimed at working professionals. This course is hosted on the EdX platform, which will continue to run regularly (enrol at [bit.ly-GovernanceViability](https://bit.ly-GovernanceViability) and [bit.ly/AfricaDigital-Policy](https://bit.ly-AfricaDigital-Policy)). All of these developments come on top of our existing flagship Honours course in Journalism, where we welcomed several new specialist lecturers this year to help prepare our students for the fast-changing world of work.

Curriculum development was also one of the main areas of focus during the Departmental Self-Review we underwent this year. In September, we welcomed two experts, Prof Ivor Shapiro from Toronto Metropol-

itan University and Prof Anthea Garman from Rhodes University, to Crozier Street to discuss our current work and future vision, and to get their input and advice on how we can improve.

We have made significant strides this year in deepening the department's research profile. A major development happened at the beginning of the year, when the South African Research Chair in Science Communication, held by Prof Mehita Iqani, joined the department. Mehita and her group of PhD and postdoctoral researchers have hosted several very interesting events and embarked on a number of inspiring projects, which you can read more about in this issue. We also welcomed a new cohort of MA and PhD students, as well as several new postdoctoral fellows, research associates, visiting researchers and an extraordinary professor in the department. Several major research projects started this year. Dr Marenet Jordaan started fieldwork on the South African leg of the Worlds of Journalism Study, an important international project to assess the state of journalism around the world. The project 'Resisting Information Disorder in the Global South', which I lead and includes teams from Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, the MENA region and Asia, also kicked off this year and

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS

For this year's edition of *Janus*, we asked our alumni to share their stories – in their own words. *Janus 2023* thus showcases the depth and variety of our alumni network. We look forward to hearing more such stories – personal and professional – in the future. Contact us anytime at [journalism@sun.ac.za](mailto:journalism@sun.ac.za) with tip-offs or tales of what you have been up to.

we had our first team meeting in Amman, Jordan, in November. We launched a series of informal talks, 'Monday Musings', where researchers in the department and invited guests can share our research ideas, present work-in-progress and ask for advice. Several of us presented papers at local and international conferences, including the South African Communication Association, the International Communication Association and the International Association for Media and Communication Research.

An important part of our work is to engage the public around matters of wider interest. Thanks to the generous support from the Millennium Trust, we could host a conference on 3 May, World Press Freedom Day, with a focus on community journalism. We brought together researchers, journalists and students to discuss the contribution this important media sector makes to

press freedom in our country. Our Honours student publication *Stellenbosch Media Forum* also focused on community media.

We entered into a new partnership with the organisation Freedom Under Law, aimed at developing legal journalism, which will see us hosting workshops for journalists in the coming years. This project was launched with an inaugural lecture by media law expert Dario Milo, who spoke about the threat posed to freedom of speech by strategic lawsuits aimed at hindering public participation (SLAPPs). Another new feature on our calendar was the quarterly Media Futures seminars, on a range of topical issues, which featured expert speakers from academia and the media industry – read more about these further in this issue.

The department co-hosted three international events: a workshop on WhatsApp and hate speech, together with Sahana Udupa

from Ludwig-Maximilian University in Germany, which brought together researchers from around the world to work on a book project on the topic; a forum on journalism innovation and leadership with the University of Central Lancashire and Media24; and the International Communication Association's regional conference, ICA in Africa, co-hosted with the University of Cape Town. This conference brought together more than 150 delegates from 19 countries and also included a preconference workshop where emerging scholars could discuss their work with senior counterparts.

What a year! Do follow our social media accounts and visit our departmental website – which we also overhauled this year – to stay up to date with our activities. And please do come and drop by our department or our events whenever you're in Stellenbosch. You're always welcome.

# Media Futures seminars highlight topical issues

The Department of Journalism, in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, launched a new series of thought-provoking seminars, titled "Media Futures" to highlight widely-discussed issues of concern to local and international audiences – and the role the media play in such current affairs. The first edition of this seminar series tackled AI and ChatGPT.

In opening the seminar, Prof Wim de Villiers, Rector and Vice-chancellor of Stellenbosch University, said he is "pleased to see the Department of Journalism taking the lead on such a topical issue and setting the tone for future transdisciplinary research and social impact".

The fourth, and final, seminar of 2023 saw the BAHons Journalism class of 2023 launch their annual magazine, *Stellenbosch Media Forum (SMF)*.

On the right are the promotional flyers summarising the topics and speakers for all four seminars.

**Media Futures Seminar Series Presents:**  
**THE FUTURE OF ENERGY: ESKOM, SUSTAINABILITY AND THE MEDIA**

Hosted by the Department of Journalism and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, this seminar will focus on the energy crisis, future challenges and solutions, and how these issues are being represented in the media.

DATE: 18 May 2023 | TIME: 17:00 - 19:00 | VENUE: Neelise Cinema  
RSVP: <https://mediafuturesenergy.eventbrite.com>

PROF MEHITA IQANI (SA Research Chair in...)  
ARADHNA PANDARUM (Council for Scientific...)  
LAMEEZ OMARJEE (News24)

**MEDIA FUTURES SEMINAR SERIES**  
HOSTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM & THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**THE FUTURE OF INTELLIGENCE: CHATGPT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS**  
27 FEBRUARY 2023 | 16:00-18:00 | VENUE: NEELISE CINEMA

CHAIRED BY PROF HERMAN WASSERMAN. WELCOME ADDRESS BY VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF WIM DE VILLIERS.

**WHAT IS CHATGPT, HOW DOES IT WORK AND WHAT CAN IT DO?**  
Bruce Watson, Centre for AI Research (CAIR), School for Data Science and Computational Thinking

**CHATGPT'S IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING**  
Antonette van der Merwe, Senior Director: Learning and Teaching Enhancement, SU

**HOW WILL CHATGPT INFLUENCE JOURNALISM?**  
Farie van Rooyen, Editor: Quest magazine

**HOW SHOULD AI BE REGULATED IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST?**

**Media Futures Seminar Series Presents:**  
**THE MEDIA, BRICS AND GEOPOLITICS**

Hosted by the Department of Journalism and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, this seminar will focus on the media's coverage of geopolitical events such as the BRICS Summit, the Russia-Ukraine conflict and shifting global diplomatic relations.

DATE: 4 September 2023 | TIME: 18:00 - 20:00 | VENUE: Neelise Cinema  
RSVP: <https://mediafuturesgeopolitics.eventbrite.com>  
Refreshments will be served.

DZVYNHA KACHUBI (Centre for Sustainability Transitions) - The Language of Reporting on Geopolitical Metaphors  
JEAN LE ROUX (Digital Forensics Research Lab) - Russian and Chinese Digital Influence in Africa  
RA'EEESA PATHER (Open Secrets) - The Campaign We Knew: Reporting on BRICS, Power and the Business of Information Warfare

**Media Futures Seminar Series Presents**  
**SMF 2023 LAUNCH EVENT!**  
**THE MEDIA'S POWER TO CONNECT**

MARCIA DAMONS (Moderator)  
THAMEENAH DANIELS & EMMA SOLOMON (Moderators)  
REBECCA DAVIS (Moderator)

**THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN FINDING TRABO BESTER**  
SMF MAGAZINE 2023: THE POWER OF CONNECTION  
HOW THE MEDIA (DIS)CONNECTS MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

WHEN: 23 OCTOBER 2023 | TIME: 18:00-19:30 | WHERE: NEELISE CINEMA  
RSVP: <https://licketwiz.co.za/70/>

# SciCom finds a home at our department

In January 2023, the NRF-[South African Research Chair in Science Communication](#) (SciCom) found its new home within the Department of Journalism, led by Prof Mehita Iqani. SciCom's mission revolves around promoting interdisciplinary, action-based best practices in science communication, leveraging creative approaches and communication research to address vital social justice issues with a key [focus](#) on climate and the environment, health and happiness, and inequality and equity. The Chair extends this by conducting issue-driven research, bridging the gap between science and society, and contributing both theoretically and empirically to the complexities of the field.

Under Prof Iqani's leadership, SciCom spearheads various innovative initiatives. The annual [Fic Sci Writers Workshop](#) is a noteworthy event that brings creative writers and a selected scientist together, resulting in the publication of an anthology that blends storytelling through a scientific lens. The [Imidibaniso Exchange Workshop](#) provides valuable communication insights to scientists and researchers, facilitating a deeper connection between science and the public. The online platform, [Humusha](#), serves as a meeting point for scientists and applied artists, enhancing their collaborative efforts in science communication. Additionally, the Chair explores the use of Audio as a medium for disseminating scientific and academic knowledge.

In promoting meaningful dialogue, SciCom hosts events such as the ongoing [Sci-Com Colloquium](#), where researchers present their work to interested audiences at various stages of their research journey.

Furthermore, in collaboration with Bournemouth University, the Chair organises the [Evidence and Power Online Roundtable Series](#), aiming to stimulate insightful discussions on the intricate relationship between science, communication, and society.

Looking ahead, SciCom's vision is to advance science communication research by delving deeper into the multifaceted connections between science, society, and evolving communication strategies and technologies.

The Chair remains committed to support-

**IMIDIBANISO BOOTCAMP**  
MEDIA HACKS FOR SCIENTISTS  
10 FEBRUARY 2023  
WWW.IMIDIBANISO.CO.ZA  
REGISTRATIONS NOW OPEN

**OUR AWESOME SPEAKERS & THEIR TOPICS**

<b>BRETT ROGERS</b> SOCIAL MEDIA AS A PROMOTIONAL TOOL	<b>JOSHUA CARELSE</b> FROM CONTENT TO CAREER
<b>KATE PINCHUCK</b> CONNECTING THROUGH COMEDY	<b>NEO BAEPI</b> PORTRAITING AS AN EVENT
<b>NIREN TOLSI</b> SLOW JOURNALISM	<b>DR WAMUWI MBAO</b> PRETEND IT'S A STORY
<b>DR MARINA JOUBERT</b> DE-JARGONISING SCIENTIFIC LANGUAGE	<b>FUMANI JWARA</b> MASIDIBANE!

South African Research Chair in Science Communication  
Stellenbosch University

**EVIDENCE & POWER ONLINE ROUNDTABLE**  
Hosted by the South African Research Chair in Science Communication (Stellenbosch) and the Centre for Science, Health, and Social Communication Research (Stellenbosch). This online roundtable brings together scientists from diverse disciplines to explore the dynamic relationship between data, methodology, and authority, as well as the interdisciplinary connections between communication and society. 24 October 2023, 10:00 PM (SAST) - 11:00 PM (SAST)

<b>THEMA MORONG-ENITE</b> Director of the Central Office for Data Analytics, Wits University	<b>LAKLA SARIAL</b> Associate Professor of Psychology, Stellenbosch University	<b>LINDSEY MCCOY</b> Professor of Sociology, University of Leeds	<b>AMER KANKRSEB</b> MChD Research Fellow, Royal Free Hospital, UCL, University of London	<b>ALEXANDER DUNLAP</b> Social Determinant Research Fellow, Research Centre for Health, University of Toronto
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REGISTER: <https://scimcomscienceonline.eventbrite.com/>

**EVIDENCE & POWER ONLINE WEBINAR**  
Hosted by the South African Research Chair in Science Communication (Stellenbosch University) and the Centre for Science, Health, and Social Communication Research (Stellenbosch University). This online roundtable brings together experts from science, communication, and society to explore the dynamic relationship between data, methodology, and scientific authority, and to use an in-depth knowledge of science and society research, specifically through various forms of communication, including clinical and scholarly research. 2 November 2023, 1:00 PM (SAST) - 1:00 AM (SAST)

<b>WILHELMINE KILMERS</b> Professor of International Health, Stellenbosch University	<b>FABIANE BISHOP</b> Senior Lecturer in Communication, Stellenbosch University	<b>ETHELLE KILWA</b> Lecturer in Anthropology, University of Johannesburg	<b>MELISSA SWARTZ</b> Professor of Psychology, Stellenbosch University
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REGISTER: <https://ticketwits.co.za/#/>

**HUMUSHA**  
**Speed Dating Webinar**  
20 SEPTEMBER 2023 17:00 - 18:30 MS TEAMS  
Find out more about Humusha, at our speed-dating seminar to facilitate scientists meeting creatives. Scientists: sign up to meet some of the creatives listed on Humusha.  
RSVP by 15 September 2023.  
REGISTER NOW: <https://humushaspeeddate.eventbrite.com>

**SOUND MATTERS**  
INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPLORATIONS INTO AUDIO KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION  
CONVENORS: PROF MEHITA IQANI AND DR NOSIPHO MNGOMEZULU  
Listen to presentations that delve into the innovative and transformative impact of audio on the creation, expression, and sharing of academic and scientific knowledge.  
DATE: 9-10 November 2023 | TIME: 9:00-14:30 (SAST) | VENUE: MS Teams (Online)  
RSVP: <https://ticketwits.co.za/72/>  
Limited spaces. Please ensure you are logged in 5 mins before the session begins.  
HOSTED BY: South African Research Chair in Science Communication, YOUTUBE CITIZEN, South African Journalists' Association  
SUPPORTED BY: University of Stellenbosch, NRF, Stellenbosch University, ASSAF

ing postgraduate students specialising in science communication through NRF-linked [studentships](#), ensuring a sustained role for the discipline and its vital role in shaping society's understanding of the world.

**Above:** A snapshot of the activities coordinated by the NRF-South African Research Chair in Science Communication since it became affiliated with the Department of Journalism.

# Afrikaans kan ook vir volgende generasie deure oopmaak

Ek knyp myself nog elke dag oor die blote gedagte dat ek in die redakteurstoel van die grootste vrouetydskrif in die land, *Kuier*, sit. Ek was 15 jaar deel van die *Huisgenoot*-span voordat ek op 1 April 2023 die leisels by *Kuier* oorgeneem het.

*Kuier* het in 2009 die eerste keer die rak getref en sedertdien het dié gewilde tydskrif net van krag tot krag gegaan – én die mediavestigingslandskap verander. *Kuier* het 'n merkwaardige platform geskep waar gewone mense in die gemeenskap hul stories kan vertel op 'n manier wat ons land se daaglikse werklikhede weerspieël. Wanneer jy daardeur blaai kan jy jouself daarin sien én hoor. Dis vir my 'n groot voorreg en eer om my gemeenskap op dié vlak te kan dien en deel te wees van dié baanbrekerstydskrif wat soveel lesers se lewens verryk en vir baie soos 'n beste vriendin is.

Ek het grootgeword op Bredasdorp en gematrikuleer aan die Hoërskool Napier op die dorpie Napier daar naby. My liefde vir tale en stories vertel is al op skool gekweek toe ek destyds die geleentheid gekry het om vir ons skoolkoerantjie, *Die Patafrankie*,



Lara Atson (Foto: ER Lombard)

te skryf. Afrikaans is maar nou eenmaal my hartstaal en ná skool het ek die groot voorreg gehad om ook my brood en botter in Afrikaans te verdien. Die taal het vir my al soveel deure oopgemaak in die werkplek en dis vir my 'n absolute lekkerte om nou deur *Kuier* ook vir die volgende generasie dieselfde geleentheid te skep. Ek kan nie wag om die tydskrif die toekoms in te lei en na nóg groter hoogtes te neem nie.

## LARA IN KORT

Ek het my B.Phil-graad in joernalistiek aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch behaal en daarna in 2007 my internskap by *Die Burger* begin as deel van my Media24-joernalistiekbeurs. Ek het in 2008 by die tydskrif *Huisgenoot* ingeval, ook vir 'n internskap, en is 'n jaar later permanent aangestel. Dit was 'n heerlike leerskool en ek het als van nuus tot vermaak en celeb- en leefstyl-artikels gedoen. In 2017 is ek tot assistentredakteur bevorder. Ek het in my 15 jaar by *Huisgenoot* onder meer jong joernaliste gementor, was verantwoordelik vir handelsmerk-uitbreidings soos 'n resepte- en ouerskapydskrif, en het in 2019 die geleentheid gekry om by die tydskrif *tvplus* te gaan uithelp as waarnemende redakteur voordat ek teruggekeer het *Huisgenoot* toe.



Enkele van die *Kuier*-voorblaie wat vanjaar onder Lara se redakteurskap verskyn het.

# Bizarre Thabo Bester's escape was 'rollercoaster' for young journalist

I worked as an intern at *GroundUp News* for a year until I became a full-time journalist in 2021. Since breaking the news of Thabo Bester's prison escape, I won the Nat Nakasa Award for Media Integrity and also published a book about Thabo Bester.

Working on the Thabo Bester prison escape story was quite the rollercoaster. When I first looked into his supposed death, the details of the work I was doing were strictly confidential. For several months, it felt as if I was holding onto a big secret. Initially, I did not entertain the idea that Bester might have faked his death and escaped from prison. It was just a rumour. But what was evident was that the authorities were asleep at the wheel.

There were far too many questions and suspicious circumstances surrounding Bester's "death" for police to treat the case like another day in the office. The first story I published in November 2022 resulted in multiple tipoffs. With each source I spoke to, the possibility that Bester escaped became

more likely. It was, however, frustrating to be stonewalled by several government departments when investigating this story. There was no urgency on their side to lodge an investigation to find a convicted murderer and rapist who was possibly on the loose.

But I knew that I needed to persevere to get to the truth about what really happened in Cell 35. My colleague Daniel Steyn and I spent months working on the story that broke the news of Bester's escape. The story grabbed the nation's attention. There was an urgency for us to push out more stories to keep the public's interest and pressure the authorities to speed up their investigation.

However, working on a story like this was exhausting. There were several long nights spent sifting through tip-offs, court papers, and interviews as we tried to piece together what really happened to Bester. But I am grateful that our hard work paid off. To this day, the details of the story are so bizarre that it still reads like a fiction novel!



Marecia with the Nat Nakasa Award for Media Integrity.

# Mentors prepared the way for top TV presenter

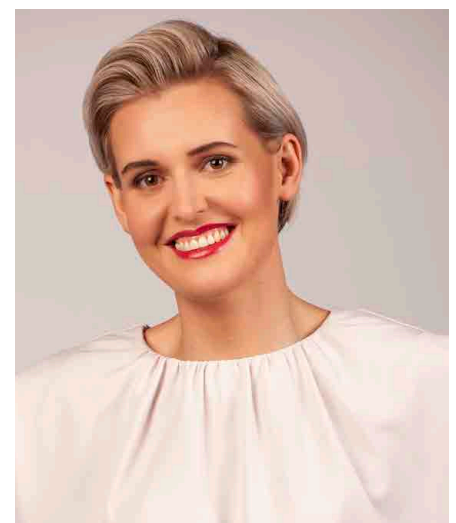
I started my journalism career at *Beeld* in Johannesburg after completing my BPhil in the Department of Journalism at Stellenbosch University. This was a seminal time in my journalism career, as I was given the opportunity to cover all manner of events. I spent many hours in court rooms, at crime scenes, at political rallies and I even travelled to the Philippines to report on the devastation caused by super typhoon Haiyan.

In 2015 I was approached by the production company Idea Candy to join the new news-programme *kykNET Verslag* as a reporter. This was the start of my television journalism career. After a few years in the field, the channel wanted to see if I could perhaps develop as a presenter in studio. I worked

alongside greats such as Bettie Kemp, Heinrich Wyngaard and Riaan Cruywagen.

Following Waldimar Pelser's promotion to head of channel, I was asked to present "In Gesprek" at the start of 2022. It has been the privilege of a lifetime to present this show. It is extremely daunting and exciting to sit across newsmakers, politicians and experts every week. I was also approached this year to join the "Carte Blanche" team as presenter and this has been a dream come true.

The Silwerskerm Award was presented to me for best actuality presenter at this year's ceremony as well. I never in a million years imagined I would be given these incredible opportunities. I'm very thankful to my lecturers and mentors from the journalism department for helping me prepare.



Lourensa Eckard

# Skryf nie vir sissies nie

So baie joernaliste het 'n droom om eendag 'n skrywer te word. Ek was al in my vyftigerjare toe ek besef het as ek nie iets aan daardie droom begin doen nie, gaan ek nooit 'n boek skryf nie. Ondanks 'n lewe in die joernalistiek en mediabestuur en 'n liefde vir, en honneursgraad in, die letterkunde was dit 'n helse opdraande stryd om uiteindelik my eerste misdaadroman in my hande te kon vashou. Steeds het die leerskool nie geëindig nie. Soveel so dat ek eers nou my vyfde spanningsroman, *Kwaaiwater*, wat einde September verskyn het, as 'n hoogtepunt beskou van bykans tien jaar se harde werk om die oorgang van 'n joernalis na 'n heeltydse skrywer-in-woording te maak.

Skryf is nie vir sissies nie. En om die pad in die skrywerswêreld te navigeer nog minder. Maar vir my was dit tot dusver absoluut die moeite werd en ek was gelukkig dat ek vroeg kon aftree om hierdie droom te leef.

## MEER OOR KWAAIWATER

Die boek speel af teen die einde van die pandemie in 2022 wanneer Hermanus sy eerste skrywersfees hou. Sommer op die heel eerste dag word die dorp se gewildste (maar nie geliefdste) skrywer, Isa du Bois, geteiken as 'n slagoffer deur 'n moordenaar wat lyk of hy sprekers, gaste en dalk selfs organiseerders van die skrywersfees in die oog het. Ná drie dae verklaar adjutant Storm van der Merwe (die heldin in vier van my boeke) die volgende: "Drie dae, drie vroue en ons is almal bleddie useless."

En die titel van die boek? Kwaaiwater verwys na 'n woonbuurt op Hermanus, maar soos alles in die boek is niks soos wat dit op die oog af lyk nie. Kwaaiwater is nie net die plek waar vroue slagoffers van 'n moordenaar met 'n fietsketting word nie. Dit verwys ook nie na vloedwaters nie, of lawaaiwater nie. Maar vir die verstaan van al die storielyne en betekenis moet mens die boek lees.

Ek is bly dat die terugvoering tot dusver onder meer die volgende sê: "*Kwaaiwater* is 'n blitsblaaier". "Dit is onneersitbaar". "Dit innoveer die genre". "Die karakters bly mens by".

## IRNA IN KORT

Ek slaag 'n B Honneurs in Joernalistiek op Stellenbosch cum laude. Wen 'n Stellenbosch Wynmakersprys in 1981 vir die groot vloede by Laingsburg en Montagu. Eerste vroulike hoofsub van *Die Burger* en toe redakteur van *De Kat* in 1988. Stig New Media Publishing, 'n media-bemarkingsmaatskappy in 1998 en in dieselfde jaar ook redakteur van *Insig*. Publiseer my eerste spanningsroman, *Moordvis*, in 2016. Dit word gevolg deur *Gifbeker*, *Bloedsteen*, *Op 'n mooi dag* en onlangs *Kwaaiwater*. Die eerste vier is ook in Engels gepubliseer.



Die omslag van Irna se jongste roman.



Irna van Zyl. Foto: Brenda Veldtman



Die amptelike foto van die Honneursklas van 1979 – waarvan Irna én Marita van der Vyver lede was. Marita staan tweede van links en Irna vierde van links.

# Crozierstraat se vriendskappe oorleef ook

Hier is 'n paar vinnige woorde - letterlik op my selfoon getik terwyl ek na nog 'n Woordfees-afspraak drafstap - oor my nuwe roman. *Laaste Kans*, ook in Engels beskikbaar as *Still Breathing*, is 'n soort ode aan vriendskap wat alles oorleef. Daar is 20 "hoofkarakters", tussen die ouderdomme van 15 en 70, wat 'n reünie-naweek in Maart 2020 van alle kante bekyk en beleef. Hoe laer die wolk van 'n dreigende pandemie oor hulle sak, hoe harder probeer hulle om dit weg te lag en weg te kuier.

Die voorblaaië van Marita se jongste roman.



Marita by die Woordfees 2023 waar een van haar vorige romans, *Stiltetyd*, opgevoer is.

## MARITA OPGESOM

Ek was in die Klas van 1979, wat in 2019 ons 40-jaar-reünie in Crozierstraat gevier het, en pas weer tydens die Woordfees 'n mini-reünie gehou het. 'n Paar vriendskappe wat daar in Crozierstraat gesmee is, het waarlik lewenslange vriendskappe geword. Ek doen nou nog soms 'n joernalistieke storie of skryf rubrieke in Afrikaans en Engels, maar my eintlike werk is al sowat 30 jaar om boeke te skryf. Die afgelope 25 jaar doen ek dit hoofsaaklik uit Frankryk waar my Frans-Afrikaanse gesin woon.

# 'Strategy is often about deciding what not to do'

I am an aspiring political communications strategist, or as we used to say at 26 Crozier Street, I specialise in the "dark arts" of journalism and media.

On a serious note, though, it was an honour to be able to present lessons from my work with Executive Mayor of Mossel Bay, Dirk Kotzé, at a mayoral communications workshop hosted by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation at their offices in Cape Town on Friday, 29 September 2023. I presented to staffers from Swartland Municipality, Drakenstein Municipality, Paarl, Western Cape and UMngeni Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal. I also had the opportunity to learn from these municipalities as well as to sit in on the City of Cape Town's mayoral communications strategy meeting.

A highlight of the day was hearing insights on strategic communications from

seasoned political communications advisor Gavin Davis. The session covered strategic communications in government, using social media to amplify messaging and analysing data in communications. A few key lessons I learned from the session were to always include a human component, even in data dense content; that strategy is often about deciding what not to do; and that the genesis of any campaign is a plan. So plan, prepare and coordinate proactively as much as possible given the very reactive nature of political communications.

I am grateful to the Friedrich Naumann Foundation and Mossel Bay Municipality for this incredible opportunity to learn. However, the essential lessons I have learned about media, storytelling and political communication all started in Crozier Street.



Aydin Parrott (right) with Executive Mayor of Mossel Bay, Dirk Kotzé.

# About a child of stars and our first stories

*Naledi, child of stars, and our first stories*, also available in Afrikaans as *Sterretjieskind Naledi en ons eerste stories*, is not only a book for reading, aimed at ages nine or ten, but a roadmap of discovery. In addition, it is also a book in which young readers can be creative themselves by searching the internet for extra pictures, and cutting, pasting, and drawing. And, of course, it is a book for thinking.

What is it all about? Well, one day after school Naledi – yes, named after the morning star – asks her grandmother: "Gogo, what is religion?" And so the two of them set off, travelling through a whole pantheon of religions, convictions, and philosophies – or our "first stories" – right around our globe, through various ages, to discover what gives meaning to our lives.

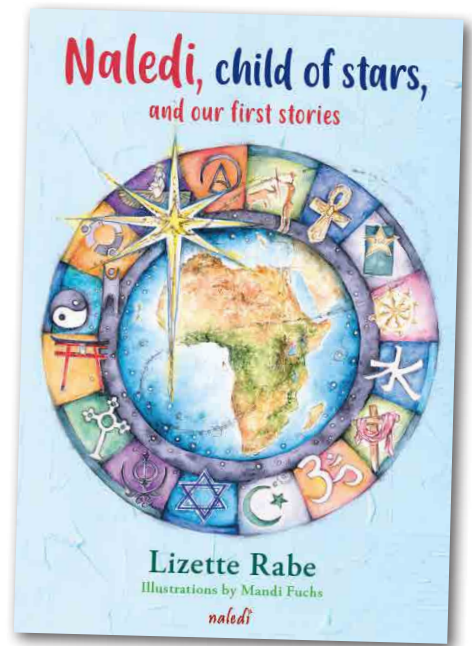
Our heroine's name refers to the fact that we are all stardust, and is a key to how all religions, philosophies and convictions are intertwined and how they take us on different journeys to that one word that encapsulates what we as human beings should strive for. What is that word? Well, go on your journey of discovery to get to that "holy grail" of a word – one simple word that Naledi's Gogo describes as the most beautiful in the whole world.



Lizette at the launch of the *Festschrift* published in her honour in 2022.

There are no religious dogmas in this story about our "first stories". On the contrary: The book wants all religions and beliefs to be regarded with respect. I approached my research scientifically, but without making it a "scientific", or academic, book.

The illustrations by Mandi Fuchs, who also illustrated my *Blue Fairy/Blou Feetjie*, add a magical, mystical touch. All in all: Fascinating to the young at heart, including caretakers, whether parents, grandparents, or teachers, and meant to open-up a whole new universe in our so diverse, multicultural society.



The front cover of *Naledi, child of stars, and our first stories*.

## LIZETTE (ABBREVIATED)

*Naledi, child of stars, and our first stories*, my second children's book, is just out. The first book, *Blou Feetjie* was published in 2022 (it also appeared in English). I ended my media career as editor of a magazine in 2000, after which I joined Stellenbosch University's Department of Journalism as chair in 2001. I retired in December 2022.



The classic photo from 1978 of the very first journalism honours class which Lizette was a part of. Lizette is seventh from the right.



# Telling overlooked stories

For the past few years, as a writer for *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* in London, I have been investigating a scandal of fire-risk flats that has affected over 4 million people in Britain. It was exposed by a disaster at Grenfell Tower in west London, where flammable cladding rapidly spread a fire that killed 72 people in 2017. Those lives, including 18 children, ended because of corporate lies by manufacturers over the safety of building products, lax government regulations that were open to abuse and shoddy construction that broke rules. The same issues meant thousands of other buildings across Britain were unsafe: almost 700,000 people were living in dangerous flats and up to 1.5 million people could no longer sell or get a mortgage on their flats.

Since 2020, I have led a *Sunday Times* campaign to free the flat owners and expose the companies who profited from unsafe homes. My articles were quoted in the British Parliament many times and were credited by a housing minister as instrumental in exposing the scandal. The campaign helped push the government to make over £9 billion in grants available to fix blocks, and to change the law to protect most flat owners from these crippling costs and force the companies responsible to pay instead. This year, in a front-page interview I did with the cabinet secretary for housing, Michael Gove, he finally admitted that the government - which has always denied

liability - shared the blame for the scandal and the lives lost at Grenfell. My work on this has won over ten awards, including a British Journalism Award last year, which is the industry's Oscars.

This is a highly complex subject with an immense human cost. Because it is so technical and niche, the media coverage has not been very good or consistent. When the Grenfell disaster happened, there was a huge amount of coverage, but the narrative focused on rich versus poor. It blamed the rich borough of Kensington and Chelsea, where the council-owned Grenfell Tower is based, for making the tower look better for the rich neighbours by covering it in cheap, highly flammable cladding - which spread the fire and killed the lower-income residents.

It missed the real story. Reporters at the time did not ask how many other buildings were unsafe and why this might happen on a wider scale. I started looking into it almost two years after the Grenfell disaster, when I met dozens of flat owners at a parliamentary meeting. They were all living in flats with flammable cladding - some had the same type of cladding as on Grenfell but many had other types of dangerous cladding. All of them were trapped in dangerous homes, unable to sell and facing huge bills. This is when I realised it was going to get much, much bigger.

Most of us become journalists to make a difference but the reality is you don't get to do that very often. It has been deeply sat-

isfying to do this here. But it has also been very tough reporting - not only because it involved listening to many harrowing stories and reading through countless mind-numbing technical reports on the minutiae of fire tests, cladding and insulation.

Initially, it was an uphill battle to get editors interested in giving it space. My desk editor championed it for years and it finally got onto the front page when the *Sunday Times* got a new editor, Ben Taylor, who saw the story. His buy-in was key.

Other challenges were to keep finding new ways to tell the same big story. Because I was writing for a Sunday newspaper, I could not cover the day to day developments or every new government announcement on the subject. Instead, I tried to focus on the big questions and then go and find the answers. Often this meant looking at what big claims are being made by the government or the industry and then talking to those affected and combing through documents to see whether that is true on the ground. Usually it was not.

It was also important to keep making the technical details human by explaining the impact on people's lives. Readers like reading about people.

For me, an overlooked, niche subject became a career-defining story. Whatever your subject area is, there will be overlooked stories. Make it your mission to find them and tell them better than anyone else.

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## Martina Lees

SENIOR PROPERTY WRITER, THE TIMES AND THE SUNDAY TIMES

[X @Lees\\_Martina](#)

Martina Lees is a senior property writer at The Sunday Times and The Times. She has won more than ten awards for her investigations, including a British Journalism Award for campaigning to free millions of people from the cladding scandal exposed by the Grenfell fire that claimed 72 lives. With an interest in how complex policy shapes our lives, Martina covers the big issues in housing, planning and how we live with climate change. She is the author of *The Accidental Landlord*, a property bestseller, and has spent half of her 20-year career as a digital editor. She started out as a crime reporter in Johannesburg.

Martina's profile page on the website of *The Times* in London.

# How to challenge academic 'imposter syndrome'

The SACOMM conference in Johannesburg this year represented a daunting prospect for me. I was encouraged by the Journalism Department at Stellenbosch University and my supervisor to submit for presentation an abstract entitled, *Journalism trauma education and awareness: Perspectives from ten South African university educators*. This was based on the findings of my Master's mini thesis, and I would present it as part of the emerging scholars category.

I was nervous, to say the least, as I do not consider myself scholastic. I presented my research and to my surprise, attendees were attentive and interested in my topic. It was

the first time I attended a communication/journalism conference as a presenter, and mentally it was a real test for me – standing in front of scholars, researchers and students – delving into why trauma awareness in journalism education is important.

Not only did the conference give me a platform to ever so slightly overcome "imposter syndrome", but it also gave me an opportunity to listen to interesting and valuable presentations – especially ones that dealt with challenges from a South African and African perspective, and which gave insight into the work and research that still needs to be done.



Nadine Christians

# Close-knit team at 'The Times' reminds of Crozier Street

I'm now working for *The Times* in London, and it's been a really enriching experience so far. (I've only joined last month!) While I still report on personal finance stories, I've really enjoyed working with my department's ecommerce team.

One question which stuck with me during my time at Crozier Street was how to create a sustainable business model for news. It was something Ms Anneli Groenewald constantly questioned us on, and a regular theme in our Media Entrepreneurship module. A big part of my role here looks at how we can use our money-related news to create different streams of revenue.

One promising project is to evolve our Money Mentor site, which is a free to use comparison tool for various financial products. This in particular has seen a great appetite for advertising and has boosted subscriptions to our main paper. While the system isn't perfect, it has gone a long way in funding some



Michael Brown

of our investigative money-related pieces.

During my time at Crozier Street, I was fascinated with journalism's transition into a digital age and how we can build a sustainable

business model which funds quality reporting. Since graduating in 2020, I've remained interested in this question and it plays a big part of my current role at *The Times*.

I now work on their Money desk, supporting the development of a new website called The Times Money Mentor. It's a free-to-use comparison tool which helps people search for highly rated personal finance products (like savings accounts and home loans) while producing explainer articles to support bigger pieces which sit behind a paywall.

While it isn't perfect, it has had great success in driving subscribers for the main paper and bringing in niche advertising from banks. I'm new to my role, but thus far it has been enjoyable to work with a team made up of diverse individuals.

In many ways, we're also a small, close-knit team - which reminds me of a certain Honours class.

# ‘Authors are to readers what God is to worshipers’

I was born in 1976 at Groote Schuur Hospital, in Cape Town, to poor working parents from the Eastern Cape's rural town of Middledrift. Both parents did not go beyond Form 1 and all their lives they knew nothing other than doing migrant labour in Cape Town - an aspect of life that would come to characterise most of my writings.

Given SA's political volatility in the early 1980s, I was sent to the EC to be brought up by maternal grandparents who died in 1992 and 1994 respectively. I returned to live permanently in Cape Town in 1995. I attended the Universities of the Western Cape and Stellenbosch, and has since written 13 isiXhosa novels, two poetry anthologies, and one folklore title. I got shortlisted for a literature award in 2023, in the Western Cape and eventually won it.

Various other writings were shortlisted for Jacana Media's Sol Plaatje EU poetry award (2017); my poem, titled "Nkandla" - also translated into English. The poem is featured in 2017 2nd Annual Poetry Anthology. The poem looks at the corruption scandal that occurred in the construction of former President Jacob Zuma's private home using

## SIBONGILE'S CAREER PATH

I may not be part of journalism by way of profession and working, but I still continue to derive satisfaction as a news consumer. I am still as keen on how journalistic roles are evolving in our country, of course influenced by the nature of our society, things like: thieving, climate change, of late, journalists' safety, personalities, evolution of media systems, social media and so on. Personally, I am still involved with RSA Parliament Communication Services, and still enjoying it. I am still writing fiction and have won a WC Literature Award 2023.

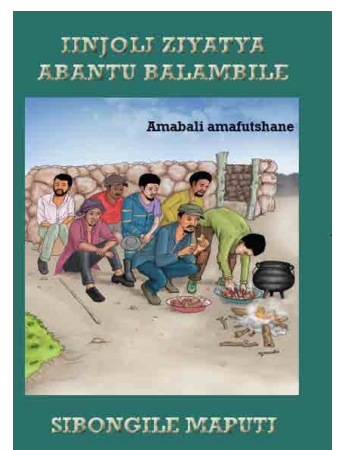
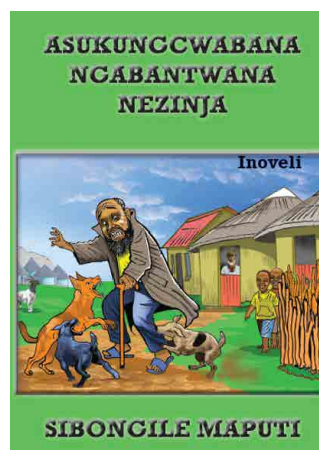
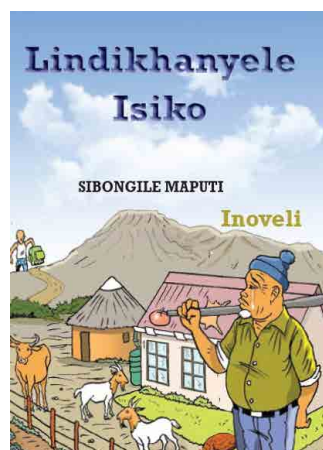
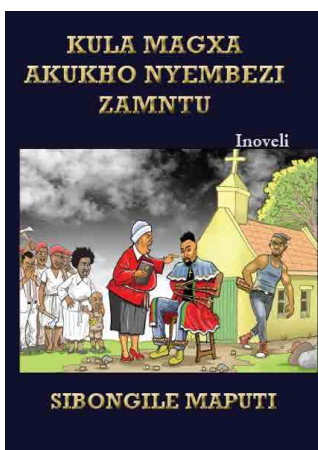
state funds.

I live by the motto: "Authors are to readers what God is to worshippers".

I am on all socials: Twitter: @SiboMaputi; LinkedIn @Sibo Maputi; and Facebook as Sibo Maputi. Here is a [link](#) to my work.



Sibongile with the WC Literature Award 2023.



Some of the covers of isiXhosa books that Sibongile has written for schools.

# Kolombië toe danksy 'n planmaker-kinderboek

Ek wou-wou wonder of dit dalk fopnuus is toe ek uit die bloute per e-pos 'n uitnodiging van 'n Kanadese akademikus (wat ek van geen kant af ken nie) ontvang om Kolombië te besoek. Sy wou my insluit in 'n paneel joernaliste wat oor hul boeke sou gesels by die Wêreldkonferensie vir Wetenskapsjoernaliste, wat in Medellín in dié Suid-Amerikaanse land in Maart 2023 aangebied sou word.

Gelukkig het ek nie die e-pos summier "delete" nie, want dit was 'n verrykende, kleurvolle ervaring om dié stad, eens die tuisdorp van die beeldhouer Fernando Botero en berugte dwelmkoning Pablo Escobar, te kon besoek.

Die kongres self het joernaliste van 62 lande byeengebring in Medellín se botaniese tuin. Almal was dit eens dat dit 'n besonder goeie plan was, veral omdat al die grootste byeenkomste gedurende drie dae in die buitelug (maar darem onder 'n dak van seshoekige panele wat aan 'n byekorf herinner) plaasgevind het. Dit was werklik 'n ontspanne ervaring en goed vir die algemene geestesgesondheid om so in die oopte, eerder as in 'n glas-en-beton konferensiesentrum, te luister na sprekers. As die praatjies vervelig was, kon mens so sit-sit helderkeurige Suid-Amerikaanse voëls dophou wat verby vlieg, 'n Iguana het selfs lui-lui in een van die sessies ingestap – tot groot vermaak van almal teenwoordig!

Ek was die enigste kinderboekskrywer op ons paneel. Dit het joernaliste uit Egipte, die VSA en Kanada ingesluit wat onderskeidelik boeke geskryf het oor Vigs, Alzheimers en die wetenskap agter sweet. Ek het gesels oor my *Inventors, bright minds and other science heroes* (Penguin Random House) en *Uitvinders, planmakers en ander slimkoppe van Suid-Afrika* (LAPA). Laasgenoemde is in September 2023 opdateer en herdruk – dit gebeur nie aldag met nie-fiksie Afrikaanse kinderboeke nie!

[Vinnige advertensiebreuk: Die boeke bevat elk 102 verhalende stories gelaai met feite oor mense met Suid-Afrikaanse bande wat op een of ander manier 'n eerste in die wetenskappe of ingenieurswese behaal, of iets nuuts begin of uitgedink. Dit sluit baanbrekeroperasies (soos dr. Chris Barnard se hartoorplanting en prof. Mashuda Tshifularo

se 3D-gedrukte middeloorinplanting) en die ontdekkers van nuwe spesies spinnekoppe, dinosourusse, fluweelwurms, ericas en erdwurms in, asook die uitvinders van slim planne soos die Kreepy Krauly, Pratley Putty, banksekuriteit vir fone, sweeftuie en beskermingsdrag vir motorfietsryers. Een van die afdelings gaan ook oor die vyf mans wat in Suid-Afrika skool gegaan en elk 'n Nobelprys in die wetenskappe ontvang het. Onder hulle is Max Theiler, wat die geelkoorsinenting ontwikkel het wat grootliks nog net so vandag gebruik word.]

Ek het gelukkig genoeg een van vier reisbeurse van die Springer Nature-groep ontvang. Dié het my bywoning moontlik gemaak, al het dit beteken dat ek op pad terug 21 uur op Schiphol-lughawe moes spandeer! Ek kan rapporteer dat mens jouself genoegsaam kan vermaak mits jy goeie geselskap het (myne was Bibi Aisha-Wadvalli, redakteur van Health-E News in Suid-Afrika), dat daar ounag rotte (regtes) in die lughawe rondhardloop en dat min mense ounag enigins goeie selfoon-etiket toepas. Maar dis 'n storie vir 'n ander dag.

Die volgende Wêreldkonferensie vir Wetenskapsjoernaliste word in Desember 2025 in Pretoria gehou. 'n Bloukraanvoël is reeds as simbool daarvan gekies.

**Regs:** Die omslag van *Uitvinders, planmakers en ander slimkoppe van Suid-Afrika* deur Engela Duvenhage.



Engela by Wêreldkonferensie vir Wetenskapsjoernaliste in Kolombië



## MEER OOR ENGELA SE LOOPBAAN

Vir die afgelope jaar werk ek gereeld vir [Nature Africa](#) en kry die kans om vir 'n internasionale gehoor oor navorsing van regoor Afrika te skryf. Dis beslis een van my loopbaanhoogtepunte, en 'n groot voorreg.

Ek het aanvanklik in die mid-1990's vir gemeenskapskoerante soos die *Suid-Kaap Forum* op Riversdal en die *Paarl Post* gewerk. In die vroeë 2000's het ek vier besonderse jare in CapeNature se kommunikasie-afdeling gewerk, waarna agt jaar as wetenskapskrywer van die Fakulteit Natuurwetenskappe aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch gevolg het. Ek vryskut reeds die afgelope 11 jaar, sedert my oudste dogter Graad 1 toe gegaan het. Ek werk sedertdien dikwels vir navorsingsinstellings en universiteite, maar ook vir publikasies soos die *Landbouweekblad* en *Die Burger*. Ek skryf al etlike jare 'n omgewingsrubriek vir die *Lig*-tydskrif, en behartig ook hul boekeblad, net vir afwisseling. Tussendeur het ek en mede-wetenskapskrywer Anina Mumm die drietalige wetenskapswebblad [Scibraai](#) begin waarvoor ons elke nou en dan stories skryf oor Suid-Afrikaanse wetenskaplikes en hul dinge – sommer net omdat ons wil en trots Suid-Afrikaans is.

# Living the dream in the Big Apple

Since graduating from 26 Crozier Street at the end of 2021, my life and career have changed dramatically. In under two years, I have worked my dream job as a freelancer for the *Daily Maverick* and graduated with a Master's degree from my dream institution, Columbia University in New York City.

Jumping into an internship at the DM after my Honours degree was a naive and miraculous feat that paid off with experience, bylines, and a steady freelancing gig in the months that followed. However, my time in the working world was cut short when my long-shot application to the Columbia Journalism School was approved, with a scholarship to boot. Overnight, my world shifted from Cape Town to The Big Apple, and I spent the next year acquiring an Ivy League education that exposed me to Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists daily, resources and technologies beyond



Giuseppe (middle) between fellow graduates at the Columbia Journalism School.

my wildest dreams, and opportunities galore.

During this time, I published a book, produced documentaries, and met my heroes. Today I sit in my Upper West Side apartment, a fresh Columbia-graduate freelanc-

ing for big-name publications and trying to make a life in this new home. I am reminded that none of this would have been possible without every lesson learned and opportunity seized at Crozier Street.

# Urge to write results in huge creative project

After I finished my Masters in 2020, I set a personal goal to take on one big creative writing project. My writing had improved significantly, and I wanted to express this in some way.

I was fortunate to get to do all the writing for the book *In Good Company*, which profiled 33 great South Africans who have all excelled in their fields (various, such as actors, musicians, sports people, medical and more). The book contains beautiful visual art (done by Marc-Gregory) of these people, and I wrote all the text that contextualised the people, explained the symbolism in the photos and what we can learn from them. It was all in aid of Reach for a Dream (to raise funds and inspire people to reach for their dreams).

Marc-Gregory approached Prof Thuli Madonsela to write the Foreword to the book.

When the book launched, I arranged a life size exhibition of it in Sandton City so people could see the art in huge form, and my words were used for the audio guide. They wanted to make the art accessible and help with the fundraising.

The exhibition was really spectacular and took up a whole passage in the mall. This was all my project and I drove the PR – resulting in coverage in major media like *News24*, *Sunday Times*, ENCA, IOL, you name it. The project went on to win two awards and raise over R500,000 for Reach for a Dream.

Earlier this year, I handed over a copy of the book to Prof Gawie Botma to acknowledge the role that he and the Department of Journalism at Stellenbosch University have played in my growth.



Jenny giving a copy of her book, *In Good Company*, to Prof Gawie Botma (her supervisor).

# Recognition is sweet for veteran female motoring journalist

After being a motoring journalist for the past 15 years (straight out of the BPhil Journalism programme), I recently won the DSTV Content Creator Award in the Automotive category.

I adore what I do, but with everything, it comes with its challenges. It is not something I like to harp on about, but being a female motoring journalist requires a very thick skin. Even in 2023, it remains dominated by men. And unfortunately, the sexism is still very real. I have fought against it for the past 15 years and I am immensely proud of myself for what I have achieved thus far.

Winning the DSTV Content Creator Award made me feel seen. It gave me just an extra level of validation which I didn't even realise I was searching for. It was extra special to me because when I started out in this job, there was no such thing as social media. Content creation in this regard just didn't exist. It was all about print back then. This award allowed me to reflect on my career and how I have managed to mould and evolve in an industry that seems to be constantly changing.

I was up against some incredibly talented colleagues, most of which are much

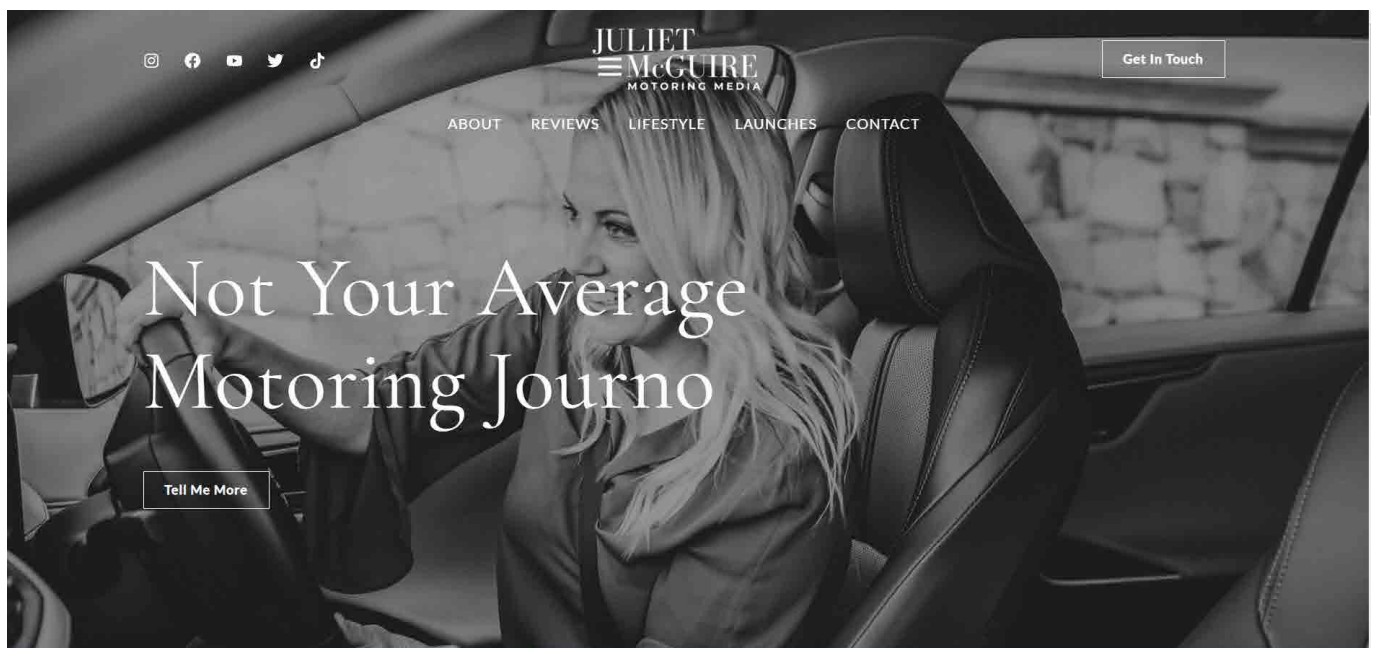
younger than me and entered this industry when the likes of Instagram and TikTok had already been around for some time. They came with skills I didn't have. I have had to learn as I go. Or grow. So to be recognised for my content at this stage in my career is something I cherish. Hopefully I will continue to grow and am still able to remain relevant. My age is working against me.. (hahaha!)

**Right:** Juliet McQuire accepts her DSTV Content Creator Award in the Automotive category.



## JULIET'S ROAD

I started my career at *CAR* magazine in 2008 and was there for seven years before being head hunted by Associated Media to head up the Women on Wheels website. I quickly became the editor of the magazine as well, a position I have held for four years. During all of this I became a presenter on Tech Report, Ignition TV on channel 189 on DSTV, and for [www.cars.co.za](http://www.cars.co.za). I had a radio slot on *Cape Talk* with John Maytham. I am now a freelance-based motoring journalist contributing to some of SA's leading publications such as *Women's Health*, *Men's Health*, *You Luxury Africa*, etc. I am still a presenter for Ignition TV as well as a voice-over artist. I am a judge for the [cars.co.za](http://cars.co.za) Consumer Awards as well as a judge for South Africa Car of the Year.



The home page of Juliet's personal motoring journalism website.

# When frustration meets inspiration

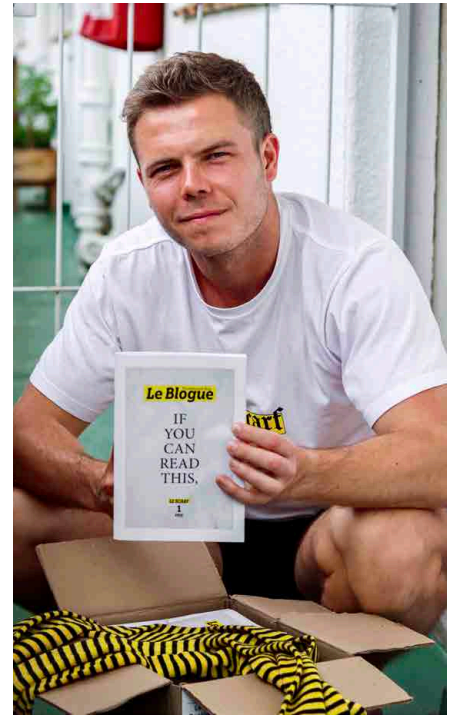
My journey as a media entrepreneur started when frustration met inspiration. I was frustrated because I couldn't land a job in journalism. I was inspired because I wanted to create a publication of my own. So, I started a blog.

Miraculously, the blog helped me land a job in the TV industry, an environment that gave me valuable experience and helped me develop my talents and interests. I became particularly interested in people's passions, journeys, life lessons and stories. As a result, the direction of my blog changed, focusing less on politics and more on "life".

Then, with a bang, the blog became *Le Blogue*, a small, printed publication filled with local stories by local people. There have been five editions so far. The main lesson learned is that having a clear vision is vital. For a long time, *Le Blogue's* vision was blurry. In these visionless moments, I leaned heavily on faith and the belief that there was and still is a vision somewhere deep down. By simply showing up every day, the vision would always return. They say patience is a behaviour, not a feeling. During *Le Blogue's*

lowest moments, I would remind myself that you don't always feel patient while being patient, and I managed to hold on.

Luckily, I haven't been alone on this journey. A media brand is nothing without people. Without people, there are no readers, stories, or reasons to create. More importantly, without people, there is no community or support. In this regard, the Stellenbosch Journalism community's support has been enormous. People have jumped on board to help in every way they can; it has been a humbling experience. My message to everyone who wants to start something is this: No matter if it's big or small, just start and keep going. Whatever it is, it will figure itself out along the way.



Mike with a copy of *Le Blogue*.

## MIKE'S MAJOR MOMENTS

After interning (under fellow alumnus Simon Sonnekus) at *Netwerk24*, I secured a job at *Expresso Show* (thanks to alumna Zoe Human's help). I transitioned quickly from social media manager to photographer to TV director before leaving to focus on *Le Scarf*, a local media brand.



Mike can be found in the back row of this photo of the Honours class of 2019.

# A sell-by date is just a number to ignore

What to do when the company that was part of your identity for more than two decades says you have reached your sell-by date? That is what happened to me.

After 23 years at Media24 – *Eikestad-nuus*, *Die Burger*, *Sake24* and *Fin24/News24 Business* – I was forced to retire because I turned 60.

An OECD-Generation survey found that ageism remains deeply rooted in the labour market. Yet, employers indicated that, when midcareer and older workers are offered a chance, they consistently match or exceed the performance of younger colleagues.

The disappointment plunged me into an existential crisis (thank goodness for friends willing to listen to me whine, vent, and eventually brainstorm constructively). My desire to continue working was because I can still make a valuable contribution in the workplace, I do not want to dip into my retirement savings yet, and I want to fund my love for travel. I tapped the vast network I had built up over the years. I also jacked up my LinkedIn profile and did a very helpful session with a career coach.

A friend told me that Douglas Knowledge Partners was expanding. The Cape Town-based start-up works with major compa-



Carin Smith

nies, NGOs and universities around the world to magnify the impact of their ideas through books, digital media, innovative convenings, and much more.

I had an interview with the dynamic CEO Colin Douglas and the rest is history. I now work in a very creative environment where it is not age that matters but what you bring to the team. Ages range from 23 to 60.

So, my message is: don't let anyone or any company determine your value. You have something to offer, no matter what your age – just go out there and find it!

## CARIN'S CAREER

I studied law, journalism and business. After a stint in the USA, first as a student and then working for a telecommunications company, I worked at *Media24* for 23 years before making a career change in July to Douglas Knowledge Partners, a strategic knowledge company which provides end-to-end solutions.

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### Experience

- Knowledge Partner**  
Douglas Knowledge Partners · Full-time  
Jul 2023 - Present · 6 mos  
South Africa
- Aviation writer**  
Business Day · Freelance  
Jul 2023 - Present · 6 mos  
South Africa · Remote
- Senior Content Producer**  
News24 Business · Full-time  
Jul 2013 - Jun 2023 · 10 yrs  
Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa  
  
Senior content producer at News24 Business (formerly known as Fin24.com) – part of News24.com, the biggest South African-owned news website. ... [...see more](#)
- Journalist**  
Netwerk24 · Full-time



# Adventures in data-driven accountability journalism

As the editor of a local government promise tracker, I read dozens of daily Google Alerts for the mayors of South Africa's biggest cities. With few exceptions, news coverage is focused on the drama of power grabs and politicians' often untested claims. A deluge of "he said, she said" reporting makes it difficult to judge how well metros deliver services on the watch of a particular mayor or coalition.

For example, did former DA mayor Mpho Phalatse and her coalition government take Johannesburg "100 years back" in ten months as the ANC has claimed? Did ANC mayor-turned-speaker Eugene Johnson leave her DA successor with a "broken" Nelson Mandela Bay?

To the detriment of accountability, you would struggle to find data-driven answers to questions like these in media coverage. As Jane Hall, the author of *Politics and the Media: Intersections and New Directions* points out, "We know from political science that if you don't connect the dots for people, they don't really know how to hold public officials accountable."

I have been experimenting with data-driven accountability journalism since

starting Track My Mayor as an Impact Africa grantee in 2017. (Code for Africa and the International Center for Journalists established the fund to support African data-driven storytelling.) Rapid changes in the political landscape, however, warrant a shift in focus because most metro mayors are nowadays axed before the delivery deadlines for their promises arrive.

Supported by a grant from the Henry Nxumalo Foundation, I am therefore switching gears to track metros' service delivery performance. My goal is to surface data that will serve as a baseline against which metros and their political leadership can be measured regularly enough to be able to keep up with the speed at which governments are replaced.

Look out for the series in January.



Liesl pitches Track My Mayor during a Code for Africa workshop in Zanzibar.

## LIESL IN A NUTSHELL

I am a self-employed journalist who has managed news websites, teams, grants and collaborations. In 2004 I graduated with an MPhil degree from the Department of Journalism at Stellenbosch University. In 2019, I won the national Vodacom Journalist of the Year Award for data journalism.



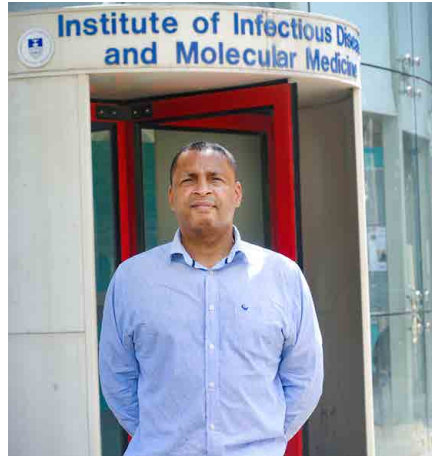
The honours class of 2001 where Liesl can be found in the middle row.

# Science communication and MA experience open door to PhD

Currently I am Communications and Marketing Manager at a clinical research group within the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences where I am based at its Worcester research site. My role has over the years evolved to include community engagement, public engagement and science communication.

My role is a complex one because it straddles multiple theory models, notably marketing, communications, public engagement, science communication and community engagement, all of which are distinct from each other.

My work plans also differ, the one day I might be visiting a school giving a talk about TB, the next day arranging media interviews for scientists about research findings, another arranging a TB exhibit at schools where scientists talk to school learners about their work and career options, and a next day working creating content and working with a graphic designer on an organisational [annual report](#). A highlight has been working with a Worcester-based videographer, Fabio Julies, producing a series of training videos which were used as training aid training scientists in a global research network attracting [30 000 views on YouTube](#).



Kelvin Vollenhoven

Based at a "platteland" research site in Worcester, there is natural tension between translating the results from complex immunology, vaccine, diagnosis and drugs trials research conducted at a rural level to local audiences on the hand, and on the other hand, translating research findings and knowledge to the broader research world which have an interest, especially those countries which have high burdens of disease. There is a contradiction, between, on the one hand, working at a well-established,

resource-endowed university, which on the other hand conducts research of a first world standard in third world conditions, against the context of poor infrastructure, high poverty levels, low education and communities burdened by complexities of disease.

More recently, I worked on a [narrative history of this complex clinical group](#), marking its 20 years of existence, as told through multiple levels of voices, from the initial founders, funders and research workers. This was a massive endeavour because it entailed conducting numerous interviews over a period of one year, transcribing, writing, studying for timelines, key events, creating a thematic construct, collating visual imagery to accompany the final product. This has inspired me to enrol for a postgraduate course in Public Health, whereafter I wish to pursue a PhD in a study of the context of infectious diseases within a broader social-economic context.

The Master's journalism course has guided me in transitioning from a marketing and communications role at municipal level, into a communications and marketing role at a prestigious academic research group, which is making an impact on a global level.

Extracts from the report Kelvin co-edited, celebrating the 20 years of the UCT tuberculosis research unit.

# Vermaaklike feetjies storie ondermyn verwagtinge

*Die Feetjiespolisiediens* (Tafelberg, 2023) is eintlik 'n voortsetting van my eerste kinderboek, *Wie skrik vir Wortel Wolf?* (Tafelberg, 2021), in elk geval tematies. Albei neem bekende sprokies en keer dit op hul kop, hopelik op humoristiese wyse. Ek hou van stories wat jou verwagtinge ondermyn.

Ek het een oggend gaan draf toe die idee by my opkom – hoe sou die “gewone” werke in 'n plek soos Feetjieland funksioneer? Ek is lief vir misdaadromans, so oor somervakansies, en ek het seker onderbewusterlik ook die genre probeer opstuur. Ek het 'n proefstorie oor Gouelokkies en die Drie Bere geskryf en vir my kwaliteitsbestuurders (my oudste twee kinders en my vrou) voorgelê, en hulle het daarvan gehou. Toe skryf ek die res van die stories – oor Jan en die Boontjierank, en oor Hansie en Grietjie.

Dit bring my groot vreugde om vir my kinders, en eintlik enige kinders, stories voor te lees, so ek probeer om boeke te skryf wat ook vir die voorleser snaaks en interessant sal wees. Maar: Om eerlik te wees, ek skryf die stories wat ekself sal wil, of sou wou, lees, en met my kinders in gedagte. So ek is sekerlik nie die regte mens om te vra of dit werk nie, maar dis van die gunsteling goed wat ek al geskryf het.

Ek sal beslis weer vir Kaptein Fanie en Sersant Saarkie, die hoofkarakters in die FPD, se wêreld herbesoek (ek is reeds besig

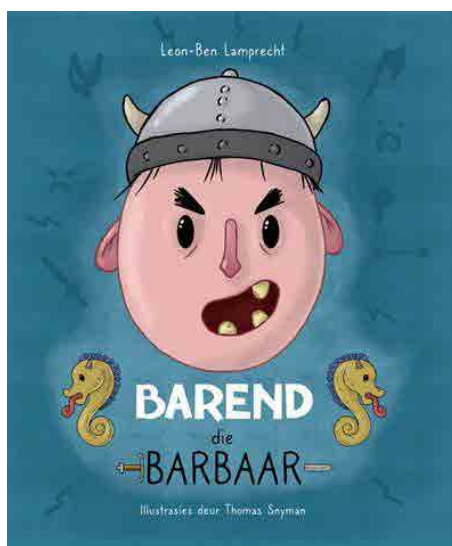


Leon-Ben Lamprecht

aan die opvolg skryf). Zinelda McDonald het *Feetjieland* werklik gemaak met haar puike sketse – ek is so dankbaar dat sy kon tyd vind in haar skedule om my stories te illustreer. *Die Feetjiespolisiediens* is geskik vir kinders tussen gr. 2 en 4 (afhangend van hoe jou kind lees). En soos genoem, hoop ek die ouers geniet dit net so.



Die omslag van Leon-Ben se jongste boek, *Die Feetjiespolisiediens*.



Die voorblaaie van Leon-Ben se vorige twee kinderboeke.

## LEON-BEN SE LOOPBAAN

Ek het my loopbaan as joernalis eintlik maar by *Die Matie* begin, toe ek kamerpunte nodig gehad het in Dagbreek. Vandaar was ek nuusverslaggewer (en later multimediajoernalis) by *Die Burger*, voor ek vir bykans ses jaar by *Weg!* gewerk het as reisskrywer. (Dié tydskrif se beginjare was ook die onderwerp van die mini-tesis vir my meestersgraad.) Deesdae is ek 'n heeltydse finansiële adviseur. Ek skryf maandeliks of so rubrieke vir *Rapport* en *Maroela Media*, en kinderboeke wanneer ek tyd kry. O, en liedjies (gaan loer gerus op die stroomdiens van jou keuse), my nuutste passie.

# Help kinders speel-speel leer oor die natuur

## DIE BOEKE IN 'N NEUTEDOP?

*Safari Activity Books* is 'n reeks natuurboeke vir kinders. Die eerste titel gaan oor Afrika se soogdiere, en kom in Maart 2024 in Engels en Afrikaans uit.

Dis aktiwiteitsboeke, met speletjies, blokraaisels, doolhowe en kopkrappers, asook interessante feite oor meer as 70 spesies.

## WAAR KOM DIE KONSEP VANDAAN?

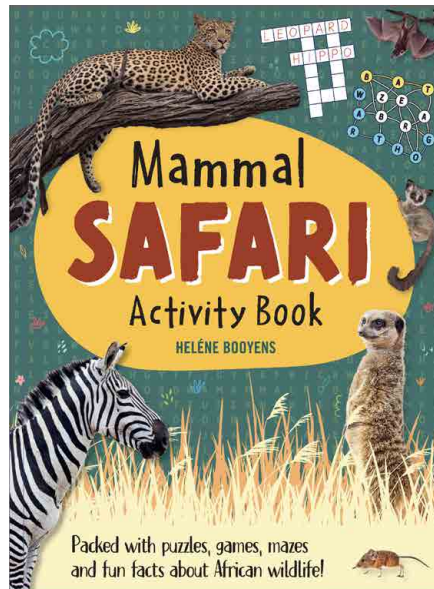
My voorgraads is in ekologie, en ek werk by Penguin aan dik veldgidse, soos *Spiders of South Africa*. Nadat ek beskrywings van 800 spinnekoppe se harige lyfies moes redigeer, wou ek iets meer vroliks aanpak. Ek pitch toe 'n reeks kleurvolle aktiwiteitsboeke oor Afrika se wilde diere.

## WAT KOM EERSTE, DIE PRENTJIES OF DIE WOORDE?

Vir my, die prentjies. Ek is ook 'n uitlegkustenaar, en het die boek eers ontwerp en met *dummy* teks uitgelê voordat ek die teksblokkies ingevul het. Ek het 'n spesieslys van Afrika-soogdiere byderhand gehou om seker te maak dat elke diertjie sy kans in die kollig kry – selfs die tandmolle en klaasneuse.

## HOE LANK VAT SO 'N PROJEEK?

Dit was so vyf maande se naweke om die boek te ontwerp. InDesign op die regter-



Die voorblad van Heléne se kinderboek oor die natuur wat in 2024 verskyn.



Heléne Booyens

skerm, *Frasier* seisoen een tot ses op die linkerskerm, vir ligte vermaak terwyl ek foto's rondskuif en doolhowe teken. Die skryf was net 'n paar naweke, want jy skiet vir die pot.

## WAT KOM VOLGENDE?

Voëls is volgende in die reeks, dan reptiele. Daar is ook twee storieboeke in die pyppyn by LAPA – een oor honde, een oor perde.

## HELÉNE KORTLIKS

Ek is 'n senior redakteur by Penguin Random House se natuurafdeling, Struik Nature. Voor dit was ek 'n joernalis by *Landbouweekblad*. My voorgraadse kwalifikasie aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch is 'n BScAgric Bewaringsekologie en Entomologie.



# Documenting suffering - a jarring and existential moment

In 2022 I was sent out to KZN to cover the aftermath of the floods about two weeks after the heavy rain began. Rescue operations were well underway, and the devastation was like nothing I'd ever seen. It was extremely jarring and an existential moment in my career - I was confronted with what it means to cover people's suffering as an objective observer in the rawest circumstances. I really grappled with my privilege and whiteness in that space.

Many didn't appreciate seeing me walking around with a camera documenting their suffering, and I don't blame them. I really had to interrogate the purpose of what I was doing and whether it was contributing in a positive way to the plight of the people who had endured the most harm.

Witnessing the work of the rescue teams who had been on call for 14 days straight, working around the clock to recover any survivors, was humbling and inspiring. Unfortunately, by the time I got there, only dead bodies were to be recovered. In fact, it was the first time I had ever smelt a decomposed dead body and that isn't something you will ever forget.

The majority of the people who had been affected were living in more rural or low-income areas. Obviously everywhere was a mess, but what really struck me was the conditions people were already living in, despite the floods. You can't imagine what the majority of South Africans have to endure every day and it made me angry and heartbroken. But still, of course, people banded together to clear debris from rivers, roads and areas strewn with rubble from washed away houses. The resilience and strength of the people in these communities, through such hardship, is what I hope to remember the longest.

One last note is the admiration I had for



Amy reporting on the KZN floods in a screenshot from the award-winning News24 documentary

my dedicated colleagues who had been in the thick of it from the beginning, especially Kaveel Singh, News24's Durban-based reporter. He is an incredibly brilliant, compassionate and hardworking journalist, a true inspiration.

I don't think things were ever the same for me after this reportage, and suffice to say I

no longer work as a journalist. I do not mean to say that I undervalue the role journalists play in society - I think they are absolutely crucial and invaluable in a democracy and can have profound positive impact, especially in holding power to account. There are just aspects of it that I have found difficult to cope with - especially working in daily news.



As part of a team (including Nokuthula Manyathi, Sharlene Rood, Chante Schatz, Kayleen Morgan and Aljoscha Kohlstock) Amy won a Sikuville Journalism Award in the feature category for their documentary, *When the rains came*.

## AMY IN SHORT

I did an AFP video journalist internship in 2017. Thereafter I went freelance for about two years, for a few publications. In 2020 I started as a multimedia journalist at News24 for two and a half years. I moved to London in September 2022 where I now live and work as a freelance producer.

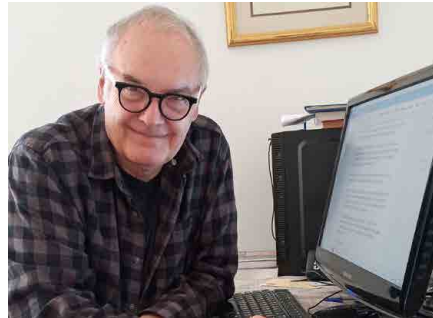
# Gedagtes oor 'n boek en Afrikaans

My boek *Ter wille van oorlewing, ideologie en geld — Perspektiewe op die geskiedenis van die Afrikaanse media* (Akademia) het in die loop van 2023 verskyn. Vir my was dit 'n mylpaal omdat die Afrikaanse mediageskiedenis iets is waarmee ek 'n groot deel van my lewe besig is — selfs van kleins af.

Ek het koerante as kind verslind en graag radio geluister. (Dit was lank voor televisie.) Later het ek interessante koerante en tydskrifte begin versamel, wat nogal nuttig was toe ek in 1991 op Potchefstroom begin klasgee het in joernalistiek. Later volg die digitale mediamuseum *Mediamense.com*, waarop ek honderde voorblaaie kon plaas en inligting oor joernaliste en ander mediamense versamel. Dit is 'n voortgaande projek.

Toe kom 'n versoek van Akademia om 'n handboek te doen. Dit het twee geword — eers die een oor mediageskiedenis en hopelik volgende jaar 'n boek oor die joernalistiekpraktyk. Die navorsing wat ek deur die jare vir akademiese tydskrifte gedoen het, het die basis van die boek gevorm, maar ek het ook nuwe navorsing gedoen, byvoorbeeld oor die geskiedenis van Afrikaanse radio. Afrikaans is reeds sedert 1924 op die lug gehoor!

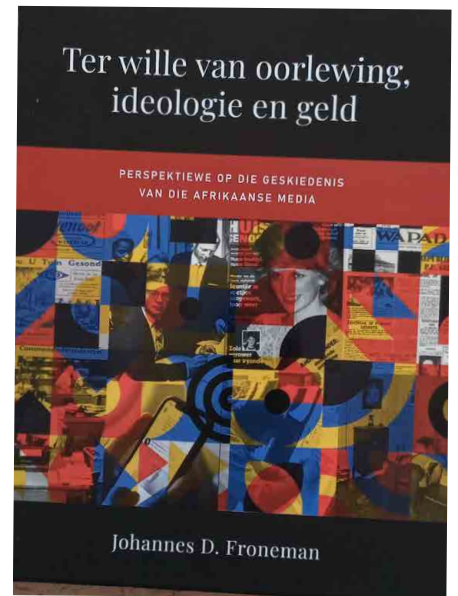
Waarom die boek in Afrikaans doen? En waarom fokus op Afrikaanse mediageskiedenis? Eenvoudig omdat Afrikaans as mediataal 'n fassinerende geskiedenis het,



Johannes skryf as afgetrede professor voltyds op Kleinmond. (Foto: Nina Froneman)

ingebed in die oorlewingstryd van mense wat die taal liefhet, dikwels skeefgetrek deur ideologiese motiewe en aan bande gelê deur finansiële beperkings. Tog is daar telkens bewyse van idealisme en energie. Dit maak dat ek 'n lang toekoms vir Afrikaanse media verwag waar voortgebou sal word op die suksesse van die verlede en dom foute hopelik vermy sal word. Die versoeking was nog altyd daar om ter wille van geld gehalte en diepgang in te boet. Die tyd sal leer.

Wat wel 'n realiteit is, is dat ons nie meer bloot ontvangers is van mediaboodskappe nie, maar dit nou in ons eie hand hou. Dit is bevrydend en uitdagend. 'n Totaal nuwe fase in die geskiedenis van massakommunikasie media word dus vandag geskryf. Eindag sal dit ook geskiedenis wees.



Die buiteblad van die boek waarvoor Froneman hier skryf.

## JOHANNES SE LOOPBAAN

Ek het 'n BA, Hons., BA (Filosofie) en M in Joernalistiek (cum laude) aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch behaal. My PhD in Bedryfskommunikasie ontvang ek van die Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys. Dit het gehandel oor die kommunikasie van Afrikanernasionalisme deur Stellenbosse studente, 1902-1948.

Ek was vir dertien jaar 'n joernalis by publikasies soos *Beeld*, *Paarl Post* en *Die Kerkbode*. Daarna het ek vir 25 jaar joernalistiek op Potchefstroom gedoseer terwyl ek steeds allerlei joernalistieke werk doen. Ná my aftrede in 2019 doen ek meestal navorsing oor die media.

# mediamENSE.com

Tuis | Groot Nuus | Koerante | Koerante (Engels) | Tydskrifte | Truspieël | Verbatim | Boeke  
Dieper delf | Menings

Die tuisblad van [Mediamense.com](http://Mediamense.com), 'n "digitale museum oor Afrikaanse mediamense" wat Johannes tot stand gebring het.



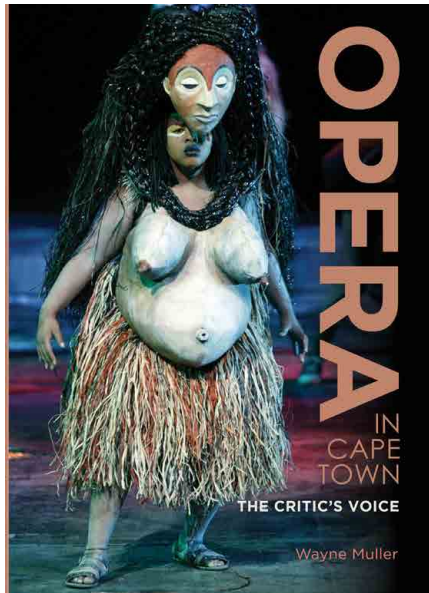
# Kunsjoernalistiek lei tot storie van Kaapse opera

Reeds vanaf die eerste dag dat ek in 1999 by Crozierstraat ingestap het, wou ek 'n kunsjoernalis wees. En in daardie jaar, kan 'n mens seker sê, het my loopbaan in kunsjoernalistiek begin toe ek vir die *Cape Times* 'n artikel geskryf het oor die opera *Hänsel und Gretel*, wat toe in Kaapstad opgevoer sou word.

Maar eintlik het my loopbaan in kunsjoernalistiek eers regtig in 2007 afgeskop toe ek die assistent-kunsredakteur van *Die Burger* geword het. Ek het begin wonder oor kunsjoernalistiek se bydrae tot die geskiedskrywing van die kunste en wou 'n boek daaroor skryf, maar het gou besef dit gaan heelwat navorsing verg. Daarom het ek toe besluit om dié onderwerp vir my PhD na te vors.

Omdat ek in klassieke musiek en spesifiek opera belangstel, het ek my PhD in Musikologie aan die US se Musiekdepartement aangepak en in 2018 voltooi. In September vanjaar het die boek wat daaruit gevloei het, uiteindelik verskyn: *Opera in Cape Town: The Critic's Voice*.

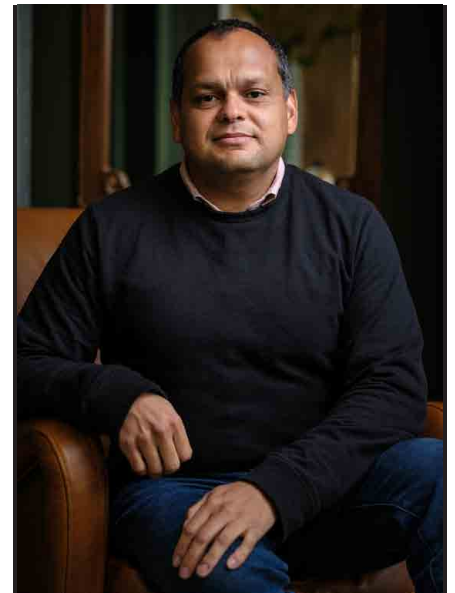
Soos die titel aandui, gaan dit oor hoe operaresensente die ontwikkeling van die operalandskap gekarteer het – hoe koerantresensente opera as kunsvorm beskryf en beoordeel het, en veral hoe hulle nuwe ontwikkelings in en die transformasie van opera neergepen en aan hul lesers



Die omslag van Wayne se boek *Opera in Cape Town: The Critic's Voice*.

verduidelik het.

Die boek is nie juis 'n geskiedenisboek oor opera nie, maar daar is tog temas wat 'n ontwikkelingsgeskiedenis van opera in Suid-Afrika ná apartheid belig, gesien vanuit die perspektief van kunsjoernaliste. Uiteindelik was dit vir my fassinerend om te sien hoe kunsjoernalistiek ons veranderende kulturele landskap in die "nuwe Suid-Afrika"



Wayne Muller

beskryf, beïnvloed en gerig het.

*Opera in Cape Town: The Critic's Voice* is te koop in uitgesoekte boekwinkels, op Takealot, en as e-boek by <https://africansunmedia.store.it.si>, Google Books of op Amazon Kindle.

Ek is ook sedert 2022 een van die Departement se besoekende spesialisdosente en bied die kunsjoernalistiek-kortkursus aan.



The Honours class of 1999 where Wayne can be found in the third row.

# RIP, National Bird Reporter's notebook: August 2023

As the editor of *Kerkbode*, I was couch surfing in the interior, staying with dominees to cut travel costs and reporting on church life in N.T. Wright's sense of an improvised act in an unfinished play, when my 4,500 km trip from Wellington to Volksrust via Swartrugens was interrupted by a road-side vision.

I had spoken to auxiliary social workers, documented an amputee receiving communion at home, filmed a preacher who harvests dung to fire the methane stove he uses in his shipping container home and

interviewed a farmer who designed the lighting-setup of the three massive road-side crosses you see on the N1 as you pass Trompsburg at night ...

But most of these stories seemed to take aim at other people - an audience out there - clicks on a server, IP addresses with religious attitudes. Then I saw the bird, hanging from a power line. A blue crane, beak ajar. Of all the ecstasies and tragedies unfolding outside the car window as I drove north and south, this muted sermon moved me the most.



Le Roux Schoeman



Le Roux's "muted sermon" photograph.



# How a PhD from Crozier Street changed my life

The past five years of my academic life have been eventful, exciting, and promising. I have achieved a lot more than I thought I would ever do within a short space of time.

It all started when I arrived at number 26 Crozier Street in January 2017 as a budding PhD candidate on a prestigious Partnership of Africa's Next Generation of Academics (PaNGEA) scholarship, administered by the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences. I remember vividly the morning cold of Wednesday 18 January 2017 when I shivered and panicked on my way to meet with my thesis promoter and supervisor Dr Gawie Botma with whom I had been in contact via email.

To my surprise Dr Botma, although imposing in physique, met me with a welcoming and an assuring smile. He quickly ushered me to the staff kitchen for a cup of coffee to keep me warm whilst we discussed my PhD journey. In the next three

years that followed, I made the Department of Journalism my home away from home. Between 2017 and 2019 I was responsible for executing my research plan that included submitting draft chapters to my supervisor, conducting field work, and eventually successfully defending my thesis.

All this was made possible by the support of Dr Botma and the journalism staff at SU. In particular, the monthly PhD roundtable meetings with other candidates made the journey less tiring because I could test my ideas before my peers and the qualified academics in the Department. In addition, I also benefitted from additional training in research methodology, scientific writing and publishing facilitated by the Graduate School.

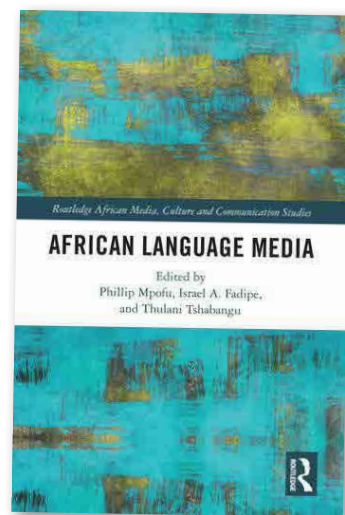
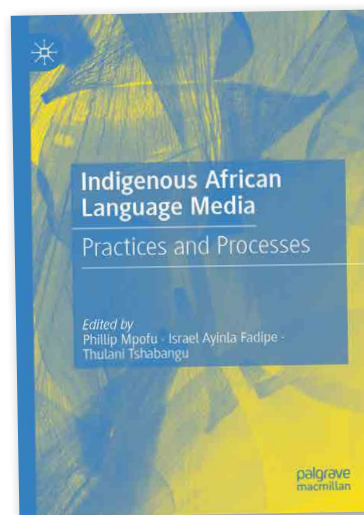
I was surely ready for an academic career when I left Stellenbosch University in 2019 with a PhD in the bag. Since my graduation, I have grown my network of scholars in particular with academics at North West

University's research entity of Indigenous Language Media in Africa. I have collaborated with scholars from Zimbabwe, Nigeria, South Africa and the UK in research. I have a growing profile of research publications that include seven journal articles in high impact journals, three book chapters and two co-edited books, *African Language Media* (2023), published by Routledge, and *Indigenous African Language Media: Practices and Processes* (2023), published by Palgrave MacMillan.

Although I have momentarily left academia to work for the United Nations in Kenya, I remain affiliated to Stellenbosch University's Department of Journalism as a research fellow. I am planning to publish in 2024 some research articles under the affiliation of the university and to continue to contribute to knowledge production. Stellenbosch University and the staff at the Department of Journalism will forever stay with me in my dreams.



Thulani Tshabangu



Covers of the books co-edited by Thulani.

# Valuable knowledge gained in 'engineering life'

I'm currently a Knight Science Journalism (KSJ) fellow at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). It's a 10-month fellowship from August this year until May next year.

The Knight Science Journalism at MIT is the most prestigious fellowship – or rather a hall of fame for science and technology journalists. During the fall and spring semesters fellows audit courses at mainly MIT and Harvard. I initially wanted to study the connection between epigenetics and early childhood development, especially how early experiences shape adulthood.

But the world has changed faster than I expected, and my interest tilted towards artificial intelligence and synthetic biology. I am interested in the cluster of technologies in AI and synthetic biology and their capacity to widen our horizons to overcome most of the difficult challenges facing our society, from automation to diseases. One of my classes at MIT this fall is the Principles of Synthetic Biology. It does not matter that my last biology class was in high school about two decades

ago; nor does it matter that I have never taken any engineering courses.

Therefore, I may never build a biological circuit for certain gene expressions after completing the course, but I have acquired invaluable knowledge in engineering life. What makes KSJ fellowship exceptional is the access to the resources at MIT and Harvard as well as other institutions around Cambridge and Boston. I felt honoured and accomplished when my story on charcoal was used to create an assignment for the students in my Politics and Policies: What Is the Impact of Data and AI? class at Harvard Kennedy School.

In addition to auditing courses, fellows meet twice every week at the KSJ office to listen and speak with invited authors and scientists. In October, we went to Woods Hole and took a boat trip to collect marine specimens, interacting with several scientists at The Marine Biological Laboratory and The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.



Chikezie Omeje

## CHIKEZIE'S CAREER IN SHORT

I am an Africa editor at the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP). Last September at the Global Investigative Journalism Conference in Gothenburg, Sweden, I was a panelist and spoke about kleptocracy and criminal state alongside the OCCRP co-founder.



# ‘What’ is most important question

Let's be clear: I did not have an illustrious career.

I did not win prizes, go on fellowships, or published breaking news stories on front pages after I received my Master's degree at the age of 54 in 2019.

But I learned so many things that I wish I had known when I was a practicing journalist in my twenties and thirties. I learned not how to be a journalist but what I was doing. The "what" is so much more important than the "how". The "how" is easy. It is the "who", "what", "where", "when" and "why". The "what" is the most important part. The part where I learned how my reality was constructed and how I constructed other

people's reality without even knowing it.

I can no longer consume news without critically engaging; but "what about?" is the valuable question I learned. And I taught that to many other people. Friends, family, and my children. My Master's degree gave me invaluable insight into life and into the society in which I find myself. It was one of the greatest experiences of my life.

To those who consider it: do not hesitate, you will be taken on a journey that will have a considerable impact on your life. Thanks to the wonderful staff and lecturers of the Department of Journalism at Stellenbosch University for enriching my life. I will forever think of you with great reverence.



Annemarie van Wyk, pictured here with her husband Marcel Kroese, during a Covid-enforced homemade graduation ceremony for her MA degree. Her children made the certificate and "the thing on my head is a plastic bag over a box".

## ANNEMARIE'S 'WHAT' OF HER CAREER

I started my career at the SABC and then moved to *Vrye Weekblad* as a translator and general office assistant. I loved the excitement and idea of being in the midst of history at the time, but my career took many turns. I eventually ended up at *Rapport* in Cape Town where I worked for seven years. I especially enjoyed court reporting and focused on environmental and agricultural stories. After having children, I started freelancing. In 2016 I received a Postgraduate Diploma in Economics Journalism with distinction from Rhodes University. I then started my Masters in 2017 and received my degree in 2019. I am currently writing fiction with the aim of publishing a novel.

# SU gives 'intellectual tools'

It was a privilege studying at Stellenbosch University (SU) where I received support from both faculty and administrative staff. I enrolled early 2011 and graduated in 2013 with an MPhil Journalism. After my graduation, I went on to complete my doctoral studies at the University of Johannesburg's Department of Communication and Media.

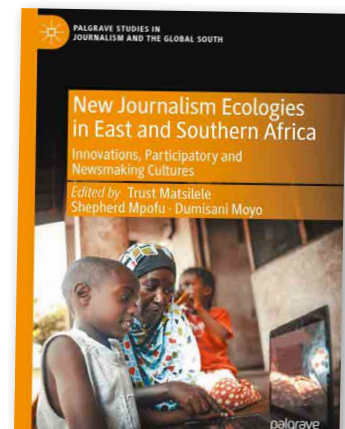
The intellectual tools I received at SU helped me in my journalism practice after I joined the *Forbes Africa* magazine and *CNBC Africa TV* (2014-2016) as journalist, rising to senior journalist within two years. In 2019, after a three-year hiatus in Canada where I was pursuing a postgraduate diploma in Christian studies, concurrently with my PhD programme, I joined the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, first as junior lecturer, rising to senior lecturer by the time I left in September of 2023.

While at CPUT, I published over 40 academic articles (18 journal papers and 26 book chapters). I also published my monograph (*Social Media and Digital Dissidence in*



Trust Matsilele. Photo: CPUT

*Zimbabwe*) in 2022, with Palgrave Macmillan, and an edited volume titled *New Journalism Ecologies in East and Southern Africa* (also with Palgrave in 2023). Some of my journal articles have appeared in leading global journals: *Digital Journalism; Information, Communication & Society* (iCS); *Journal of Com-*



One of the books written and edited by Trust.

*munication Inquiry; Media, Culture & Society;* and *Journal of Science Communication*. At the CPUT I supervised six master's students to completion and have since been appointed adjunct fellow. Last September I relocated to the UK to join Birmingham City University as senior lecturer in journalism.

# ‘Funny, light, with a bit of a bite’

I started writing my novel, *When the Filter Fades*, in 2018 as a creative exercise for National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo). As a journalist, I had never seriously considered writing fiction and it felt daunting to craft a story primarily from my imagination. I had also written a non-fiction title, *The Big South African Hair Book*, which was closer to reportage, so delving into the world of fiction took me completely out of my wheelhouse.

NaNoWriMo challenges the writer to set a daily writing goal and stick to it – the aim is to deliver 50,000 words within a month and, by the end of that month, I had over 70,000 words. I’ve worked in lifestyle media in various capacities and have been on both sides of the influencer/client relationship, so I wanted to mine those experiences and industry secrets and rumours to deliver a juicy summer read.

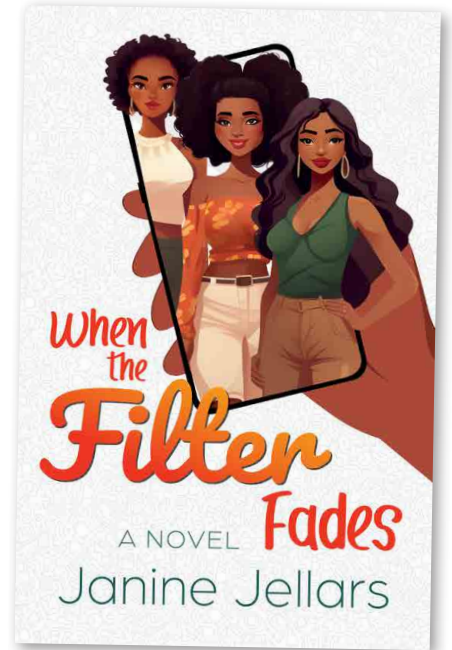
As I’ve matured, I’ve shed a lot of the snobbery around what I thought was a “worthy read” that I used to have when I was younger. Life is tough enough as it is, and I wanted to write something funny, light, with a bit of a bite. I took inspiration from authors I admired – locally, Qarnita Loxton and Angela Makholwa, and, internationally, Talia Hibbert and Jasmine Guillory – and mixed it with the perspective I’d gained as a media industry insider. Many of the behind-the-scenes machinations are stranger than fiction. Once I started allowing the characters to tell the story, and just delivered the daily word count, the plot came together quite quickly.



Janine Jellars

In summary, the novel follows the interconnected stories of three young women trying to make it in contemporary Johannesburg. There’s Lin, the consummate professional social media influencer, who has taken her bland marketable image all the way to the bank. Former child star Lebo has courted controversy since her career took a nose-dive. Then there’s gossip queen Mbali, who has built a business writing about the scandals of the rich and famous.

I completed the draft of the novel in 2019 but put it on the backburner while I promoted my non-fiction title and went on



The cover of Janine’s book *When the Filter Fades*.

to complete an MBA. Once I graduated, my publisher approached me to finalise the manuscript. Writing is a solitary process, and it’s strange that something I’ve completely conjured in my brain is now going to be out there in the world to be consumed.

## JANINE’S JOURNEY

After graduating from Stellenbosch in 2005, I spent 10 years as a journalist and editor, working for Media24 and (then) Avusa titles such as *Fairlady*, *Elle* and *Seventeen*. I pivoted to digital communications, and have worked as a communications expert at corporations such as Coca-Cola and Cell C.



# Writing and visualising to tell powerful stories

Words can be boring. They need pictures and contrast, at the least. They need augmentation – and this is where I come in. As editorial director and designer for a design studio, I write, edit and design publications. But it took a while to get here.

Sadly, most companies keep the roles of writing and visualising separate. I've always wanted to do both, and after two jobs where I only did design, I found GAPdesign – a company that finally appreciated my background. Deidre Nortje, the owner of GAPdesign, had taught design at Crozier many moons ago, and understood where I'd come from.

At GAPdesign, we specialise in visual storytelling. We create infographics and publications to tell powerful stories for NGOs and universities. Recently, we won the [Publication of the Year](#) award at the SAPF awards with the [UCT Careers Guide](#). Every year, we conceptualise, manage, write and design this publication for the Careers Service office at UCT.

We were blown away by the award and pleased that our client, UCT Careers Service, got the recognition they deserve. Out of all South African universities, UCT has the best graduate employment rate, and this publication is one of the reasons why they stay at the top of the list. It offers crucial information and advice to students in planning and developing their careers. In addition to exclusive job opportunities, it includes pages upon pages of content empowering readers with career advice,



Karin van Laeren (right) with Deidre Nortje, owner and creative director at GAPdesign, holding their trophies.

the latest news from various industries and articles written by established professionals.

As the content editor for the *Guide*, I conceptualise the theme every year along with a content plan. Then, I identify writers and liaise with them (for the 2022 guide, I briefed/interviewed more than 40 external contributors). Once all the contributions are in, my job is to fill in the gaps and rewrite and edit the articles as needed. When the words are finalised, we jump on design.

My job is far from traditional, and that suits me. I will forever be grateful to Crozier for allowing me to spend the majority of my internship at *WegSleep* doing design (don't tell anyone!) – it really set me up for where I am today.

By the time that this is published, we will be hard at work on the next *Careers Guide*. If you need any help with your career, or just want to learn a bit about how AI is being used in various industries, keep an eye out for it.



The official photo of the honours class of 2016 where Karin can be found in the second row.

# TV producing is an unpredictable rollercoaster

I have had a wide-ranging career which included radio, print, TV news and now producing, reporting on politics, crime, human interest and whatever else comes up in between, including some long form documentaries. I have ended up living in Stellenbosch where I was born and I work from home as a freelance producer and journalist.

At the moment I am working for Carte Blanche and doing features for CNN's Inside Africa. Earlier this year, I was lucky to produce a piece on Cape Town with the channel's iconic broadcaster, Richard Quest. He flew in for a week, but I worked on the production for almost a month, to ensure that it was perfectly set up for him. He is a stickler for detail, so everything had to run perfectly smoothly, and produced to the minute.

In the middle of filming the insert, we were involved in a live broadcast of his Business Show from the rooftop of The Taj hotel in Cape Town at 10 pm at night. This was a live show, all put together with cables and phones and laptops in a virtual studio. It was extraordinarily impressive to watch how he and a very small team of four, including me as a "handlanger", created a set and broadcast his finance programme after a full day of shooting on his travel show.

We worked hard to put together a programme for him which would show iconic Cape Town as it is, not necessarily as it is marketed. So the important things were panoramas, perspectives and experiences, which included kelp diving and e-biking in the vineyards. The best perspectives came from Cape Town Chef Karen Dudley who spoke as she always does with great enthusiasm about food and what it means to Capetonians beyond taste and texture.

With each interaction, Richard mined the interviewees for little nuggets about their life and personalities, and created a story which had texture and emotion, giving a viewer a real sense of the kind of Cape Town to be engaged with if on holiday. I was privileged to watch an international professional at work.

Since then I have been busy with other stories. I have decided to specialise in



Filming Cape Town Chef Karen Dudley engaging with Richard Quest, visitor to the Bo-Kaap.

public transport because I feel it is a critical component of a functioning democracy. So I have followed the taxi strikes in Cape Town for Carte Blanche. The seeds of this conflict go back before the latest conflict in the second part of this year, and I expect there will be more violent bust-ups in months to come, with commuters stuck in the middle, and people and livelihoods at risk.

The CNN Inside Africa piece I have worked on has been much lighter - it was about Calligraphy in Cape Town. A small creative collective has connected through ink and script, stone and sand, and explored the joy of calligraphy through the different cultures that exist within the embrace of Cape Town. I interviewed Arabic calligraphers, cross over Calligraphers, and beach and stone scribes. Each individual was from a different cultural tradition, but they all recognised the beauty of unique handwriting. It was a different type of celebration of our diversity and I loved making that programme.

When I work for CNN's Inside Africa I have more freedom to define the story as I wish.



Marion Edmunds

When I work with Carte Blanche, I work with a presenter who adds their own definition to the story, and the brief is focused for ten minutes of content. The executive editorial team of Carte Blanche is extremely talented and dedicated, and they watch over every detail of our work to make sure it is the best it can be. Producing is an emotional rollercoaster - I am never relaxed until it's done, because there is so much unpredictability in each story.

# We remember Ainsley Moos

The year 2023 started on a very sad and tragic note for the Department of Journalism after the passing of alumnus Ainsley Moos (honours class of 2001). At the time of his death on 31 January, Ainsley was the chairperson of the Stellenbosch University Council and Executive: Corporate and Stakeholder Relations at African Rainbow Capital.

Former classmates from around the world reacted with shock and sadness at the "devastating" news of their "dear friend". Fellow journalism graduate Liesl Pretorius remembered Ainsley's focus and determination during their honours year. She said that when he became editor of *Volksblad*, she thought "it couldn't have happened to a nicer, more capable guy", adding that this was true for his many career successes since.

According to another classmate, Maryke Visagie, Ainsley was "a true gentleman and a born leader whose ego never got in the way". She added that she will always remember him "as someone who took every opportunity to learn, who cared deeply about classmates and friends and who never lost his sense of humour, even when times were tough". Marenet Jordaan, also a classmate, recalled Ainsley's zest for life and love for his son.

Ronel Bester, another graduate from the journalism class of 2001, added: "Ainsley was fiercely interested in and forever curious about the world, and particularly



Ainsley took a selfie at the first in-person post-Covid Senate meeting (in 2022), with Prof Thuli Madonsela and Lizette Rabe.

passionate about our human interconnectedness. I will never forget his faith in people and his deep commitment to the potential we could harness as caring individuals and communities.

"He lovingly and proudly cherished his family and friends – may we honour him with our memories of his values, warmth, hope and humour."

Ally Powell, who was the class representative during their honours year, said she remembers Ainsley as "incredibly hardwork-

ing and dedicated to every task he tackled". According to her, he was "kind, fair and always willing to help his fellow classmates" and that she will miss "his steadfastness, his warmth and his compassion". During his impressive career Ainsley was editor at *Volksblad*, *Landbouweekblad* and *Sake24*, and later head of group communication at Sanlam.

More memories about Ainsley are shared on the department's webpage:

<https://journalism.sun.ac.za>

## LE ROUX SCHOEMAN SHARES SOME MEMORIES ABOUT HIS CLASSMATE AND FRIEND:

It was 2001, at the start of the academic year at Stellenbosch University's Journalism Department. We both hoped we could write and we both knew we couldn't type. So Ainsley and I hunkered down in front of the keyboards of Crozier Street and surrendered to Mev Amoraal's Monday morning computer literacy instructions, listening to the noise of fellow students breaking the sound barrier at 30, 40, 50 (!) words per minute. We sat there, like cattle in the rain, and took it. Me and Moos. Now he is gone,

and I sit here pawing at literature to offer any lines of consolation to those engulfed by grief. Something from De Gruchy's "Led into Mystery"? Some lines from Auden ("Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone ...")? Once again Koos du Plessis will have to do: "Hartseer is stom."

Ná hy joernalistiek studeer het, het Ainsley se loopbaan iets van sy tik-styl reflekteer. Stadige, versigtige begin en dan 'n verbete, opbouende ritme wat opwaarts streef en waarmee min kan byhou. Joernalis, hier, toe redakteur van daardie koerant, redakteur van hierdie tydskrif, voorsitter van hierdie Raad, kollega van Patrice Motsepe in Sandton, side-hustle-boer op 'n stukkie

grond buite Oudtshoorn, pa van seuntjie, bruidegom onderweg na kansel.

Once, out on a story project in rural Limpopo, with Ainsley behind the wheel, I remember us hitting a rogue speed hump with such force that the windscreen cracked. He knew where he was going and often I got the feeling that we were all running late.

And – around the much-watched clock – Ainsley was being the unique person that he was: a ready smile and a ready seriousness. He was a serious listener, serious talker, serious reader and serious leader.

# 'n Blik op die geskiedenis: Staatjie uit die klas van 1989

Die hele 1989-klas het sowaar uitgesien na die "common"-aand in Augustus 1989, want die interne kreatiwiteit het soos 'n vuurpyl op ons klas afgepeil. Die klere het geskrou van afskuwelikheid, en geen kledingstuk het by niks gepas nie. 'n Belangrike element van dié aand was om uit die boks te dink en dit voor te dra op die verhoog. Humor is 'n kardinale eienskap van die mens en ek het my daardie aand in 'n koma ingelag! Weg was die lesing, pen en papier. Weg was die student-wees gevoel. Dis goed om in só 'n manier uiting te gee aan jou kreatiewe denkvermoë en om vir die mens te sê dat die lewe 'n lied is. – Werner Swart

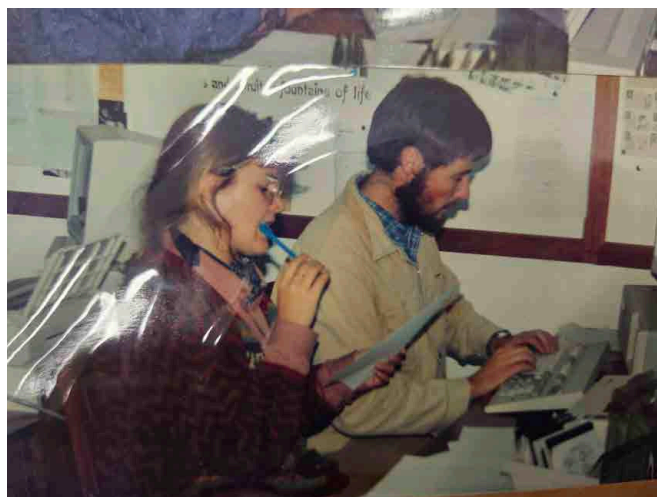
'n Paar oomblikke uit die lewe van die honneursklas van 1989 – soos onthou en vasgevang deur Werner Swart.



Van die klaslede voor die "ou" departementele bord.



Isolde Lombard en Susan Pretorius



Pearlle Joubert en Hans-Peter Bakker



Wyle Winie Rousseau, destydse departementele sekretaresse.



Jen Crocker en Hilde Roos



Wyle Prof. Johannes Grosskopf, destydse hoof van die departement.



# The class of 2023 in action

Being a journalism honours student at 26 Crozier Street is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. This year was no exception for the 21 students admitted to the BA Honours Journalism programme. You work hard, yes, but you are granted opportunities that many other students would love to have. Here are a few highlights from the activities of the 2023 honours class.



The class of 2023 ready to go on to tour of the broader Stellenbosch community after their first day of class. This is an eye-opening experience for all – even the students who had been studying at Stellenbosch University as undergraduates.



On a trip to the !Kwa ttu San Heritage Centre near Yzerfontein in June, students had the opportunity to drink a variety of freshly brewed indigenous teas.



The students viewing an archaeological dig site at the West Coast Fossil Park close to Langebaan.



In the iconic Stadsaal Caves in the Cederberg, where students could also learn about rock art and the work of the Cape Leopard Trust.



Forget about the official class photo in the department's gallery. This is probably how the class of 2023 will remember each other best.



This year the students' cultural tour had to be split in two – because the first planned trip to the Cederberg had to be postponed due to flooding of roads. Here they are on the farm Kleinvlei in the Cederberg where the Marais family farms with everything from rooibos to naartjies.



After classes had ended – and before the deadlines and submission of the dreaded in-depth project – students could dress up and celebrate at their year-end function held at La Pineta outside Stellenbosch.



From left to right: Noxolo Mbazini, Dr Meli Ncube, Dr Jana Berg, Fumani Jwara and Prof Mehita Iqani.

# News snippets from our staff

## **NOXOLO MBAZINI**

### **Administrative officer**

This year marked the beginning of a delightful journey for me at the department, where despite joining the Department of Journalism in September, I immediately felt a warm welcome. My role involves diverse responsibilities, from managing parking bookings at our journalism department to handling flights, admission-related administration, and financial payments to vendors. The scope of my tasks has provided a rich learning experience, allowing me to acquire a multitude of skills in a remarkably short time.

Navigating the intricacies of SUNfin was initially a challenge, but as time progressed, it transformed into a source of satisfaction. The collaborative and supportive environment of my workplace has been instrumental in making this learning curve enjoyable. Each day, I find myself embracing new challenges, expanding my knowledge, and contributing to the smooth functioning of the department.

As the year draws to a close, I reflect on the professional growth and the genuine camaraderie that has made this experience not just a job but a pleasurable journey in a welcoming and positive work environment.

## **DR MELI M. NCUBE**

### **1st year postdoctoral research fellow**

This past year has been nothing short of remarkable, and I am genuinely grateful for the opportunities and the warm, tight-knit community I've found here. From the very beginning, I was struck by the intimacy and personal attention that our small department offers.

Working alongside esteemed Prof Herman Wasserman and fellow researchers has not only expanded my knowledge but has also deepened my passion for my field of study. In my role as a postdoctoral fellow, my research delves into the multifaceted realm of disinformation, exploring its profound effects on journalism and the erosion of trust in media. This work is especially focused on uncovering innovative strategies within investigative journalism that can effectively combat disinformation in diverse African contexts.

Furthermore, I am also a member of a multinational team dedicated to researching the causes of and responses to information disorder in the Global South. Our primary objectives include uncovering the underlying factors of information disorders, formulating effective response strategies, and rigorously evaluating their efficacy. You can find more information about this project at <https://idrc.sun.ac.za/>.

Another notable aspect of my postdoctoral experience has been the invaluable degree of flexibility and independence granted in my work. I am highly motivated to continually enhance my skills and strive for even greater achievements in the years to come.

## **DR JANA BERG**

### **Visiting researcher**

I am a visiting researcher from the German Center for Higher Education Research and Science Studies. My research is into NGO-science collaborations around climate science communication in Germany and South Africa. The stay at the South African Chair of Science Communication enables me to conduct field research in South Africa and to gather contextual knowledge on many different levels, as well as to gain insights into the ongoing research projects and discussions at the institute. I am very grateful for the warm welcome and the chance to learn, connect and reflect.

## **FUMANI JWARA**

### **Communications Officer: SA Research Chair in Science Communication | Social Media Coordinator: Department of Journalism**

As someone who is intrigued by the connections between seemingly unrelated fields, I am truly grateful to be a part of a research Chair and Department that explores the unknown to push the boundaries of both research and practice. Since the SARCHI Science Communication (SciCom) joined Stellenbosch Journalism in early 2023, it has been an enriching experience. The transition to a new department is often filled with uncertainty, not only about team dynamics but also in

terms of how colleagues will perceive and appreciate the contributions that newcomers bring in expertise and research. Fortunately, the Department has embraced and supported SciCom's work, particularly in advancing SciCom's fundamental mission of leveraging science communication for societal change. The interdisciplinary recognition is a testament to our commitment to communicating science in ways that are both easily understood and accessible, something which the field of journalism and the Department seeks to strive for on any topic that informs society. Looking forward, I am eager to participate in more engaging events, forge new connections, and explore fresh avenues for collaboration. A heartfelt thank you to the Department for making us feel at home!

## **PROF MEHITA IQANI**

### **SA Research Chair in Science Communication**

After almost 11 years at the Media Studies department at Wits, I arrived at Stellenbosch in January 2022 to take up the SARCHI Science Communication. This was a huge life and career change for me, and I'm so glad to have found a supportive and kind academic home in the Journalism department, since January 2023. It's a really good fit, because the department housed Centre for Science Communication for many years before my arrival, and the move of the Chair into the department offers an opportunity to build on that, and also explore more cross-pollinations. Journalistic skills and expertise are key to understanding communication in theory and practice. I'd argue that "all science is communication", so I can't think of a better setting to work on issues-driven empirical projects, and creative communications action research. In the years ahead I look forward to working on many research events and publications, meeting new students and creating new collaborations at 26 Crozier Street. I'm so pleased to be surrounded by colleagues and students who are as passionate as I about journalism, media and communications research and pedagogy. Thank you to the whole department for welcoming us!

# SMF now multiplatform media brand

This year saw the rebranding of the student-run community news publication, launched in 2017 as MatieMedia (under the mentorship of then Rykie Fellow, Andre Gouws).

Now known as SMF News, this publication showcases the work of our honours students as they learn to navigate the world of journalism. This rebrand was partially inspired by the need to have one central

brand that the students can use to publish on multiple platforms.

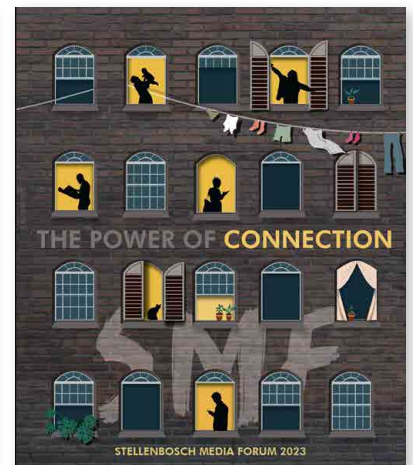
As SMF News, the digital news publication has the tagline: "Your voice, your news." Students have this year published stories ranging from profiles and hard news to a series of reviews on productions presented at the annual US Woordfees.

For the SMF Newspaper, published in May on World Press Freedom Day, students

highlighted the value of community journalism. SMF, the magazine, published in October, focused on the "Power of Connection".

We congratulate Anneli Groenewald, the lecturer who led the students through the writing, editing and design of SMF as a multiplatform brand in 2023.

Visit [www.smfnews.org](http://www.smfnews.org) to read our students' work.



**Left:** An example of how the homepage of SMFNews appears to its readers. **Middle:** The cover of this year's SMF Newspaper, under the editorship of Kara van der Merwe. **Right:** The cover of this year's SMF Magazine, under the editorship of Thameenah Daniels.

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

When you walk up the ramp to our honours students' newsroom, you either hear a flurry of voices and laughter or (only) the clattering of keyboards. It depends on the time of year and whether these aspiring mediaworkers are frantically rushing towards a deadline.

Sometimes people forget that the same goes for staff members. We do not stop working when the classes end. In fact, these so-called holiday periods are arguably some of the busiest times on the yearly calendar. Not only do we have to grade assignments, but we must also fine-tune our planning for the year to come. Academic administration is indeed never-ending. Not to mention the pressure of having to "publish or perish".

Working on our alumni newsletter was therefore somewhat of a respite from the day-to-day challenges of being an academic. How wonderful it is to read about the fascinating and diverse lives people lead after

leaving our department. This year we were thrilled to get more than thirty first-person reflections from former students – all of them inspiring in their own way. We also included some snippets from current staff and students.

We beg your indulgence if there are a few typing errors. We know our alumni all have keen eyes. *Janus* is a labour of love with the aim of celebrating the rich heritage of our department. If you pick up a serious mistake, please send an email to [marenet@sun.ac.za](mailto:marenet@sun.ac.za).

We would love to feature more stories from our alumni in future editions of *Janus*. Send your stories, photos, or memories from your time at the department to [journalism@sun.ac.za](mailto:journalism@sun.ac.za) – any time of the year.

May you all enjoy a wonderful holiday season – filled with books, laughter, and lots of time away from work.

- Marenet



Dr Marenet Jordaan (far right) with departmental administrator, Mrs Elizabeth Newman (left) and Journalism Practice lecturer, Anneli Groenewald, at the Stadsaal Caves in the Cederberg.