



ENGLISH ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2019

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EASA commemorative lecture in honour of Margaret Raftery	

This year's English Academy Commemorative Lecture honoured the life and legacy of Professor Margaret Raftery, who passed away at the end of 2017 after a protracted battle with cancer. The event took place on 16 May 2019 in the Equitas Auditorium on the Bloemfontein Campus of the University of the Free State, where Margaret had taught for more than three decades.

Proceedings were opened by the Head of English, Professor Helene Strauss, who paid tribute to her former colleague's formidable academic career and personality. In a succinct but moving speech, Professor Strauss highlighted not only Margaret's stature as an internationally respected medievalist, but also her unflagging commitment to her students and colleagues. The lecture was delivered by Dr Idette

Noomé (University of Pretoria). Titled “Embodying Temptation: The Representation of Choice in Medieval and Early Modern Drama”, it offered an incisive yet accessible account of the ways in which abstract moral concepts were visibly and viscerally rendered on 15th and 16th century European stages. With deftness of touch, Dr Noomé showed the degree to which similar questions had preoccupied Professor Raftery’s work – from the writing of her Master’s dissertation right up to some of her most recent publications. Delivered to a mixed audience of close friends, family, members of faculty and other interested parties, the lecture was further enlivened by Dr Noomé’s discussion of contemporary performances of the plays in question, both abroad and in South Africa.

The event was drawn to a close with a word of thanks to those in attendance, to Professor Rosemary Gray, who deputised for the Academy’s President, Professor Mbongeni Malaba, for her kind assistance with the organisation, and to Dr Noomé for a lecture that honoured both the spirit and scholarship of Margaret Raftery. **Rick de Villiers**



Guest speaker Dr Idette Noomé and organiser Dr Rick de Villiers

AT LAST, A WINNER FOR THE SOL PLAATJE PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION!

The judges for the 2017 Sol Plaatje Prize for Translation had a hard time trudging through the varied submissions and deciding on the best translation deserving of the award. Their first challenge was the difficulty in getting eligible submissions. Submissions for the prize had been slow in coming in and not all of them met the criteria. The prize is expressly for a work translated from any of South Africa’s other languages into English. After months of intense labour, the panel of judges decided that the translation from Afrikaans into English, of *Flame in the Snow: The love letters of Andre Brink and Ingrid Jonker*, edited by Francis Galloway and published by Umuzi, was

most deserving of the award. The translation was done by Karin Schimke and Leon de Kock.

The award ceremony took place on Wednesday, 13 March 2019 at an English Department seminar at Stellenbosch University which was part of a collaborative project with Malmo, Uppsala, UKZN, UWC and Stellenbosch. Former Academy President and now Deputy President, Professor Rajendra Chetty presented the award to Karin Schimke and Leon de Kock. It was a reasonably big audience and the Department of English at Stellenbosch University generously sponsored the catering.

CITATION: 2017 SOL PLAATJE PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION

[This is a 2017 prize that was only finalised and presented in 2019.]

The 2017 Sol Plaatje Prize for Translation is awarded to Leon de Kock and Karin Schimke for their translation from Afrikaans into English, of *Flame in the Snow: The love letters of Andre Brink and Ingrid Jonker*, edited by Francis Galloway and published by Umuzi. Of the many texts submitted by South African publishers for consideration, the translation of this epistolary novel, and the love letters, which were written half a century ago, was adjudged the best.

The adjudicating panel observed that De Kock and Schimke managed to translate over two hundred love letters and were able to capture the nuances and expressions of adoration in this gripping love affair. This was done in a manner that was not lost in its English translation, transporting the reader into the

gripping drama of a heated love affair but also into the political and social milieu of 1960s South Africa. This was most difficult due to the lyrical quality and quasi-religiosity of the correspondences in Afrikaans which are challenging to render. The translators negotiated the complexities of translating these linguistic nuances with masterful dexterity, making the English translation of this collection a pleasure to read and hereby enriching the canon of English works available for study in South Africa and promoting cultural exchange.

Leon de Kock is a writer, translator and critic who has been active in South African literature since the 1970s. He has won several awards, including

the South African Translators' Institute inaugural prize for outstanding translation for his rendition of Marlene van Niekerk's novel *Triomf*. Karin Schimke is a journalist, poet, editor, writing coach and translator. Her poetry has been published in South Africa, Germany and England and has been translated into isiXhosa, German, Dutch and Afrikaans. She was awarded the Ingrid Jonker Prize for Poetry in 2014 for her debut collection entitled *Bare and Breaking*.

The adjudication panel was convened by Dr Candice Livingston, senior lecturer in English studies at CPUT and comprised Dr Amanda Swart, a poet and senior lecturer in Afrikaans, with Ms Betsie Klop- per, who has also taught Afrikaans at tertiary level and who is involved in the creation, translation and publication of English and Afrikaans works.



ACCEPTANCE SPEECH: KARIN SCHIMKE

In the same year Leon and I were translating *Flame in the Snow*, I interviewed Marion Boers of the S A Translators' Institute. She told me that whenever the institute called for entries for its prizes for outstanding translation and dictionaries, most of the submissions for adult literature were still translations between English and Afrikaans. Four years on, it seems to me that things might be changing.

Oxford last year published eight texts translated into English: two isiXhosa novels, two isiZulu novels, one Sepedi novel, one Sesotho novel, one Sesotho play and an anthology of poetry translated from various indigenous languages. The work was funded by the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences and was organised by academics from the University of the Western Cape. A major translation project is currently being funded by the Northern Cape Department of Sports, Art and Culture. Seven novels and one work of non-fiction are being translated from English into Setswana this year, and if funding continues, ten non-fiction works—biography, memoir and poetry—will be translated next year (see yiba.co.za).

Over on social media, I've watched not a few debates in which people pit themselves against translation. The main argument is that people should learn to speak more indigenous languages instead of having their ignorance pandered to. I have no truck with the argument that people should learn to at least understand, if not speak, more indigenous languages. But a world in which translation is stopped because they don't is not a world I would like to live in.

I did an interview with a transgender man who doesn't currently have access to the hormones he

needs to remain stable within the body he is transitioning to. He described the hormone he needs as “the key to **translating** my body so that other people can **read** it the way it is for me. The hormone is what makes me more **legible** to other people”. He explained that gender dysphoria—the sense that how you are on the inside does not correspond with how you are perceived in the world—is difficult for people who have never felt a disconnect between who they feel they are, and what others believe them to be. The hormones are needed for him to fully inhabit his humanity in the eyes of the world. They are, for him, a symbol—but also a means—of communication. The way he expressed himself struck me as a poignant commentary on the plight of those people in society who are daily mired in a sludge of stupidity to have something as obvious as their humanity recognised in order to access rights others are never required to question. I was moved by his use of the words “translate” and “legible”, and how he needs hormones in order to communicate the essence of himself to those parts of the world that care to “read” him properly.



Karin Schimke, Leon de Kock, Rajendra Chetty and Candice Livingston

Translation is the rendering of meaning from one language into another. Translation is conversion. It is movement. A translator is able to change a reader's understanding of the world, or, at the very least, supplement it. In the process of presenting experiences of one language group into another, the essential literary by-product of imagination is switched on, and — as so much research over the years has shown — imagination is the route to empathy, and empathy the route to social change. Translation is a political act.

The English-reading world is currently hungry for literary translation, for voices whose primary life experience is not in English. Many such works are receiving major prizes, and here the most obvious examples that spring to mind are *The Vegetarian* by Han Kang, translated from Korean, and *Flights* by Olga Tokarczuk, translated from Polish, both of which won Booker Prizes. There is a move away from language parochialism, and I suspect it is linked to a shift in political sensibilities, which in turn are either the reason for or the outcome of more and more marginalised voices being welcomed into publishing.

Bheki Ntuli, who has worked on a great number of translation projects into isiZulu, including Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*, Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet* and Lewis Carol's *Alice in Wonderland*, told me he wished for more world classics or

works of exceptional merit to be translated because this cross-pollination served both the source and the target literatures, but also allowed readers to see the world through the cultures and practices of speakers of languages different from their own.

To extend the metaphor begun by the transgender man I interviewed, one might think of translation as the literary hormone that allows legibility and understanding. Prizes like these highlight the noblest ambition of translation: to humanise. I would like to thank the English Academy of Southern Africa most sincerely for awarding me and Leon this prize, and I would like to acknowledge the work of the editor of the English text, Lynda Gilfillan, and the project editor Francis Galloway, without whose knowledge and experience, generously shared, our final product would not have been the jewel it turned out to be.

I would like to thank publishers like Penguin Random House, and in this case particularly the editor Fourie Botha, who take on literary translations. I am confident that in the next few years some of the translators of the works I mentioned will be honoured for the work they are doing, because there are publishers willing to broaden their lists and embrace translations.

I am deeply grateful for the Sol Plaatje Translation Award, which is named for the energetic polyglot we might all strive to be one day.

Karin Schimke

TWO GOLD MEDALS AWARDED IN 2019

The Academy's Executive Committee received two nominations for its Gold Medal award and members felt that both nominees were equally deserving candidates of this prestigious award. The two Gold Medalists are Professor Chris Mann and Professor Rajendra Chetty.

The ceremony to award Professor Chris Zithulele Mann the English Academy of Southern Africa Gold Medal for Distinguished Service rendered in the promotion of English Studies took place on 14 March 2019 in the magnificent setting of the National English Literary Museum in Grahamstown. The English Academy was delighted by the selection of NELM as the venue for the award ceremony, as NELM is an institutional member of the Academy. The ceremony was attended by Professor Mann's friends and colleagues from the Institute for the Study of English in Africa, as well as members of the English Department at Rhodes University.

Professor Mbongeni Malaba presented the medal on behalf of the Academy and Professor Mann's wife, Professor Julia Skeen, arranged a slide show featuring some of her husband's work and the paintings she produced for their joint publication, *Lifelines*. Many of his other works were on display.

Professor Malaba thanked the Director of NELM, Ms Beverley Rycroft, for the gracious hospitality NELM provided, as well as Professor Sam Naidu for the assistance she rendered in preparing for the awards. He also thanked Professor Rosemary Gray for coordinating the arrangements.

The Gold Medal award to Professor Chetty took place on 4 May 2019 at Northwards in Johannesburg on the occasion of the presentation of the English Academy Percy Baneshik Lecture by Dr Sope Maithufi. Professor Chetty received the Gold Medal for his distinguished service to English over many years. Professor Malaba read the citation compiled by Professor Rosemary Gray and seconded by Dr Naomi Nkealah, after which he presented the medal to Professor Chetty.

In his acceptance speech, Professor Chetty humbly acknowledged the honour accorded him by the Academy, noting that his service to the Academy was done with great pleasure. He spoke of the importance of writing and its enduring nature. He ended his speech on a hilarious note, as is typical of him, by stating: "I have never received gold before, so I will take my gold and run." It was quite heartwarming for him to have his son, daughter-in-law, granddaughter and oth-

er family members present at this special occasion, together with EASA's patron, Pitika Ntuli.



Laurence Wright, Mbongeni Malaba, Chris Mann and Julia Skeen



Rajendra Chetty and Mbongeni Malaba

CITATION: GOLD MEDAL AWARD TO CHRIS MANN

Chris Mann is well known for the sustained quality of his poetic output over many years. His literary CV is extensive, and there is little need for me to rehearse it here in detail. However, some high points should be noted.

He has some 19 book-length poetry publications to his credit, many of them with mainstream publishers (i.e. not self-published), as well as 16 poetry productions, comprising plays in verse or live multimedia poetry productions.

His educational achievements include an MA in African Oral Literature from SOAS (London), an MA in English Language and Literature from Oxford, a BA in English and Philosophy from Wits, a qualification in financial management, also from Wits, and two courses in isiZulu from Unisa. His languages are, in descending order of proficiency, English, isiZulu, Afrikaans and Italian. All these contribute to his work.

Following his formal education, Chris spent the first fifteen years of his working life mainly as Operations Director of the Valley Trust in the Valley of a Thousand Hills, putting together projects in low-cost water-supply and sanitation, small-scale agriculture, pipeline construction and the development of secondary roads – training the populace to undertake this work themselves. The enterprise provided seasonal work for over 1000 people and was one of the inspirations behind today's national Public Works Programme. The combination of this work and his socially-energised poetic output, together with his role as singer-songwriter for the culture-crossing band Zabalaza (which performed in English and Zulu, reaching the finals of the SABC "Follow-that-

Star" programme) culminated in his being awarded an Honorary DLitt by the University of Durban-Westville, now part of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, at a remarkably young age.

His accolades and distinctions are too numerous to recapitulate in full. He won the Newdigate Prize for Poetry while a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, standing in a long line of distinguished poets and authors including, in the nineteenth century, John Ruskin, Matthew Arnold and Oscar Wilde, and in the twentieth, Jon Stallworthy, James Fenton and Andrew Motion. He came fourth in the 2010 election for the Oxford Professor of Poetry, a five-year appointment jealously competed for by poets from the international English-speaking world. He has won the Olive Schreiner Prize for South African Poetry in English, the Academy's Thomas Pringle Award for Poetry, the Eastern Cape Premier's Award for Literature, the South African Performing Arts Councils' Playwright Award, and a National Arts Festival Standard Bank Ovation Award for Drama, and several other awards.

Certain performances deserve separate mention. Imagine Chris standing atop a three-tier structure in the middle of King's Park Stadium in Durban reciting his poem "Till Love is Lord of the Land" to an audience of 200 000 as part of the celebrations to welcome Madiba to Durban after his release from prison. Or *Lifelines*, an eco-themed show (and book) about encounters with animals, which has been performed more than 80 times in South Africa and abroad, the performance sometimes featuring Janet Suzman. Or *Seeing the Cosmos in a Grain of Sand*, which was Chris's inaugural lecture as Professor of Poetry at Rhodes University. The lecture-in-verse explores the standard theory of cosmogenesis in relation to art and human consciousness, and has been

presented to audiences of scientists, as well as non-scientists in South Africa and abroad. His poetic range is impressive.

He is in demand internationally as a keynote speaker and guest writer, appearing and performing on several occasions at conferences and symposia in Singapore, the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, and throughout South Africa.

However, some points deserve stressing in relation to the Gold Medal. Chris Mann has always believed in poetry as both a private and a public good. This has led him to support initiatives which encourage the wide public availability of poetry, his own and others. Initiatives such as *Wordfest*, the literary component of the National Arts Festival; or *Word-beacons*, the provincial distribution of illuminated sculptural light-boxes as part of the Eastern Cape Wordfest, placing poetry at significant public venues in the official provincial languages; taking multi-modal performances of poetry, image and song to schools and universities around the country, over many years – these are sustained initiatives unmatched by any other South African poet. Each has been successful, though not to the extent that Chris Mann would have wanted.

Of crucial importance is Chris's willingness to take poetry into school halls and classrooms. His work is regularly prescribed at secondary and tertiary levels. How inspiring, then, for learners to be able to hear the poet in person read his poetry, guitar in hand, often with multimedia accompaniment created and delivered by his wife, the artist Julia Skeen, who has been a treasured partner and collaborator throughout his career. Poetry becomes a real presence, a remembered voice, an experience, and not a

text-bound intellectual abstraction.

So despite his Zulu name, Zithulele (the quiet one, the reticent one), Chris Mann has removed himself determinedly from the selfish, self-preoccupied Romantic stereotype of the poet, wrapped in dreams and unable to function effectively in the public arena, through his constant, practical concern for the spiritual and cultural welfare of others as seen in his track record in social welfare, poverty alleviation and development projects over many years; but more importantly, for our purposes, in his effort to nurture appreciation for language in general, and for the English language in particular, helping to forge its unique place in the multilingual linguistic ecology of South Africa.

I have no hesitation in proposing Chris Mann as a worthy recipient of the English Academy's Gold Medal for services to English.

Laurence Wright



Mbongeni Malaba and Chris Mann

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH: CHRIS MANN

It gives me great pleasure to thank the English Academy of Southern Africa for this generous award. I'm also delighted to acknowledge the creative, open-ended vision of the Academy which affirms the English language not as an ethno-nationalist bunker but a global interlocutor for use by all.

My vocation is to write books of poems and implement public benefit projects that have their genesis in poetic vision. I wish I could thank by name the many colleagues who have assisted me over the years. Shakespeare reminds us that our desires might be boundless but our acts are slaves to limit. Let me unfairly refer to just a few:

My high school English teacher, John Gardener, was an inspiration. Let me demonstrate how he used a poetic metaphor to alert my adolescent thought to realms beyond a Cape Town suburb.

"The English Teacher"

I'd have been horsing around in the back row
with Talbot, Robbie Le Roux and Snitcher,
an egg-mayonnaise sandwich on my desk,
when Mr Fogarty strode in, chalk in hand.

Tall, gangly. Grey suit, white shirt and tie.
That quizzical, admonitory look on his face.
The cough, repeated. To settle the theatre,
before the curtain went up. The pause.

And then – "Boys, what do you make of this?"
He spun on his heel, strode up to the board,
and hand held high, scribbled six words.
A silence. A murmur. Of perplexity, mostly.

And then the grumbles, the groans of revolt

he liked to get going at the start of a lesson.
Robbie, I guess, would have started swatting
the Chemistry notes tucked into his Hamlet,

And Mulligan, the *vox populi* of the class,
waving an arm from his desk in the front,
old Mullikins would have stood up and said,
“Please sir, what’s this got to do with exams?”

But that’s as may be, that’s all quite gone,
along with the Physics, the History dates,
the hours spent drowsing at deep fine-leg
and messing around on bikes after school.

What’s left is a kind of faded hologram,
archived, I imagine, yet alive in my brain,
where Mr Fogarty, that look on his face,
pitches up in the classroom, just as before,

and gawping at his words on the board,
a half-eaten sandwich still on my lap,
I sense a curtain opening in my mind
as he chalks just this on the blackboard:

Over the hills and far away.

I’d also like to acknowledge a few of the other literary colleagues who’ve helped me sustain that numinous sense of horizons present but not yet reached. I thank in particular the late Guy Butler, Malvern Van Wyk Smith, Lucy Newlyn, Molly Brown, Lynette Paterson, Rosemary Gray and Laurence Wright.

Most of my adult life has been spent in the hinterlands, in daily working contact with people who speak English, isiXhosa and isiZulu. The social anthropologist Monica Wilson, brought up on a mission, sought to understand and describe how rural people saw themselves within their own language. She opened another curtain in my understanding.

“Hogsback Oracle”

[in memoriam Monica Wilson]

Who can discern their clan,
its shibboleths and ghosts,
until they encounter another?

Hers was a pastoral people.
Living with them in youth
she looked, asked and wrote.

How did they value land?

Their children? Each other?
What had conquest done?

Trim, fastidious and spry
she had a scholar’s gravitas,
the spirited gaze of a nun.

Her Rome was Cambridge.
Widowed long she made
the Hogsback her Zion.

Her findings were her life:
the small-scale to flourish
needs to unfold in the large.

The next person I’d like to thank is a visual artist. For over thirty years my work has benefitted from the advice, ideas and imagery contributed by Julia Skeen, to whom I have the good fortune of being married.

Our first collaboration was an exhibition of painting-poems entitled *The Horn of Plenty*. Forty odd poems about fruits, vegetables and cereals were embedded in images and then made into a book. A similar series, describing forty odd encounters with animals from aardvark to zebra, were made into a book entitled *Lifelines*. Julia extended this Blakean tradition into the digital domain. For performances, the poems are projected onto a large-scale screen. For the internet, use is made of videos and backing sound. I would like to suggest that this award is a recognition of her creativity as well.

“Evensong in Grahamstown Cathedral”

I saw across the rows of pews last night
a woman’s face as lined and beautiful
as yours will be when we’re as grey and old.

I turned to look at yours. Below the eyes
I saw the first faint signs of time’s caress
and felt a tender ache I’d never known.

Was this love maturing? Or ruing time?
Could I who loved appearances too much
now grow to love the whole being of you?

In red and white, the choir lined the steps.
Whiskered or bald, fresh or lined and worn

their faces placed us in a Breughel crowd.

In slow, solemn plainchant they sang a psalm.
Line by line, the music became their breath,
their breath a music older than their bones.

I turned to you, but you were lost in time.
Strange new feelings struggled open in me.
Burstings. Meltings. A letting go. A peace.

Let me hear more of such music, I prayed,
for I would love you as we age and find
your face the more beautiful for being old.

My father was a Springbok cricketer. He died when I was four, from cancer that struck during a tour of England. I blame the war. He was captured at Tobruk, escaped from a prisoner-of-war camp and spent two years hiding in the countryside near Venice, endlessly smoking old newspapers and mealie leaves.

My family in Port Elizabeth was devastated. I was sent to live with my grandparents in Durban. Since they were working people, I was on my own during the day. I retain a memory of a companion, a man with a kindly voice and blue overalls who worked in the garden. His is a vague but consoling presence to this day. The cross-culture work of Monica Wilson taught me to interpret him as a shade, and that my inner life embodied a community of other people.

“The Parliament of the Shades”

We do not see deeply unless with love,
And deepest and clearest among our insights
Are those which steeped in love’s energy
Accumulate clarity in contemplative calm.

Such brooding serenity allows the self
To convene the shades alive in the soul,
To quieten the bombastic, hearten the shy
And the bid the elderly and neglected speak.

In turn, these partners and companions,
Mentors, opponents, and even enemies
Converse with each other and the self,
Which listens, responds, and negotiates.

This reconciliation, of shades and self,
Flows on and separates, and flows again
In sleep and dream, as well as in thought,
With balance and not perfection the goal.

Put simply, the shades are memories of people who influence our inner life. The shades through the poetry of Homer, Virgil and Dante, South African praise-poetry, the Christian concept of “the communion of the saints” and the oeuvre of Thomas Hardy. Jesus is a shade to me, as is Mandela, and also a talkative and diverse host of relatives and friends, deceased and alive, including mentors such as Monica Wilson and Abel Ndlovu who during ten years in our cross-over band patiently taught me *ngoma* and *mbaqanga* music. To deny this diversity is to impose a kind of inner and spiritual apartheid.

In contrast to tweet-speak discourse, ethno-nationalist prejudice and ideologies that other and scapegoat people who are different, good literature for me uncovers and affirms the complexity and interdependence of people. I am honoured to accept this English Academy award as an affirmation of that holistic, inclusive vision of life.

Democracy will always be shallow
Until it’s ensconced within our souls.
We cannot make peace with each other
Until we make peace with our shades.

ENGLISH ACADEMY OLIVE SCHREINER PRIZE FOR DRAMA TO NEIL COPPEN

An exciting programme unfolded at Ike’s Bookshop at Greyville, Durban, on 22 May 2019. This was the English Academy 2017 Olive Schreiner Prize for Drama awarded to theatre celebrity Neil Coppen for his play *Tin Bucket Drum*. Thayalan Reddy was programme director for the event owing to Professor Malaba not being able to attend. Professor Owen Seda of the Department of Drama and Film Studies at Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria, representing the English Academy and the panel of judges, provided infor-

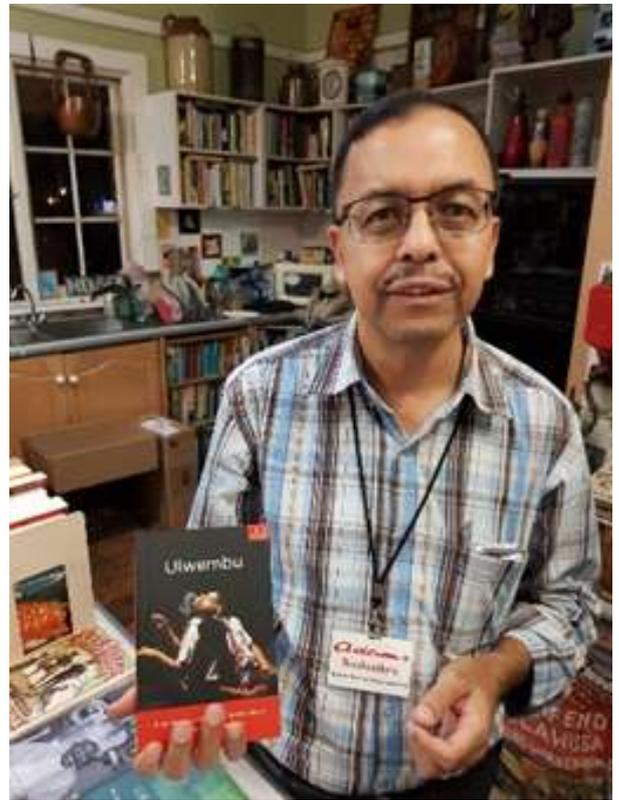
mation in respect of the criteria employed in the drama award and read the citation.

An engaging part of the proceedings was a dramatic performance by actress Mpume who gave an impressive rendition of an extract from *Tin Bucket Drum*. This certainly added lustre to the event. In his acceptance speech Neil Coppen gave insights into the socio-political realities in our country which inspired him to create the works which now enjoy internation-

al acclaim.

The event was characterised by an interesting buzz with many academics and luminaries in the arts arena present. These included the likes of Illa Thompson, Mary Johnstone, Eubulus Timothy (film director), Dr Graham Alston, Dr T S Pillay, Dr Jairam Reddy and Jayshree Parsuraman (actress/director). Thanks are due to Joanne Rushby of Ike's and Cedric Sissing for their assistance in a memorable event.

Thayalan Reddy



Event planner Cedric Sissing

Actress Mpume, award winner Neil Coppen, programme director Thayalan Reddy, and OS panel convener Owen Seda

CITATION: 2017 OLIVE SCHREINER PRIZE FOR DRAMA

In *Tin Bucket Drum*, Neil Coppen achieves the amazing feat of breaking new ground out of the ordinary by harnessing a fascinating combination of one-hander dramaturgy that is rooted in African storytelling theatre with modern forms of multimedia. Coppen uses this combination to address issues of hope and despair, as well as oppression and liberation, which so often apply to many post-colonial contexts going through some of the challenges that his home country of South Africa is currently grappling with, a quarter of a century after democracy.

In *Tin Bucket Drum*, the reader and the theatre-goer bear witness to a virtuoso one-woman performance in which the storyline and plot are interwoven using a rich tapestry of character transformations, and minimum properties in ways that resonate with Africa's richest traditions of storytelling theatre. Coppen's play is outstanding in its evocation of atmosphere. It uses an allegorical journey motif in which

the reader is taken through the earthly tribulations of the various characters to the joy and bliss of final emancipation, using only one actor in combination with elaborate techniques of modern forms of multimedia. Here then is total storytelling theatre brewed in a contemporary African pot at its best.

From exposition to inciting incident through to final resolution, Neil Coppen's play is shot through with a rich blend of dialogue, rhyme, prose and poetry in ways that make contemporary South African drama of English expression a joy to encounter.

Neil Coppen's *Tin Bucket Drum* will certainly remain etched in the annals of the best of contemporary South African drama for quite a good many years to come.

Judges: Professor Owen Seda (Convener, TUT), Dr Connie Rapoo (UBotswana), and Dr Samuel Ravengai (Wits)

GWEN KNOWLES-WILLIAMS BURSARY AWARD GOES TO RHODES IN 2019

Mr Bruce Bushula was awarded the 2019 Gwen Knowles-Williams Bursary to conduct research for his doctoral studies on promoting reading in rural and township schools. As an educator, he is mindful of the deficiencies in the reading capacity of many learners as well as teachers in environments that

lack libraries. He believes that intervention at this level is crucial if the standard of education in South Africa is to be uplifted. He has engaged a couple of donors who will supply books to the schools in

which he will conduct his research. He believes that, by promoting a reading culture and establishing libraries where there are none, learners will cultivate an interest in reading and using English, which will have a positive impact in their academic performance as they progress. He is pursuing his studies at The Institute for the Study of English in Africa (ISEA) at Rhodes University and it was wonderful that he was handed his certificate by Professor Laurence Wright who was the Director of

ISEA for many years, and, indeed, taught Bruce during his undergraduate studies. Professor Wright highlighted the fact that the bursary was established to promote the study of English in education, from a generous bequest by Professor Gwen Knowles-Williams, first president of the Academy. The bursary was presented to Mr Bushula in Grahamstown on 14 March 2019 on the occasion of the Gold Medal Award to Chris Mann.

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH: BRUCE BUSHULA

A very good afternoon to you, ladies and gentlemen. It gives me great honour to stand here in front of you. It is not my intention to make a long speech, but the main aim is to thank the following four institutions for making this occasion possible: the English Academy of Southern Africa, Rhodes University's Department of Literary Studies, the Institute for the Study of English in Africa, and the National English Literary Museum.

It is my firm belief that this bursary will not only contribute to my PhD research but also to the teaching of the English language at my school. We should not forget that teachers have a great responsibility to educate the nation and ultimately this will contribute to a better society. Nelson Mandela once said: "Education is the most important weapon that we can use to change the society". Countless empirical studies all over the world have shown that education makes it possible for people to use their skills to change their immediate environments. This means that the school has a big role in the society, but it is important that all the stakeholders in the education system should know their roles.

There is a poem that I want to share with you. The title of the poem is "An elementary school classroom in a slum" by Stephen Spender. In this poem, the poet is trying to show the role of the school in developing the future of the learners. For example, in the first stanza, the poet describes the physical appearance of the learners in the classroom. The children are sick due to diseases and malnutrition. In the second stanza, the poet describes the classroom. There is a map, a picture of Shakespeare and a picture of a beautiful valley in Europe hanging on the wall. The poet argues that these pictures and the map are irrelevant to the children because they will tempt the learners to steal because they are trapped in their own life of poverty. In the subsequent stanzas, the poet complains bitterly about the situation of these learners and he blames those who are involved in education for not doing enough for these children. The poet argues that the situation of the children can change only if the teachers are doing their job by giving the learners proper education. The poet argues that if these children are encouraged to learn and know the importance of books, they



Bruce Bushula

would be able to reach their full potential and ultimately reach the stars.

This poem is important to me because it always reminds me about the duty I have in the community. The PhD research that I intend to conduct is on extensive reading. The proposed title is "Using a cultural historical theory to implement an extensive reading programme in two Grade 9 classes in two Eastern Cape schools: A case study". However, I am still at the initial stages of my research proposal and I am receiving feedback from my supervisors and other PhD scholars in the International PhD Week that is hosted by Rhodes University. This research study is important to me because, although research has shown an overwhelming evidence of the benefits of extensive reading, it is an infrequently used approach here in South Africa. In order to make an intervention, I need to include an activity theory in my research design that will help me answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives.

This research will also help learners with an opportunity to read for fun. In my research design, I have included a classroom library (where the books will be kept for the duration of the study) as the most

important reading resource that will help the learners to read for fun or pleasure. Learners will have an opportunity to interact with a variety of reading materials. I have plenty of books at my disposal and these were donated by Biblionef, Zenex Foundation and our partner school in the United Kingdom. Learners will have an opportunity to read for pleasure after the normal school programme in the classroom library.

An extensive reading programme will help learners with English language learning because the advantages of having extensive reading programmes in a school have been proven in countless empirical studies. In my efforts to promote English language teaching, I aim to do the following in our community:

- encourage all language teachers and content subject teachers in our community to create their own classroom libraries in their own classrooms

and start their own reading programmes.

- encourage all language teachers to attend English language conferences at Rhodes University.
- encourage language teachers to attend seminars, conferences and public lectures that are organised by the English Academy of Southern Africa.
- support all the activities that are organised by EASA.

In conclusion, once again let me thank the English Academy of Southern Africa, Rhodes University's Department of Literary Studies, the Institute for the Study of English in Africa and the National English Literary Museum for making this occasion possible. Without these institutions, this occasion would not have been a success. May God bless you in abundance. Thank you very much.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN PIETERMARITZBURG FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

The Maritzburg College campus was alive with robust dialogue and critical engagement on Tuesday, 14 May 2019, as over 110 teachers of English from across the KwaZulu-Natal province gathered for the 4th Annual MCEASA Conference. The conference, hosted by Maritzburg College in association with the English Academy of Southern Africa, has become a significant platform of discourse and networking amongst colleagues of English teaching. This year, we welcomed Dr David Robinson (UJ), Dr Berrington Ntombela (University of Zululand) and Professor Peter Titlestad (UP; retired) who presented with Professor Malaba (UKZN), a loyal supporter of the conference since its inception. We are also immensely proud of our Headmaster, Mr Chris Luman—who is an English teacher by heart and Mr James Maistry, as they have presented at every conference held thus far. Highly informative presenta-

tions were also done by Mrs Debbie Martin, Mr Chris Barnsley, Ms Amy Dettmer, Mrs Bernice Borain, Mrs Belinda Kidd, Mrs Fiona Khan, Mrs Avi Maistry and Digibook.

The conference has grown in leaps and bounds over the past four years and we are grateful for the support of the English Academy. We hope to continue with our positive contribution to English teaching as we believe strongly that literacy is the cornerstone of knowledge acquisition. This year's conference theme was 'Back to Basics'. The Maritzburg College English Department is proud of their part in promoting fresh and exciting ways of connecting with our learners.

Rodelle Govender (HOD – English, Maritzburg College)

CITATION: GOLD MEDAL AWARD TO RAJENDRA CHETTY

Rajendra is an internationally recognised postcolonial scholar. His research is transdisciplinary, drawing from English literature and social activism. He is considered a pioneer researcher in the sub-genre of South African Indian writings with two seminal texts: *South African Indian Writings in English* (2002) and *The Vintage Book of South African Indian Writings* (2010). His critical texts include: *At the Edge – The Writings of Ronnie Govender* (2017); *Trauma, Resistance, Reconciliation in post-1994 South African Writings* (2010); *Transnationalisms and Diaspora* (2009); and *Indias Abroad: The Diaspora Writes Back* (2004). He is acknowledged for

cutting-edge articles on Phyllis Naidoo, Fatima Meer, Aziz Hassim, Farida Karodia and Ahmed Esop. His research output includes over fifty journal articles, eleven chapters in academic books, twenty-five international conference papers and seventeen keynote addresses.

He straddles the fields of literature and literacy and in 2016 he was appointed Research Chair in Literacy and Poverty. He leans on critical educational studies and has written extensively on the problems of literacy in high poverty communities and the in-

tersectionality of race, class and inequality in schooling. He received the 2016 Medal of Honour for his national and international work in educational research from the Education Association of South Africa.

In 2015/16 he was Fulbright professor at the City University of New York. His visiting professorships include the University of Trivandrum, Federal University of Brazil, University of Gothenburg, University for Foreigners in Perugia, University of Coventry and Northern Michigan University.

He has served the cause of English, not only as a distinguished scholar but also as a mentor to colleagues, a supervisor of postgraduate students, and as curriculum advisor to the national Department of Education. He is the author of eleven school language textbooks and is a member of national and provincial para-statal bodies concerned with the field of English studies. He is currently the editor of the Academy's internationally indexed journal *The English Academy Review: A Journal of English Studies*. He is a rated social scientist with national

and international recognition. Rajendra has performed several signal acts in the service of the English Academy of Southern Africa, *inter alia* convening the jubilee conference in 2011 as well as one of the most successful conferences to date, "Decolonial turns, postcolonial shifts and cultural connections" in 2017. He has run seasonal schools, presented public lectures throughout the country, serves on the National English Language Body, and is chair of the Western Cape Language Committee.

He has offered distinguished service to the English Academy by serving as its President for two terms, organising award functions and public lectures in Cape Town. Importantly, he supported the Academy's annual nominations for the Nobel Prize for Literature. He has a special skill in soothing ruffled feathers and reconciling warring factions. Rajendra has guided the English Academy of Southern Africa into the 21st century quietly but firmly and with enlightened vision.

Rosemary Gray

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH: RAJENDRA CHETTY

Colleagues, Good day. My sincere thanks to the Academy for this recognition. There can be no greater delight than being rewarded for work that you enjoy. Khalil Gibran noted that when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another. It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart.

Researchers are plagued with the question, who do we write for, as we are nervous that our writing may gain praise or denigration. Camus dealt with the question best. "One either serves the whole of man or does not serve him at all. And if man needs bread and justice, and if what has to be done must be done to serve this need, he also needs pure beauty which is the bread of his heart." The best way we can serve the revolution for equality and justice is to write as well as we can. We cannot resolve the massacres of Marikana or Sharpeville. But we should turn our faces to the reason for our being, as responsible human beings within a social context, being here: in a particular time and place. Brecht wrote of a time when "to speak of trees is almost a crime".

Writers were forbidden to write – Bloke Modisane, Bessie Head, Nadine Gordimer. Lives were at risk – Can Themba, Chinua Achebe, Ken Saro Wiwa. Words on scraps of paper were smuggled out of prison by Mandela and Phyllis Naidoo. Writers have been imprisoned: Soyinka, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Dennis Brutus. Many of the great writers have endured the trauma of exile, from which some did not survive at all: Alex la Guma, Nat Nakasa.

South African writers have a history of being summoned to submit the word. Jabulani Nxumalo's

book *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a Double Agenda* was forced to be withdrawn from university libraries in 1991. I was a Master's student at Natal University that year and found it karmic that returning *umkonto we sizwe* cadres brought 8000 copies of the book in their backpacks and it was widely available, but the university had to place its only copy in an underground vault. In 2017 Jacques Pauw had threats levelled against him for *The President's Keepers*. The launch of Pieter-Louis Myburgh's *Gangster State* was disrupted and protesters threatened to burn the bookstore. Julius Caesar burned the Library of Alex-



Professor Rajendra Chetty

andria in 48BC. The Nazis burned books. Isis burned books. If this history teaches anything, it is that books cannot be killed. Pages can be burned, but ideas are not so easily killed.

Writing becomes subversive when the shameful secrets of our times are explored deeply. Arundhati Roy, Sylvia Plath and Alice Walker's rebellious integrity to the state of being was manifest in life around them; the writers' themes undoubtedly are formed by the distortions of that society as the life of the fisherman is determined by the power of the sea. In literature, as Mongane Serote writes, we page

through each other's faces, we read each looking eye... It has taken lives to be able to do so.

When we engage with writings, we work with fragmentary phrases of truth, never changed by our stumbling efforts to spell it out and write it down, never changed by lies, by semantic sophistry, by the dirtying of the word for the purposes of racism, sexism, prejudice, the glorification of destruction, the curses and the praise-songs.

I have never received gold before, so I will take my gold and run.

EASA PERCY BANESHNIK MEMORIAL LECTURE AT NORTHWARDS

The 2019 English Academy Percy Baneshnik Memorial Lecture was presented by former Council member Dr Sope Maithufi on 4 May 2019 at Northwards in Parktown, Johannesburg. The prelude to the event was a tour of Northwards which was a magnificent experience. The curator of Northwards, Dr Neil Viljoen, impressed visitors with his bountiful knowledge of the facility's history, art, architecture, sculpture and design, as well as the shenanigans of its inhabitants. Neil's sense of humour made the tour so much fun! Having completed the tour, one felt like one now knew a part of South African history that was missing from its history textbooks. The tour was immediately followed by the presentation of the Gold Medal award to Professor Rajendra Chetty.

After Professor Chetty's thrilling acceptance speech, Academy President Professor Malaba introduced Dr Maithufi who thereafter presented the lecture on the topic "The significance of mist in the art of Selby Mvusi". Dr Maithufi started off by expressing his gratitude to the Academy for the honour of the invitation to present the lecture. In his lecture, he located Mvusi's art within black aesthetics. He analysed both the artwork and the poetry of Mvusi and then explored the intersections between the two. The concept of allegory was quite pertinent in the analysis, as Dr Maithufi used allegory to bring together the verbal and visual realities of the work of Mvusi.



Dr Sope Maithufi

Among the prominent guests to listen to Dr Maithufi's lecture was Academy Patron Professor Pitika Ntuli. As is customary, the full lecture will be published in the *English Academy Review*. Sincere thanks go to the Percy Baneshnik Trust for its generous sponsorship of the lecture.

SUSTAINED COLLABORATION WITH THE INDIAN CONSULATE IN DURBAN

The Academy has had a remarkable history of maintaining collaborative relationships with institutions and organisations that share its vision and mission. The Indian Consulate in Durban is one such institution. It has always supported Academy events in Durban, while offering sponsorships in some instances. On 10 May 2019 the Consulate hosted a literary evening in commemoration of Indian Nobel Prize literary icon, Rabindranath Tagore.

As part of the programme, Professor Malaba gave an overview of the goals of the English Academy

followed by Mr Thayalan Reddy who focused on Tagore's contribution to literature at an exciting time in world history. Mr Reddy foregrounded Tagore's poetic genius, and his observations were later augmented by readings where students from Sastri College recited with passion selected poems from Tagore's poetic texts *Gitanjali*, *Stray Birds*, *Fireflies*, and *I Won't Let You Go*.

Contributions to the programme included remarks by the newly appointed Consul General, Mr Anish



Dolly Reddy, Mbongeni Malaba, Sabrina Schoeder and Thayalan Reddy

Rajan, and cultural attaché, Dr C.P. Yogi, both of whom are well versed in Tagore’s literary contributions. An engaging Ms Sabrina Schoeder was the programme director to a full house. The event goes into record as another highly successful event that highlights the positive impact of the Academy’s collaboration with the Indian Consulate in Durban.

Thayalan Reddy



Adv. Robin Sewlal, Ishana Sewlal, Dr Bhupen Bagwan, Mr Anish Rajan

(Indian Consul-General), Thayalan Reddy, and Dolly Reddy

EXEC MEMBERS HYPE UP ACADEMY PRESENCE AT A BOTSWANA CONFERENCE



Rosemary Gray and Owen Seda among the delegates at the Botswana conference

Exec members, Professor Rosemary Gray and Professor Owen Seda, truly cherish their southern African heritage, as evident in their involvements in academic citizenship activities within the region. They attended the 10th International Department of English Conference in Gaborone, Botswana on 19-20 June 2019 which had the theme “English and the Dynamics of Global Access”. True to their calling as scholars, they both presented papers at this dynamic event. Professor Gray’s paper was entitled “‘Life is a street corner’: Meditations on the Global

in Ben Okri’s *The Magic Lamp* (2017)”, while Professor Seda’s paper had the title “Redemptive apotheosis and Joseph Campbell’s *Hero’s Journey Narrative* – August Wilson’s *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*”. Their participation at this conference is a sure indicator that the Academy’s presence was felt by delegates.

EASA 2020 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

“Africa Hurrah’: Into Africa, Out of Africa, English in the World Interrogated”

Durban, 15 – 19 September 2020

Call for papers

The conference invites established and emerging researchers, teachers, librarians, archivists, publishers and policy makers to engage in deliberations on the following themes and issues:

- Recent Trends in Southern African Literature
 - African Diasporic Literatures
 - Englishes Across Continents
 - Indian Ocean Cross Currents
 - Indian Diasporic Writing
- Trends and Traditions in African Literature
- Literature and Movements for Social Change
- Women’s Writing and Writing about Women
 - World Literature
 - The City in African Literature
 - Return to the Archive
- Libraries languishing in Neglect
 - Bibliodiversity
 - Language Pedagogy
 - Sociolinguistics
- Strategic Transformations in the Language of the Stage
- Emerging Perspectives in African Drama and Performance Studies
 - Interdisciplinary Studies
 - Tributes to Peter Abrahams
 - Tributes to Charles Mungoshi
 - Tributes to Prof. Dr Geoffrey Davis

Several prominent speakers of international stature will deliver keynote and plenary addresses at the conference. The programme will consist of three days of presentations, parallel sessions and workshops. The academic programme will be complemented by social activities including a welcome reception at the renowned Killie Campbell Africa Museum and Library, a literary tour of Durban and reading by writers and a gala dinner.

Timeline

1st announcement and call for papers: 1 July 2019

2nd announcement and further call for papers: 24 August 2019

Deadline for abstract submission: 30 September 2019

Submission of abstracts must be done electronically (by email) in MS Word format and emailed to englishacademy@societies.wits.ac.za. All abstracts will be peer reviewed.

Website: www.englishacademy.co.za

Conference fees: R5000

Foreign: US\$ 350

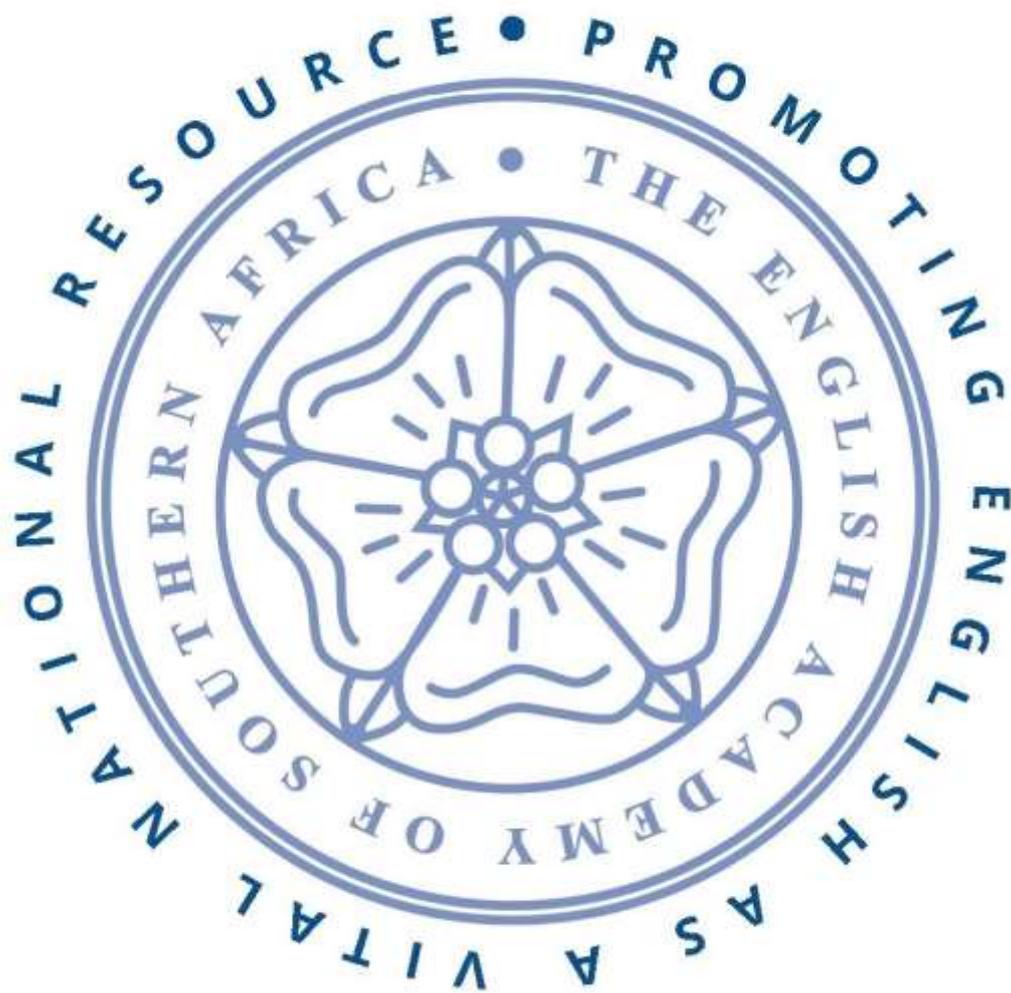
Early bird: R4500

Early bird: US\$ 300

Postgraduates: R2000

**Venue: Tsogo Sun Garden
Court Hotel, Durban, South
Africa.**

EASA retirees: R500



PATRONS

Pitika Ntuli and Njabulo Ndebele

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Editor: Naomi Nkealah

Deputy Editor: Aghogho Akpome

Editorial Assistant: Rosemary Gray

Photos: Candice Livingston, NELM, Illa Thompson

Typesetter: Alan Gray

Administrator: Karin Basel

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