



FACULTY News



JANUARY 2010 | FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES | UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Many reasons to celebrate at FHS



Prof Greg Hussey and his wife Cynthia le Grange really had something to celebrate at the results bash! His daughter, Hannah, along with her fellow final-years, received news that she had passed the final year of her MBChB!



Prof Bongani Mayosi got to meet SA's president, Jacob Zuma at a function where he received National Orders. He received the Order of Mapungubwe, in recognition "of his excellent contribution in the field of research in medical science".



Kopano Matiwa, who graduated with an MBChB on Monday, 14 December 2009, has been awarded a Rhodes Scholarship for 2010. Congratulations on this wonderful achievement!



Prof Kit Vaughan gave his valedictory lecture on Wednesday 9 December 2009, entitled "The Pleasures of a Life in Academe" (see story on Page 4). He is photographed with the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof Marian Jacobs, and Assoc Prof Tania Douglas, who gave the vote of thanks.

The Department of Medicine in UCT's Faculty of Health Sciences celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2010!

Congratulations!



The Faculty remembers Ralph Lawrence

Professor Ralph Lawrence, who in 1945 was one of the first three black students to graduate with a medical degree from UCT, has died. Lawrence, born in Durban in 1920, died on 17 December 2009 after a long career in forensic medicine. As one of the first black doctors to graduate from UCT, he worked actively for an end to racism in medicine, even after he left South Africa in 1948 to pursue postgraduate studies, driven overseas by the racism of the new apartheid government.

He matriculated in 1938 and was accepted for medical studies in the UK in 1939, but World War II broke out and scuppered his plans. Instead, he worked as a bricklayer's assistant and in an advertising agency before applying and being accepted to study medicine at UCT in 1940.

Life in Cape Town and UCT was full of trials. He wasn't allowed to stay in a university residence, so moved into a District Six hotel where "conditions were basic and the food was poor". When he pointed this out, he was asked to leave and had to find accommodation with an Indian family.

At UCT, he wasn't even sure if he would be allowed to complete his clinical studies after the initial pre-clinical programme. After Lawrence and others petitioned UCT, they were allowed to register for the clinical years, but on condition that they not enter 'European' wards or be present at any examination or clinic where white patients were treated.

On 13 May 1944, Lawrence was suspended from classes pending a disciplinary hearing for being present at clinics where white patients were present, in violation of the condition of his registration. He was acquitted on a technicality as he had not been formally notified of the race-based conditions of his registration.

In September 1944, Lawrence became the first black student to serve on UCT's Students' Representative Council (SRC). Several attempts were made to remove him from the SRC, however, and members even walked out of the annual SRC dinner because of his presence. He was also barred from the official SRC photograph in case the Chancellor, Jan Smuts, was offended by the presence of a black student.

In a speech made at the end of his term of office on the SRC, Lawrence called on students to make a firm stand for democracy and to fight for a better South Africa.

In 1945, Lawrence, Cassim Saib and Maramoothoo Samy-Padiachy became the first black students to graduate with medical degrees from UCT.

In September 1948, Lawrence left South Africa to further his studies in the UK. There he married Bronwen Arthur in 1950, and the couple had three sons. Lawrence served as the principal forensic physician to the Derbyshire Constabulary from 1953 to 1998. As a member of the British Panel of Expert Witnesses he continued to



In 2002, Prof Ralph Lawrence (right) returned to UCT to sign the Faculty of Health Sciences' Charter, which committed it to reconciliation. With Lawrence is Prof Ralph Kirsch.

conduct forensic examinations well into his 80s, remaining intellectually active virtually right until his death. In addition, he served on the council of the British Medical Association for many years.

Lawrence was a Foundation Fellow of the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine with the Royal College of Physicians, president of the Association of Police Surgeons from 1993 to 1994, and an internationally renowned ambassador and champion of clinical forensic medicine. He was also made an Officer of the British Empire.

His 2006 autobiography, *A Fire in His Hand*, included sharp insights to the history of social medicine in the UK.

In May 2002, Lawrence returned to UCT to sign a Faculty Charter highlighting non-discrimination and equality as part of the Faculty of Health Sciences' commitment to reconciliation. He was appointed as an honorary visiting professor to the faculty in 2003.

"The life and story of Professor Ralph Lawrence - and that of many other students like him - is a chronicle of how UCT shamefully failed so many of our students," said vice-chancellor, Dr Max Price.

"But as South Africans, we can take pride in the achievements of Professor Lawrence and the many black graduates who persevered and excelled under these uncharitable conditions. Their legacy is one of courage and determination in the face of adversity."

This obituary is extracted from a version penned by UCT's Associate Professor Gonda Perez and Professor Leslie London, and Lawrence's son Hugh, and includes notes from other sources.

DEAN'S CORNER

At the beginning of each year, the Faculty of Health Sciences is a hive of activity as first-years are registered and returning students get back into the swing of lectures, and this year was no exception. The Admissions office is to be commended for the hard work that they put into making such a success of the start of the academic year. In addition, the staff in the Dean's Suite also had to contend with irate parents and devastated would-be students and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in this mammoth task.

However, it hasn't all been smooth sailing. We started the semester with negative media coverage about the state of lectures in the Faculty, to which the University felt compelled to respond. I was delighted to see that some of our students also registered their disappointment in the *Argus* for printing such

a damning article without first checking their facts. I trust that if there are any unhappy FHS students out there, they will go through the appropriate channels within both the Faculty and University to try to resolve their issues, and only if they are unable to do so, perhaps then resort to the media.

Sadly, on Monday, 1 February, one of our PhD students, Dr Johann Steyn, collapsed and died on campus. Dr Steyn, a qualified radiologist, was studying towards a doctorate under the supervision of Professor Bongani Mayosi, Professor of Medicine and Associate Professor Ernesta Meintjes. His field of study was cardiac imaging, and he was due to undertake a three-month cardiac MRI specialist training internship in the United Kingdom.

I would like to thank the people who came to his assistance and those who continue to

support his colleagues and family at this difficult time. On behalf of the Faculty, I extend our deepest sympathy to his family, friends and colleagues.

Safety on and off campus continues to be a major issue and I urge staff and students to be vigilant, particularly when walking in the areas around campus alone, and after working hours.

Campus Protection Services has listed safety and security tips and these may be found at <http://www.uct.ac.za/students/health/campusafety/>.

They also urge staff and students to report any suspicious activity by telephoning CPS on 021 650 2222/3 or at the FHS campus 021 650 6100.

I trust that 2010 will be a safe and productive year and I look forward to receiving news of your successes.

Child injury prevention a must, says van As

Society must prevent injuries to children, and UCT should not be shy to lead the way, Professor Sebastian Van As said at his inaugural lecture, *Ex Africa Semper Aliquid Novum* (There is always something new from Africa), on 25 November.

Van As, head of the Trauma Unit at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, said trauma is the leading cause of the death of children between the ages of one and 18 in South Africa. Each year, approximately one million children die from the three big killers: motor vehicle accidents, drowning and burns.

Van As drew his argument from recommendations made by the Commission for Africa, instituted by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, which suggested a shift of emphasis from humanitarian relief to prevention to solve Africa's problems.

Research at UCT represents a wealth of information that is internationally underutilised, Van As noted. This includes the numerous novel experimental liver and liver



Prof Sebastian van As.

transplantation studies at the Liver Research Centre at Red Cross Hospital, and the fact that the university's and hospital's work has made South Africa a world leader in trauma care.

According to the World Health Organisation, trauma will be the biggest killer by 2010, as other causes such as infectious diseases and cardiovascular diseases will decline in the next decade.

It's therefore a concern that there is a tendency among certain administrators to think that dedicated trauma units can be dispensed with," he said.

The development of paediatric trauma care is another area where surgeons have excelled and taken leadership. In 1984 the Red Cross Children's Hospital Trauma Unit was established and extended in 2004 when a whole state-of-the-art new trauma unit was built.

Approximately 10 000 children are treated annually in the unit, and the main causes of injuries are falls, transport-related injuries, burns and assaults.

Van As believes that the recently established Global Health Institute at UCT will contribute significantly to global health, but it requires a strong trauma component.

Developmental Neurology gets a boost with expert's visit

When the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences invited renowned neuroscientist Mijna Hadders-Algra to UCT for a few days, they realised her whirlwind visit needed to be shared with others.

So last week the school hosted a two-day training course where Hadders-Algra, professor of developmental neurology - specialising in the early detection of developmental disabilities - at the University of Groningen in The Netherlands, steered 80 health care professionals from across South Africa through a score of related topics.

Day one of the jam-packed programme concentrated on the assessment of neurological disorders among infants, while day two was spent on possible interventions, all drawing on Hadders-Algra's wealth of research.

"The programme was quite detailed and quite intensive," says the school's Marieke Pronk, who helped make the visit and course possible. "And it was great to have someone of Professor Hadders-Algra's calibre to come and lecture here."

The course attracted paediatricians, speech therapists, occupational therapists and

physiotherapists - among others - from both the private and public sectors. Most work with infants and children suffering from

neurological disorders, and going by comments during and after the course, the two days proved useful for catching up with the latest developments in the field, even if much of the studies were taken from more developed nations.

So, for example, Shane Hodges, a physiotherapist who works with children with cerebral palsy and other learning and physical disabilities at Paarl School in Brackenfell, found the sessions on movement and posture of particular interest. "It was very helpful to find out what's out there and what's happening," she says. The course also triggered a few ideas for a PhD proposal for Amshuda Sayed, course convenor and lecturer at the school.

"What I liked most about the speaker is that she always used evidence and literature to qualify any statement she made, and more specifically made reference to her own research studies," says Sayed. Just the right note on which to kick the new year off, then.



Prof Mijna Hadders-Algra.

SMS info for disabled

Disabled people, especially those living in rural parts of South Africa, often find it difficult to get information about the rehabilitation services that are available to them from government departments and NGOs in their area.

This new SMS information service is available to anyone with access to a cellphone who sends an SMS with their name, town and the information they need to—072-172 2623.

An SMS will be sent back to the caller with contact info for the nearest service provider to them. An email will be sent to the service provider to ask them to make direct contact with the caller. After a week or so, a follow-up email will be sent to the service provider to monitor what service has been provided.

Please note that 072-172 2623 is NOT a call centre and will only respond to a standard SMS. There are no extra SMS charges.

The service is NOT designed to provide detailed information to the caller - that should be done by the service provider.

Government departments and NGOs are asked to please use their networks to notify disabled people throughout South Africa of this service and to share this media release with their medical staff, therapists, social workers, teachers and all staff who come into contact with disabled people.

We hope that they will please display this media release wherever it might be seen by disabled people and their families, such as at hospitals, clinics, Welfare offices, SASSA Pay Points, schools, Labour Centres, Post Offices, Police Stations, Libraries, Councillor's Offices and NGOs.

(Information provided by the Children's Institute)

Monday Paper

Life in academe is a pleasure to listen to

Now gearing up for the world of private enterprise, Kit Vaughan, UCT's Hyman Goldberg Professor of Biomedical Engineering since 1996, recently delivered his valedictory lecture at the Faculty of Health Sciences. Vaughan broke his lecture, titled *The Pleasures of a Life in Academe*, into eight "vignettes", starting in 1977.

That's the year he published his first academic article, *A Biomechanical Model of a Sprinter* in the *Journal of Human Movement Studies*, while working on his PhD at the University of Iowa in the US.

The next steps in Vaughan's narrative were his stint as postgraduate supervisor at the University of Virginia (1989); his first grant, a princely US\$132 000 from the National Institutes of Health (1992); his return to South Africa in 1995 - his family living off their savings and American credit cards - and landing the Hyman Goldberg Chair at UCT in the fledgling field of medical imaging; establishing a medical-imaging research group to continue the work of his muse, Nobel laureate Allan Cormack (2000); his sabbatical as a Ernest Walton Fellow in Ireland, which he'd recounted in a paper, *A Year in the Land*



of Saints and Scholars (2003); the launch of his book, a four-year labour of love entitled *Imagining the Elephant: A biography of Allan MacLeod Cormack* (the title is inspired by the story of six blind men trying to identify an

elephant by touch alone and coming up with six very different answers), work that involved fact-finding missions to England, Scotland and the US (2008); and winning the rights to host, in Cape Town, the 22nd congress of the International Society of Biomechanics (2009).

Vaughan, aged 56, is now looking forward to the next vignette in his professional career that will follow his retirement from UCT: that of business man. "I have realised that I am at heart an entrepreneur, and that I'm still young enough and have sufficient energy to pursue another career," he said.

In partnership with UCT and with funding from the Industrial Development Corporation, Vaughan has launched a spin-off company that will market low-dose x-ray technology for the early detection of breast cancer.

There is clear evidence from other countries that screening programmes can "dramatically" curb the disease's mortality rates, Vaughan said.

"I am more convinced than ever that we have the technology with the potential to save many lives, both here in South Africa and elsewhere in the world."

Daily News

Another reason to celebrate

At the Health Sciences graduation ceremony, held on 18 December 2009, Professor Di McIntyre and Dr Lillian Artz from the Faculty of Health Sciences became the first of three academics to be awarded the UCT Social Responsiveness Award. The other winner was Dr Ailsa Holloway, director of the Disaster Mitigation for Sustainable Livelihood Programme.

"The winners of the Social Responsiveness Award were chosen from a large and very strong field, so much so that the selection committee felt that for this first year of the award at least, it was impossible to identify one single recipient," said deputy vice-chancellor Professor Jo Beall. "The three winning nominations illustrate research, teaching and civic engagement that benefits both external constituencies and enhances UCT's reputation."

As well as her professorship at UCT's School of Public Health and Family Medicine, McIntyre holds the South African research chair in health and wealth, and is the founder of the Health Economics Unit, where she served as director for 13 years. McIntyre's involvement in health care financing issues requires a combined role of academic and activist. Most recently, McIntyre's engagement

in the current debate on National Health Insurance, through workshops, opinion editorials and media interviews, has contributed to a better understanding of the complexities of financing a national health scheme. This role as a public intellectual has enhanced the university's engagement with national, continental and international challenges.

Founded by Artz in 2004, UCT's Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit in the Faculty of Health Sciences tackles the high levels of violence against women in South Africa. Collaborating with NGOs and regularly commissioned by the government, the unit's progressive research is used for evidence-based advocacy for women's rights. Recently, a number of research and advocacy projects were undertaken to guide the law reform process on sexual offences. With an impressive publication record, the unit has earned an international reputation and is consulted regularly by international organisations.

The awards are a part of UCT's Senate- and Council-approved Social Responsiveness Policy, adopted in 2008, which is aimed at encouraging an "enabling environment" for social responsiveness at the university.

Time is running out!

Physicians Conference 18 – 21 February 2010 Cape Town International Convention Centre

The Physicians Conference 2010 programme will include the 50 most important topics in Medicine, including Cardiology, Endocrinology, Pulmonology, Neurology, Infectious Diseases, Gastroenterology, Nephrology, Rheumatology, Haematology, Dermatology, Geriatrics, Lipidology, Emergency Medicine, Pharmacology and Ethics.

The format will be a combination of lectures and interactive workshops.

The topics will be of interest to physicians in both private practice and the state sector.

There will also be 'Meet the Expert' sessions on Thursday 18 Feb, in venues in the Old Main Building, Groote Schuur Hospital.

Further information & enquiries:
Belinda Chapman, UCT Conference
Management Centre
Belinda.chapman@uct.ac.za
Tel: +27 (0) 21 406 6407.