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MEDIA RELEASE

Embargo: Immediately

Top Scholars in South Africa Honoured

Forty-four of the country's leading scholars and scientists were inaugurated as Members of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) at the annual Awards Ceremony on 23 October 2024.

As the official Academy of South Africa, ASSAf has as core function to honour the country's most outstanding scholars by electing them to Membership of the Academy. ASSAf Members are drawn from the full spectrum of disciplines.

New Members are elected each year by the full existing Membership. Membership of the Academy is a great honour and is in recognition of scholarly achievement. Members are the core asset of the Academy and give of their time and expertise voluntarily in the service of society.

The 44 new ASSAf Members bring the total Membership of ASSAf to 730.

The new ASSAf Members are:

Prof Babatunde Abiodun is Professor, Director of Nasen-Tutu Centre, and DST/NRF SARChI Chairholder (interim) in Ocean and Atmospheric Modelling, Department of Oceanography, University of Cape Town.

Prof Stephanie Matseleng Allais is Professor of Education and DST/NRF SARChI Chairholder in Skills Development, University of the Witwatersrand.

Prof Pamela Andanda is a Professor of Law at the University of the Witwatersrand, where she coordinates and lectures postgraduate Intellectual Property Law.

Prof Jason Bantjes is Chief Specialist Scientist: Mental health, Alcohol, Substance use and Tobacco Research Unit (MAST RU), South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC)

and Honorary Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town.

Prof Reinette (Oonsie) Biggs is Co-director: Centre for Sustainability Transitions and DST/NRF SARCHI Chairholder in Social-Ecological Systems and Resilience, Stellenbosch University.

Prof Emese Bordy is Professor in the Department of Geological Sciences, University of Cape Town.

Prof Brett Bowman is a Professor in the School of Human and Community Development at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) where he is also Head: Postgraduate Strategy in the Office for Research and Innovation.

Prof John Carranza is Professor of Economic Geology, University of the Free State.

Dr Ding-Geng Chen is DST/NRF SARCHI Chairholder in Biostatistics, University of Pretoria.

Prof Michael Chimonyo is a Research Professor in the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture, University of Venda.

Prof Beatrice Conradie is an agricultural economist and Professor in the School of Economics, University of Cape Town.

Prof Peter Dunsby is currently full professor of gravitation and cosmology at the University of Cape Town.

Prof Kevin Durrheim is Distinguished Professor in Psychology at the University of Johannesburg, where he heads the *UJ Methods Lab*, promoting open access to open science in Africa.

Prof Mohamed Jeebhay is Head: Occupational Medicine Division, School of Public Health (and Department of Medicine), University of Cape Town.

Prof Bridget Kenny is Full Professor in the Department of Sociology, University of the Witwatersrand (Wits).

Prof Pradeep Kumar is a Personal Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand Department of Pharmacy and Pharmacology, Senior Researcher at the Wits Advanced Drug Delivery Platform Research Unit, and Chair of the School of Therapeutic Sciences' Teaching and Learning Committee.

Prof Jianxin Li is Professor Extradarius, Institute for Nanotechnology and Water Sustainability, College of Science, Engineering and Technology, University of South Africa (Unisa).

Prof Michelle Louw is Head of the Department of Commercial Law and Professor of Law (banking Law) in the Department of Commercial Law, University of Cape Town.

Prof Ndomelele Ndiko Ludidi is Dean: the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, University of Mpumalanga and Extraordinary Professor at the University of the Western Cape.

Prof Madivane Mavhunga is Professor in Science Teacher Education, School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand.

Dr Vanessa McBride is currently Science Director: International Science Council and formerly, Head of Research: South African Astronomical Observatory.

Prof Petrus Johannes Meintjes is Senior Professor: Department of Physics, University of the Free State and leader of the UFS Astrophysics Group.

Prof Victor Mlambo is Professor in Animal Science School of Agricultural Sciences; Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, University of Mpumalanga.

Prof Tankiso Moloi is Director and Professor: Johannesburg Business School, University of Johannesburg. He is also Head of Doctor of Philosophy in Digital Transformation and Professor at the same institution.

Prof Yoshan Moodley is Full Professor, Department of Zoology, University of Venda.

Prof Hassina Mouri is Full Professor in Medical Geology, Faculty of Science, University of Johannesburg and UNESCO Chair on Medical Geology in Africa.

Prof Juan Nel is Full Professor in the Department of Psychology, University of South Africa. He is also a registered Clinical and Research Psychologist.

Prof Jan Nordström is Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics, University of Johannesburg.

Prof Anna-Maria Oberholster is Professor of Genetics: Genetics Department, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Stellenbosch University.

Prof Adebola Omowunmi Oyedeji is Professor of Organic Chemistry, Department of Chemistry and Niche Leader: African Medicinal Flora and Fauna, Walter Sisulu University.

Prof Etheresia (Resia) Pretorius is the Head of Department and a Distinguished Research Professor in the Physiological Sciences Department, Faculty of Science, Stellenbosch University.

Prof Johann Rohwer is Professor of Systems Biology, Department of Biochemistry, Stellenbosch University.

Prof Hussien Shimelis is Full Professor of Plant Breeding in the School of Agricultural, Earth and Environmental Sciences and Chair of Crop Science and Director: African Centre for Crop Improvement, University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

Ass. Prof Yandisa Sikweyiya is Chief Specialist Scientist: Gender and Health Research Unit, South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), and Associate Professor at both the School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand, and the School of Public Nursing and Public Health, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Prof Charalampos (Haris) Skokos is Professor of Applied Mathematics, Deputy Dean for Postgraduate Studies and Research, Faculty of Science, Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics, University of Cape Town.

Prof Catherine Sole is Professor in the Department of Zoology and Entomology, University of Pretoria (UP) and is affiliated with UP's Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI).

Prof Vanessa Steenkamp is Full Professor in Pharmacology and Deputy Dean: Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Pretoria.

Prof Frank Tanser is Professor of Global Health and Director of Population Health Innovation (at the Centre for Epidemic Response and Innovation), Stellenbosch University.

Prof Francis Thackeray is Honorary Research Associate in Evolutionary Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand.

Prof WD Francois Venter is the Executive Director of Ezintsha at the University of the Witwatersrand and Research Professor in the Wits School of Clinical Medicine.

Prof Serestina Viriri is a Full Professor of Computer Science, and Dean and Head of the School of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Prof Catherine Ward is Professor in the Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town.

Prof Jennifer Watermeyer is Professor in the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology and Director: Health Communication Research Unit, University of the Witwatersrand.

Prof Jan Rijn Zeevaart is General Research Manager: Applied Radiation, South African Nuclear Energy Corporation (NECSA) and Extraordinary Professor at North-West University (NWU) and the University of Pretoria.

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Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)

ASSAf was inaugurated in May 1996. It was formed in response to the need for an Academy of Science consonant with the dawn of democracy in South Africa: activist in its mission of using science and scholarship for the benefit of society, with a mandate encompassing all scholarly disciplines that use an open-minded and evidence-based approach to build knowledge.

ASSAf thus adopted in its name the term 'science' in the singular as reflecting a common way of enquiring rather than an aggregation of different disciplines. Its Members are elected on the basis of a combination of two principal criteria, academic excellence and significant contributions to society.

The Parliament of South Africa passed the Academy of Science of South Africa Act (Act 67 of 2001), which came into force on 15 May 2002. This made ASSAf the only academy of science in South Africa officially recognised by government and representing the country in the international community of science academies and elsewhere.

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