



The US Witsie



Wits Fund Newsletter September 2022

witsfund.org

Wits turns 100 this year. Learn more [here](#).

We got a face-lift...how was your summer?

It's been a jam-packed month. And this is the first of our new-look newsletter, which we redesigned just in time to celebrate the 100th anniversary of our *alma mater*, Wits University.

The Wits Vice-Chancellor was on a tour of the US East Coast in September (look out for more news on that in our next issue) and he made it to Times Square for a very special celebration.

WITS IN TIMES SQUARE



Wits celebrates its centenary in Times Square, New York

‘Wits. For Good’ was the theme of the gathering that attracted some impactful and prominent alumni who made their way to Times Square to celebrate with the Wits delegation led by Professor Zeblon Vilakazi, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Wits University.

An alumnus also honored Wits with an advertising spot on the façade of the Nasdaq building, on which the ‘Wits. For Good’ message was displayed.

“Wits University has over 200 000 talented [alumni](#) scattered across the globe who have played a key role in supporting Wits,” says Vilakazi. “These are innovators, change-makers, and catalysts who impact society, for good. They include Nobel Prize winners such as Nelson Mandela, CEOs, leaders in foundations and trusts, and individuals. We look forward to partnering with many more alumni, donors and entities in the USA, in years to come.”

[Robbie Brozin](#), the CEO of Nando’s, who is also spearheading an important Wits-Bara project, says: “This is a beautiful, iconic moment for Wits in Times Square. Wits is going into a new dimension now and I am so excited to be part of it. This is the start of a new partnership and I look forward to working with Wits on the Bara Digitisation Project [a project to systematically digitise records at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital]. This will bring new hope for South Africa. I am so excited and privileged to be a South African and a proud Witsie.”

[Read more here.](#)



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Vision

To ensure that Wits University remains one of Africa's – and the world's – pre-eminent research-intensive educational institutions, with top academic standards, committed faculty, and supportive alumni.

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THE JOSH FUND TURNS ONE



Sibonelo Kodisang, 2022 recipient of Josh Fund Wits University Scholarship



August marked the one-year anniversary of [the Josh Fund](#), an organization founded to honor the beloved talented composer, entrepreneur and extraordinary musician, Josh Markowitz (pictured above).

Working through the Wits Fund, a scholarship has been provided to qualified students pursuing a Bachelor of Music degree and entering the final years of study at the University of the Witwatersrand School. Channeling Josh's passion for multicultural music, especially sounds from South Africa. Wits is the alma mater of Josh's father Stephen, who credits his professional journey to his university. Josh himself traveled several times to South Africa, the country where his father was born and raised, where he collaborated with South African artists and was deeply honored to host six students at his Bar Mitzvah in Seattle, Washington.

Josh believed that music is transformative, empowering the lives of youth, turning dreams into reality. To honor this belief, family and friends have established a fund to support and nourish aspiring young musicians.

By appreciating music that came from all over the world, Josh understood that his own music could be sent out and shared worldwide. He believed aspiring, talented artists - despite their circumstances - deserved the opportunity to shine. That belief, and now that legacy, will live on forever.

The first recipient of the *Josh Fund: Wits University Music Scholarship* is the incredibly talented Sibonlwesihle Kodisang, known as Sibonelo, a jazz saxophonist. Sibonelo is in his third year at Wits pursuing his Bachelor in Music. Sibonelo embodies the passion and dedication to music that Josh carried with him throughout his life. Josh began his music career as a child playing the Saxophone, Sibonelo will bring Josh's spirit with him as the first recipient, in 2022.

We are looking forward to meeting the 2023 Josh Fund Wits Music School scholar.

Alumnus Spotlight

The wrongness of it all

Laraine Kentridge Lasdon

Austin, TX - August 2022



We were young when we discovered
the space hovering between earth and sky,
revealing stark inequities, dark, spawning clouds.
We understood the dangerous path of resistance.
We were not cowed.

Righteous and angry, we walked, as one,
no turning back from the crack of a gun.
That is how we were in 1964.
Bullets into pearls.
Pearls into wisdom.

We rebelled against the massacre at Sharpeville,
the arrest of Mandela, the 1964 Rivonia trial.
“I am prepared to Die” he said, not deny,
heard in the USA, twin to “I have a Dream”
1963, Martin Luther King. Their words recall
the wrongness of it all.

I can never unremember that time.
Fire in the belly and eye.
forged in the crucible of truth,
young souls burn, hearts in thrall
at the wrongness of it all.

I used my anger but never faced the horror
I sang the protest song - never loud enough
I carry the guilt of omission, of a lack of imagination.
I left my country when threats became attacks.

I was young and raw and turned my back
on the wrongness of it all.

From the vantage point of age
I urge the young to fight inertia.
March into danger, heed the call,
or live with what you know
is the wrongness of it all.

Love the new look? Have some suggestions? Want to tell us your story of how you
got here? Please write in and tell us: <https://witsfund.org/contact/>



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