



The US Witsie



Wits Fund Newsletter January 2023

witsfund.org

Wits turned 100 in 2022 Learn more [here](#).

SO YOU MADE IT TO THE END OF JANUARY...now what? Time to shake off the "Janu-worry blues" and figure out how you will have an impact in the world in 2023. Don't worry, we have some ideas for you!



HOW TO TURN 100 IN STYLE...AND FOR GOOD.



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United States & Canada

A highlight of the four-city West Coast visit in May was a spectacular alumni dinner hosted by Nicole and Bradley (an internationally recognized neurobiologist) Jabour at their beautiful home in Los Angeles (pictured left, from L to R) Noshin Erfani-Chadimi, Larry and Hedi Isaacs, Nicole and Bradley Jabour, Stephanie and Dr. Omer Benat, Prof. Zebulun Vilasak, Peter Besudenhoust, Nadine and Gary Barber (former CEO of Metro Goldwyn Mayer), Isaac Shongwe (Wits Chair of Council), and Kayla and Bryan Gordon. Charles Goldsack, a globally renowned music industry entrepreneur, Dr. David and Angela Fine (who have generously endowed the **David and Angela Fine Chair in Innovation**), Steve Olin (Chairman, President, and CEO of Amgen/Berger Corporation, a global healthcare solutions leader, currently ranked No. 10 on the Fortune 500), Paul Brink (CEO of Franco-Nevada Corporation) and Stanley and Dr. Marion Bergman (CEO of Henry Schein and pulmonologist, respectively), were some of the illustrious alumni who met with the Wits delegation during the three-city East Coast tour in September.

Celebrating #Wits100 in Times Square, NYC



Thembaile Xulu, Sherwin Charney, Robbly Bresh, Kundai Makgomothe, Prof. Helen Ross, Prof. Zebulun Vilasak, Ngweni Zizwile



Isaac Shongwe, Derek Schuler (CEO Helix Capital, San Francisco) and Prof. Zebulun Vilasak

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READ MORE ABOUT WITS 100 GLOBAL CELEBRATIONS IN 2022
(incl. the US and Canada pictured above) [here](#).



Wits mourns the passing of Dr Frene Ginwala

Wits University mourns the recent passing of struggle icon Dr Frene Ginwala (90) - a lawyer and academic, political leader and activist, journalist, and Speaker of South Africa's first democratically elected Parliament. An ardent feminist, Dr Ginwala [entrenched the principles of non-sexism](#) both within the ANC and broader society and ensured that women were actively involved in shaping our democracy, as described by Professor Shireen Hassim in *The Conversation*.

Dr Ginwala was [awarded an honorary doctorate from Wits University](#) in recognition of the selfless contribution that she made in the fight for a free, democratic South Africa. Listen to [her acceptance speech](#) delivered at Wits on 21 March 2022 where she spoke about the important role of higher education and its role in advancing democracy. Read more [here](#).

A Witsie Today, A Witsie Forever

Balungile Belz ([Wits Fund Board member](#)) and her eight month old son, Emerson, during their trip to South Africa over the December break. Balungile, who graduated with an MA in International Relations in 2013, and her family are based in Chicago, IL.



The Story of Wits and South Africa's National Coat of Arms



It was in the year 2000 when former President Thabo Mbeki approached the [Rock Art Research Institute](#) (RARI) in search of an indigenous art image to be represented in the coat of arms of the new South Africa. Scholars referred Mbeki to the famous Linton panel, a large slab of rock, measuring 2m by .8m, recovered from a rock shelter on a farm named Linton in 1918. The panel came to prominence after a male figure chosen from the panel became the figure we see today in the national coat of arms.

Wits Emeritus Professor and rock art specialist David Lewis-Williams was given an opportunity to translate the ancient San language for the national motto. He chose the |Xam words “!ke e: |xarra lke” from the phrases “people who are different” and “come together”.

Read more about this, and the current exhibition titled *!ke e: |xarra lke – People who are Different: Come Together* [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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KEEP GOING, *STRAIGHT-STRAIGHT*, UNTIL THE NEXT ROBOT: HOW AN AI OBSESSION TOOK ONE WITSIE FROM THE LIBRARY LAWNS TO THE IVY LEAGUE

IF YOU COULDN'T MAKE IT for the Wits Fund Indaba, and stories from [Prof George Konidaris](#) - of his favorite Library Lawn tree, the slushy dash, late-night inspiration from 5FM and Barney Simon, and the evolution of all the robots... they are here, in the recording below.
And he'll answer the question on all our minds <queue dramatic music>:
Will Robots Take Over the World?



George Konidaris (Wits Fund board member) is an Associate Professor of Computer Science at Brown University, where he directs the Intelligent Robot Lab.

Love the new look newsletter? 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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The University of the Witwatersrand Fund, Inc.
PO Box 7101, New York, NY 10150

