



The US Witsie



Wits Fund Newsletter January 2024

witsfund.org

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

HAPPY NEW YEAR WITSIES: may it be one filled with love, contentment and peace for you and your families. And may our global human family find the same.

WITS REMAINS A BEACON OF HOPE IN SOCIETY



As we think about our institution and how it advances the public good, we recognise that the world is facing multiple challenges including global conflicts, humanitarian crises, and a climate emergency.

Closer to home we have to contend with the national challenges associated with deepening inequality, energy and water insecurity and slow economic growth. Our staff and students continue to contribute towards addressing this national and global polycrisis in multiple ways, and as an institution we encourage critical thinking and reflection on how best to achieve solutions to these challenges.

As I reflect on this year and the many achievements of our staff and students, I know that Wits remains a beacon of hope in society, because of the commitment of members of the Wits community, and the diversity of views on the many challenges that we face.

Through harnessing our knowledge, research and expertise, our talented students and staff, and our local and global partnerships, we can work together to make this world a better place for all.

Read more [here](#).



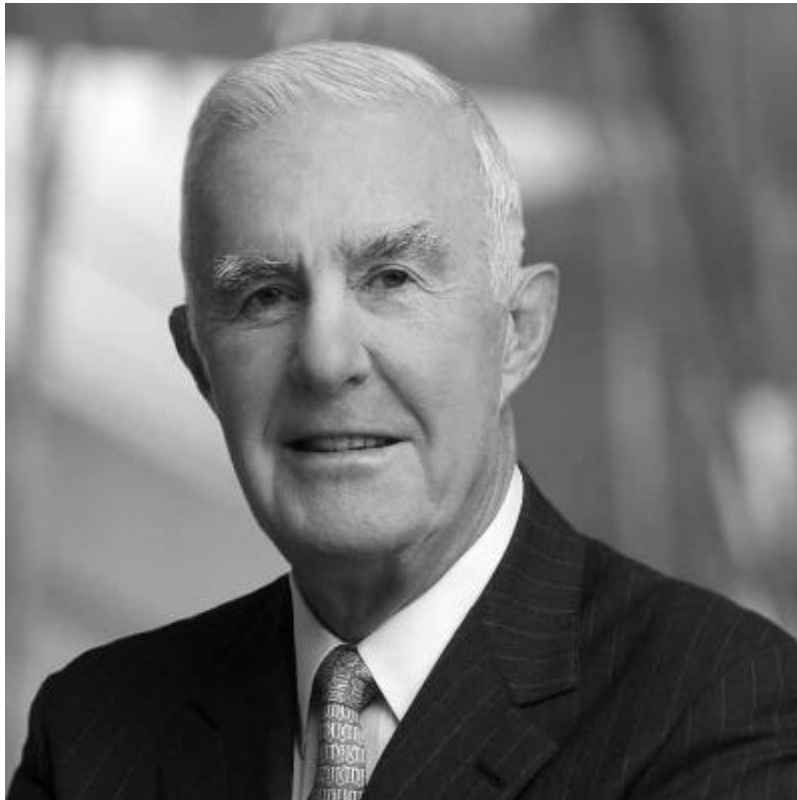
WATCH: Wits VC reflects on 2023

As we feel gratitude for the blessings in our lives, one way to pay it forward is through making an impact in a person's life that will

uplift them, and their family, for generations to come.

DONATE [HERE](#)

**IN MEMORIAM: JOHN STEELE CHALSTY, FOUNDING
MEMBER OF WITS FUND BOARD**



John Steele Chalsty (1933-2023)

John Steele Chalsty (BSc 1953, BSc Hons 1954, MSc 1955, DCom *honoris causa* 2005) business leader, former chairman and chief executive officer of Donaldson Lufkin & Jenrette Inc and founder of the Wits Fund in the US, passed away peacefully at the age of 90 in his home on 12 November 2023.

Chalsty was born in 1933 and began his academic journey at Wits, completing honours and master's degree in chemistry and physics. He is remembered for his sporting prowess as a member of the Wits Rugby First XV. In 1954 the team beat Pretoria University 12-0. After receiving the Stanvac Scholarship in 1955,

he travelled to the US to study at Harvard University.



In a 2007 interview he said: "I had turned in work at Wits on a PhD in chemistry and thought I could pick it up at Harvard," he recalls. It wasn't so easy, however. "I heard I would have to start all over again. Another four years of chemistry was appalling. I looked around for something to do and discovered the business school. I found I had somehow stumbled into the right career."

Chalsty also served in leadership roles with other prominent institutions, including vice chairman of the New York Stock Exchange, president of the New York Society of Security Analysts, and board member of Occidental Petroleum, Metromedia International Group, Inc, and Sappi Global.

He did not forget his beginnings and remained a supporter of South Africa. He helped to establish the University of the Witwatersrand Inc. (the Wits Fund) in the United States, an entity that continues to be of vital importance to the University. The Chalsty name is proudly emblazoned on one of the outstanding meeting spaces on West Campus, associated with the [Mandela Institute](#) and the School of Law, because of his pivotal and founding donation to the Institute.

Read more [here](#).

REMEMBERING GRAD AT WITS AS AN AMERICAN STUDENT



During the Wits Grad Season in December 2023, [Dr. Nafeesah Allen wrote a LinkedIn post](#) about her own Wits PhD graduation. With her kind permission, we reproduce the post below:

On a December day like this one, my husband and I packed up our two small kids and our UppaBaby for a milestone event. I crossed the stage in front of Judy Dlamini, MD, PhD at the University of Witwatersrand and have never been the same since.

It was 2019 and my fourth degree from a globally-recognized, top-tier institution of higher learning. Old hat.

I'd only gone to my undergraduate graduation because my grandma wanted to go - you know, when a lady who grew up on a farm in Alabama says you better do something, it is done.

But my PhD was different. It felt different. And I haven't been the same since.

When I registered at ACMS, I was unmarried, new to ZA and MOZ. I graduated full grown. Old and married with 2 small kids and big dreams. I wore missangas proudly that day to remind myself that a girl from Newark could be so strong, could go so far, and her legacy could be timeless, too.

As far as I am aware, I'm the first on both sides of my family to earn a doctorate

degree. Sadly, grandma wasn't there but she wanted to be—but that 30 hr flight.

Since then, so much has happened.

Books, more babies, companies, confidence, deals, titles, positions, offers, promotions, and a lot of late nights with a keyboard, baby bottle, and gel pen in hand.

I can look back and say that this picture marks the beginning of a becoming.

I'm so happy for all of you who will cross that stage and move that tassel this week. You're excited about it now, but give it a few years...You will be awestruck by your younger self... congratulations Kudus! Proud Witsie!

[hashtag#graduatestudents](#)

[hashtag#phdlife](#)

[hashtag#witsie](#)

[hashtag#johannesburg](#)



WATCH: WITS LATEST NEWS IN SIXTY SECONDS - In this episode, more than 2,500 students graduated this December, two students were honored at the Global Undergraduate Awards and an upgraded Micro CT Scanner that gives invisible 3D eyes to scientists was unveiled. We celebrate dedicated staff who retire from Wits this year and catch up on the season's greetings from Wits Vice-Chancellor Professor Zeblon Vilakazi (FRS) as he sums up the year. Read the full stories [here](#).

[The University of the Witwatersrand Fund, Inc.](#) is a corporation under the Internal Revenue Code, section 501 (c) (3). Donations are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. The Wits Fund IRS EIN number is: **13-3902012**.

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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