



The US Witsie



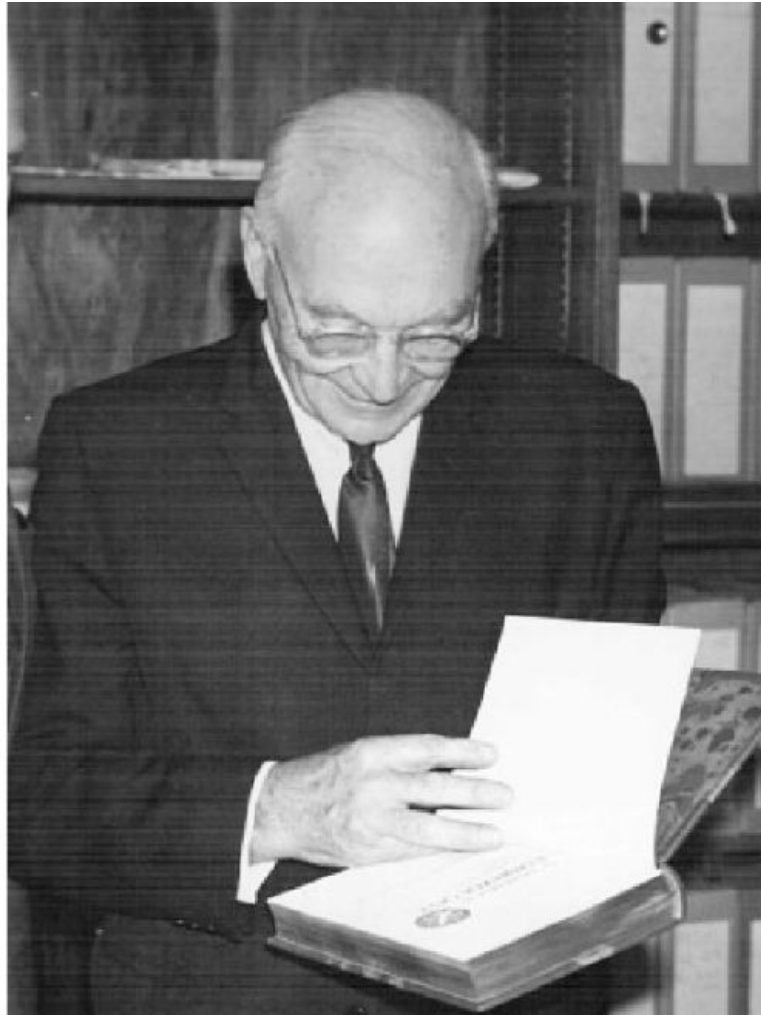
Wits Fund Newsletter April 2024

witsfund.org

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

IN A WORLD SEARCHING FOR MIRACLES, be the reason someone else is able to take a step forward, to feel good about themselves, and to have courage. Be the miracle.

**SYMPOSIUM HELD TO HONOUR
PROFESSOR BORIS BALINSKY**



Wits and the Embassy of Ukraine to South Africa come together to honor a scientist son of both countries.

The much anticipated Balinsky Symposium was a commemoration of the life and legacy of world-renowned Wits scientist Professor Boris Balinsky, who died in 1997.

The two-day event was a celebration of the pioneering biologist, embryologist, and entomologist's research endeavors, achievements and passion for science over his 92 years of life. In his academic life he earned deep respect as a scientist, teacher, mentor and leader whose work in experimental embryology and electron microscopy was lauded as ground breaking and visionary. He authored over 140 scientific papers and his textbook *An Introduction to Embryology* was translated into five languages reaching students and scholars across the globe with over 100 000 copies printed (pictured above).

[Speaking live](#), his "academic grandchild", [Professor Hazel Sive](#) was able to show Professor Balinsky's seminal work has been influential to her own academic research and breakthroughs. Professor Sive, a member of the Wits Fund Board, became Dean of the College of Science, and Professor of Biology

at Northeastern University, Boston USA in June 2020. She is a research pioneer, award-winning educator and innovator in the higher education space.



Starting from her undergraduate years at Wits, when she was introduced to the frog *Xenopus* by Dr. Barry Fabian, Dr. Sive has become a world leader in frog care and methodology. She initiated the Early Development and Cell Biology of *Xenopus* Course at Cold Spring Harbor Labs, that continues annually, more than 30 years on. She is Editor-in-Chief of *Xenopus: A Lab Manual* (2023, Cold Spring Harbor Press): with 18 Chapters and 213 authors, there has never before been a book of this magnitude focusing on the *Xenopus* system.

Read more about the symposium [here](#).



WATCH: PROFESSOR HAZEL SIVE SHOWS THE IMPACT OF PROFESSOR BALINSKY'S WORK ON HER OWN BREAKTHROUGH RESEARCH.

WITS HOUSES CENTERS OF GLOBAL LEADERSHIP



Wits US Representative, [Nooshin Erfani-Ghadimi](#), was on campus at Wits University in February this year, and has shared some updates, pics and videos of her time there:

I had the opportunity to visit the Wits University campus in Johannesburg for a series of meetings, in February 2024.

Southern Centre for Inequality Studies (SCIS) in new premises – the oats baron’s house:

The SCIS is an interdisciplinary research centre focused on understanding and addressing inequality in the global South, and around the world. It is directed by Professor Imraan Valodia, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Climate, Sustainability and Inequality.

In my visit with the teams, we discussed particular US partners and donors, including the Schrier Foundation, Ford Foundation, Open Society Initiatives.

We discussed approaches to new donors and partners and to work together to strategically push forward these important connections.

Interestingly, the SCIS has found a new home in one of Wits national treasurer properties, on the Wits Business School campus. Called “North Lodge”, it used to be a home of an “oats baron”, and is an historical landmark.



David and Angela Fine Chair for Innovation, and the Wits Innovation Centre (WIC):

I met up with Adam Pantanowitz (Fine Chair, and WIC Director) and Letlotlo Phohole (Deputy Director of the WIC) at their team’s new home at the “Wits Plus” building on west campus. They had moved to the space just a few days previously, and some of the staff were also brand new. There is a lot of potential for ensuring spaces for ideation and creation, work, and teaching and

meeting for staff and students in years to come.

The team is already working on helping faculties with their IP and patent management. And the hosting of industry/corporate R&D labs on campus is also imminent. And the senior leadership of the University is very much involved and supportive of the role of the Chair and WIC in setting up Wits for its 2nd century.

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.

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WHY WE RUN: ROB FRYER IN WITS REVIEW



Above: Rob Fryer at the Boston Marathon in 2013, an hour before the bombing, as he describes in his book *Running For Your Life – Exploring the Amazing Benefits of Regular Exercise*. **Opposite:** Fryer during the 1988 Comrades Marathon at Botha's Hill.

[Rob Fryer, Wits Fund Treasurer](#) and life-long runner, [was profiled in the latest Wits Review](#). We provide an excerpt below, with his kind permission:

"Rob Fryer earned nine silver medals in the Comrades over 11 years and one silver at Two Oceans, between 1977 and 1988. His running career spans five decades and he says: "I have run over a quarter of the distance to the moon, including 120 marathons and ultra-marathons, and hundreds of shorter distance races."

Over the course of his career, Fryer worked for Deloitte all over the world and is now consulting from home. **About his role as the Wits Fund treasurer he says: "I owe my entire career as a professional accountant to Wits and you want to give back. So many people on the Wits Fund feel the**

obligation and responsibility, and encourage others to do the same."

Fryer is now 77 and he continues to run marathons in his age group. "You remain competitive and want to make sure that no one older than you beats you," he laughs. At age 70 he ran a 50km race in Connecticut and was first in the over-60 age group."

Read more [here](#):



WATCH: WITS LATEST NEWS IN SIXTY SECONDS - In this episode, Four mining companies give R40 million to advance research, teaching and awareness in geosciences through the Bushveld Geology and Metallurgy Research Chair in Geosciences, bats' pre-Pleistocene records are sparse despite abundant fossils and Wits staff achieve common purpose through a development programme. Learn about the Boris Balinsky Symposium to honour the revered scientist and the STEM MentHER induction programme to inspire Grade 12 girls.. Read the full stories [here](#).

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Vision

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