



The US Witsie



Wits Fund Newsletter August 2024

witsfund.org

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

AS SUMMER WINDS DOWN and children head back to school, it is amazing to think of the potential of each child, and how they can change the world. Our role is to ensure that the world they inherit will be better, and safer, and more equitable. And for those heading to university, to make sure that their experience is as rewarding as ours was.

NETFLIX INVESTS IN WITS FILMMAKERS



Students in the [Film and TV Department](#) in the [Wits School of Arts \(WSOA\)](#) are to benefit from a Netflix Creative Equity grant from the global streaming entertainment service.

The Netflix grant will be used to develop creative digital infrastructure in the Department at Wits University and will provide students with state-of-the-art equipment in their learning and content-creation journey.

This grant will advance the University's mission to train industry-ready graduates with access to contemporary industry equipment, and Netflix's goal to advance equity for emerging film and TV creatives through its [Netflix Fund for Creative Equity](#)

Read more [here](#).

WITS FUND INDABA - "From Honors to Honors"

We are so excited to host notable US Witsie, Dr. Donal Skinner (Wits BSc Hons, 1988) at our next Indaba, and to hear his amazing life story.

Thursday, September 12th | 8pm Eastern | 7pm Central | 5pm Pacific
RSVP to nooshin.erfani-ghadimi@wits.ac.za by 9 September

Dr Skinner is dean of the Hobson Wildenthal Honors College and professor of

biology. He received his PhD from the University of Cambridge, England, followed by postdoctoral fellowships at Cambridge and the Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique, France. His research focused on the mechanisms driving hormone secretion by the brain, especially that of gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH). He is passionate about facilitating undergraduate research and study abroad opportunities.

See Donal Skinner's full profile [here](#).



Wits Fund Board invites you to the

WITS FUND INDABA

From Honors to Honors – How High Impact Wits Experiences took an Alumnus Around the World

by Donal C. Skinner, PhD
Dean, Hobson Wildenthal Honors College,
University of Texas at Dallas

Invitation



Donal Skinner, PhD

 Thursday, 12 September 2024

 7pm central time (8pm eastern, 5pm pacific).

RSVP: nooshin.erfani-ghadimi@wits.ac.za by 9 September.

STUDYING INNOVATIONS IN DEMOCRACY AT WITS



The Ambassador of France to South Africa, H.E. David Martinon, joined Wits Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Zeblon Vilakazi and Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation, Professor Lynn Morris, and Professor Achille Mbembe, to officially open the new offices of the [Wits Innovation Foundation for Democracy](#).

The Foundation looks to reshape discussions about democracy in Africa. It is a Pan-African non-profit organization, working mainly in three areas: research and scholarship, education, and advocacy. Its aim is to advance research and education policy to sustain and enhance democracy in Africa.

Read more [here](#).

WATCH: "THE PARADOX OF ABUNDANCE"



Solar Socialism: Wind, sunlight and the paradox of abundance: Wits Series talk given by Professor David McDermott Hughes, Rutgers University.

"Sunlight outstrips fossil fuels by a factor of ten thousand. As a daily, never-ending resource, wind also vastly exceeds oil, coal, and methane. Proponents of renewable energy have yet to grapple with this abundance."

ETHICS OF USING AI AND BIG DATA IN RESEARCH



Philosophical, legal, moral, teaching and other angles unpacked at Wits SARIMA Carnegie 4th annual Global Ethics Day online event on 6 August.

Hosted by Wits University, in partnership with the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) and the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, the online colloquium used legal,

philosophical, moral and practical arguments for and against the integration of AI technology into the research environment.

Each of the guest speakers had cautionary words around the potential for the misuse and misapplication of a technology which has become a part of our everyday lives, including in academia.

Read more [here](#).

TAKE YOUR DINOSAUR TO SCHOOL DAY



"When did you find your first dinosaur?", "Where can we find dinosaurs in South Africa?"

These were some of the pressing questions young learners posed to a team of Wits University palaeontologists visiting the Saheti School in Bedfordview, Johannesburg, recently.

This was the second outreach to the school by Professor Jonah Choiniere from the Evolutionary Studies Institute at Wits, accompanied by three PhD students, Atashni Moopen, Chandelé Montgomery, and Lutendo Mukwevho, and Master of Science student Enele Twala. The aim of the outreach is to expose Grade R learners to the discoveries of South African dinosaurs.

The Wits team gave a short presentation about their work as palaeontologists, demonstrating the tools of their trade and showing videos depicting a day in the life of a dinosaur dig.

Read more [here](#).

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 families, for generations to come.

DONATE [HERE](#)



WATCH: WITS' LATEST NEWS IN SIXTY SECONDS - In this episode, We catch up with leading intellectual Professor Achille Mbembe who is at the forefront of reshaping African democracy through the recently established Wits Innovation Foundation for Democracy. The Wits School of Geosciences celebrates a remarkable achievement, winning 4 out of 7 prestigious Geological Society of South Africa awards this year. Meanwhile, Prof. Collen Masimirembwa is set to receive the Precision Medicine World Conference Pioneer Award at the 2025 PMWC in Silicon Valley. Two Wits PhD students have been recognized through the 2024 Ivan Karp Doctoral Research Awards, and the University recently hosted a Womxn's Day dialogue, where students and women leaders engaged in critical discussions on civic engagement, gender equality, and more.

Read the full stories [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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