



# The US Witsie



Wits Fund Newsletter November 2025

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**Wits Fund Board Vice-President, Prof. Teboho Moja,  
Honored for Contribution to Global Education**



**Wits Fund Board Vice-President, [Prof. Teboho Moja](#) (pictured above seated middle) was recently honored as an Outstanding Educator. The award was presented by South Africa's Former President Thabo Mbeki, who also serves as the Chancellor at the University of South Africa (Unisa).**

The Outstanding Educator Award, presented to Professor Moja, acknowledges the contribution of an outstanding educator who has excelled in or advanced teaching and learning, skills development and/or research in his/or her area of expertise.

Professor Moja was recognized for her role in shaping South Africa's higher education policy and for earning numerous international awards for her leadership and scholarship.

Read more [here](#).

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## **What Next After Post-Pandemic Seismic Shifts?**



**The Covid-19 Pandemic revealed the truth: humans are mortal — but they can also organize, strategize and fight to survive.**

The latest issue of [Wits University's research magazine, Curiosi.ty](#) includes an in-depth look at responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. The global outbreak disrupted science and society with devastating effect, but it also ignited the innovation and imagination that we will need to confront future pandemics.

Curiosi.ty is Wits' award-winning research magazine that explores innovative ideas, cutting-edge science, and thought-provoking discoveries. First published in 2017, Curiosi.ty provides a platform for Wits academics, researchers, and postgraduate students to share insights that tackle the pressing issues of our time. Each edition is themed and unpacks these topics in an accessible and engaging way, bringing research to life.

The #Disruption edition explores the crises, tech, research, and people shaking up our world in 2025. It's the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology and we reveal how Wits scientists have engineered a world-first quantum system that is able to ignore noise. Five years post-Covid, we showcase African biomedical and public health innovations that emerged during crisis, and how to pandemic-proof our future. Artificial intelligence is everywhere, and Wits MIND institute fellows bring a human and scientific lens

to the purpose, practice, and ethics of human, animal and machine intelligence. We explore how researchers are disrupting the *status quo* in diverse fields including agriculture and architecture, animation and rock art, precision medicine and amapiano, the law and research management. With the world tumultuous and on a geopolitical knife's edge, disruption is both crisis and opportunity. Wits researchers lead the way.

Read more [here](#)

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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.

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### Innovation Without Borders



**New video series explores what innovation really means in a university: 'Innovation Without Boundaries'**

Produced by the Wits Innovation Centre, the series explores what innovation looks like beyond the boundaries and expectations imposed on this important concept.

The first episode of this monthly podcast series features Dr David Fine, Wits alumnus and a prolific scientist and inventor, whose advances have influenced daily life, from food safety to explosives testing in airports. He is also the [generous donor of the Angela and David Fine Chair of Innovation](#).



In his episode, Fine describes what he calls the 'beginner's mind'. He says that approaching his work and research with fresh eyes and without the established preconceptions in a field has allowed him to rethink and innovate how things can be. He animatedly tells stories of how he broke the norms in several fields and switched work interests when he felt he was no longer having fun and impacting things deeply.

The series features the [WIC's](#) Acting Angela and David Fine Chair of Innovation, [Professor Christo Doherty](#), in conversation with thinkers, doers, and disruptors shaping the future of innovation in Africa and beyond. "I hope the conversations in the series will stimulate interest and thinking about what we understand to be the meaning of innovation in our African context, in the African research university, and how to do innovation in different and new ways," he says.

Read more [here](#).

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**Inside the Cookbook of Genetic Recipes**



**Witsie Caitlin Wheeler (pictured above) is a Novartis Next Generation Scientist whose PhD zooms in on confounding questions about autoimmune liver disease.**

“DNA is the double helix. What I’m studying, the RNA with the gene expression, is a single strand,” she says. Her PhD is an investigation into the molecular markers that drive this autoimmune liver disease especially in young African women.

African populations are largely underrepresented in global research — especially in the omics space. ‘Omics’ is a term encompassing several different technologies such as genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, metabolomics, etc.

“The omics all have a special superpower,” explains Caitlin. “For example, genomics looks at large amounts of genetic data and can further link this to health trends.”

A study like Caitlin’s PhD has likely not been done in Africa before, and research is limited. To undertake single cell sequencing, she needs skills that are not readily available in South Africa. That’s why pharma giant, Novartis, selected her as one of its Next Generation Scientists.

Read more [here](#).

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### **WATCH | Wits in 60 Seconds**

Seven rising SA tech start-ups are heading to Dublin after clinching top spots in the Irish Tech Challenge SA 2025. Wits Libraries unlock new possibilities with the newly launched Open Data Vault and a PhD researcher traces the genetic pathways behind autoimmune liver disease. We also look at Wits' contribution to Africa's first brain health strategy showcased at the G20 and how fresh mapping from the Wits Innovation Centre is shaping support for the country's next generation of agripreneurs.

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The University of the Witwatersrand Fund, Inc.  
PO Box 7101, New York, NY 10150

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