



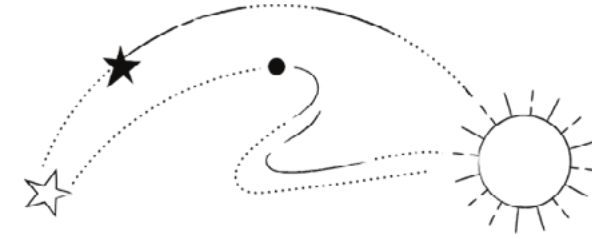
# Canon Collins Trust

## ANNUAL REVIEW 2025

Harnessing the power of *scholarships* to create  
SYSTEMIC CHANGE



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# CHAIRPERSON'S REFLECTION



## CHARTING A BOLD PATH FORWARD

### Keith Holdt Reflects on his first year as Chair

As we present the Canon Collins Trust annual accounts for 2025, I am pleased to report on a year of strong momentum. Having taken on the role of Chair in 2024, this year has focused on turning our strategic ambitions into concrete action – and the progress has been heartening.

For over four decades, the Trust has awarded more than 3,600 postgraduate scholarships across southern Africa, investing over R300 million in education for social justice since 2000 alone. In a world marked by rising inequality and uncertainty, our mission remains vital: to develop ethical leaders who use their knowledge to challenge and transform unjust systems.

A notable achievement of 2025 has been the broadening of our strategic relationships. We have strengthened our engagement with key government departments, including the Department of Higher Education and Training and the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation. We also began deepening our engagement with the business sector, exploring how corporate South Africa can contribute to higher education as part of both social justice and economic development.

Our partnerships with universities have expanded and the pursuit of initiatives like a **Global Mandela Leadership Centre of Excellence** reflects how the Trust is positioning itself at the nexus of scholarship and systemic change.

A significant development was our

expression of commitment to the Presidential PhD Programme. Supporting scholars in key areas of knowledge production marks a bold step in scale and ambition, reaffirming our belief that doctoral study is an investment in the region's future leadership.

A highlight for me was attending the Annual Scholar Conference, where over 150 scholars and alumni gathered with trustees. The energy, curiosity, and intellectual rigour on display were inspiring. These scholars are not passive recipients of funding; they are emerging leaders actively shaping the debates that will define southern Africa's future.

Our work is sustained by a community of scholars, alumni, donors, and partners whose generosity and belief in our mission make everything possible.

As we look ahead, the strategic foundations laid in 2024 are bearing fruit. With strengthened partnerships and bold ambitions, we are poised for greater reach, deeper impact, and long-term sustainability. Thank you for being part of this journey.

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REFLECTION



## ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE FOR THE FUTURE

### Reflections on 2025 from the Executive Director Ivor Baatjes

As we look back on 2025, I am struck by how profoundly this year reminded us of both the fragility and the possibility of our social landscape. Across southern Africa, we continued to witness communities confronting layered crises – youth unemployment, inequitable access to education, deepening gender-based

violence, and the ongoing syndemics that shape the lives of the most vulnerable. These are not isolated challenges; they are the result of long-standing structural inequalities that demand intentional, collective, and justice-oriented action.

In this context, the work of the Canon Collins Trust took on renewed urgency and purpose. Our scholars, partners, and networks demonstrated that meaningful change is possible when we approach leadership not as an individual pursuit, but as a shared, relational, and socially engaged endeavour. The scholars' research, spanning climate justice, legal advocacy, women in science, community health, and socially engaged scholarship, reflected this ethos, strengthening the shared commitment to build systems of care, collaboration, and critical consciousness.

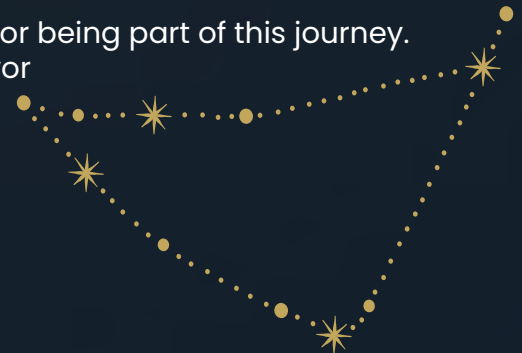
What stands out most in 2025 is the depth of solidarity that emerged across the ecosystem. From community organisers and researchers to civil society partners and donors, each played a vital role in advancing scholarship anchored in justice, ethical leadership, and human dignity. Behind every achievement in this Annual Review lies a story of perseverance,

dialogue, and collective learning. It is in this spirit of co-creation, so central to transformative education, that our impact continues to grow.

As we move into 2026, we do so with clarity and conviction. Our task is to deepen the partnerships that enable long-term, systemic change—linking higher education, civil society, government, and grassroots movements in purposeful, future-building work. We remain committed to nurturing scholars who not only excel academically, but who lead with compassion, courage, and a profound sense of responsibility to their communities.

To our partners, board, staff, donors, alumni, and scholars: thank you for walking this path with us. If 2025 has taught us anything, it is that if you want to go far, go together – and together, we carry forward the work of creating a more just, equitable, and hopeful region for all.

Thank you for being part of this journey.  
Sincerely, Ivor



# SCHOLARSHIPS



“What made this year so special wasn’t only the extraordinary scholars we were privileged to support, but the way they showed up for one another and for the Trust. They poured their time and talent into applications, interviews, and workshops, making this year’s Conference our most inspiring yet. Behind them stood a dedicated team and generous, deeply committed funders. Even in a year of tighter resources, this collective spirit reminded us why this work matters ... and why it is so rewarding.”

Eva Lenicka, Scholarships Manager

## *Pictured overleaf*

1. Siyabonga Dlamini, LLB, University of the Western Cape.
2. Hazel Mukunyaidze, LLB, University of Fort Hare.
3. Mbulelo Qotoyi, LLB, Cum Laude, University of the Western Cape
4. Sandas Madziva, LLB, University of Fort Hare.
5. Nigel Tanaka Zhuwawu, LLB, University of Fort Hare.
6. Takudzwa Matekwe, LLM, University of Pretoria.
7. Previous Patience Mufunganzira, LLB, University of Fort Hare.
8. Linekela Paul Nanyeni, MEd, University of the Witwatersrand.
9. Sara Iyaloo Ekondo, Master’s of Management in Entrepreneurship and New Venture Creation, University of the Witwatersrand.
10. Dr Gerald J.T. Mandisodza, LLD, University of the Western Cape.
11. Aarti Bhana, MA Journalism and Media Studies, University of the Witwatersrand.
12. Bahati Msosa, LLM Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa, University of Pretoria.
13. Dr Sikelela Ndlazi, LLD, UNISA.
14. Dr Kathleen Mpfu, LLD, University of the Witwatersrand.
15. Dr David Sidney Mangwegape, PhD Health Sciences, North-West University.
16. Dr Msakha Mona, PhD Education, University of Cape Town.



# IMPACT

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Scholars supported in 2025



Differently abled



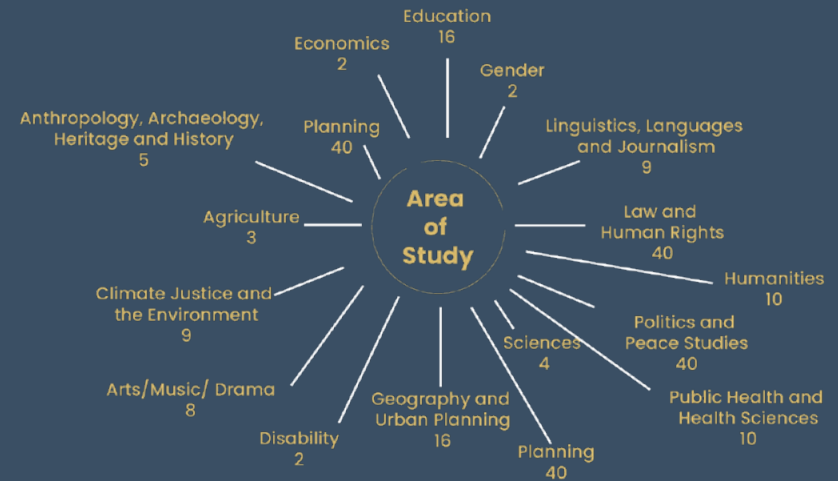
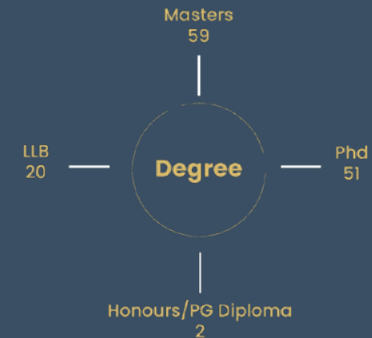
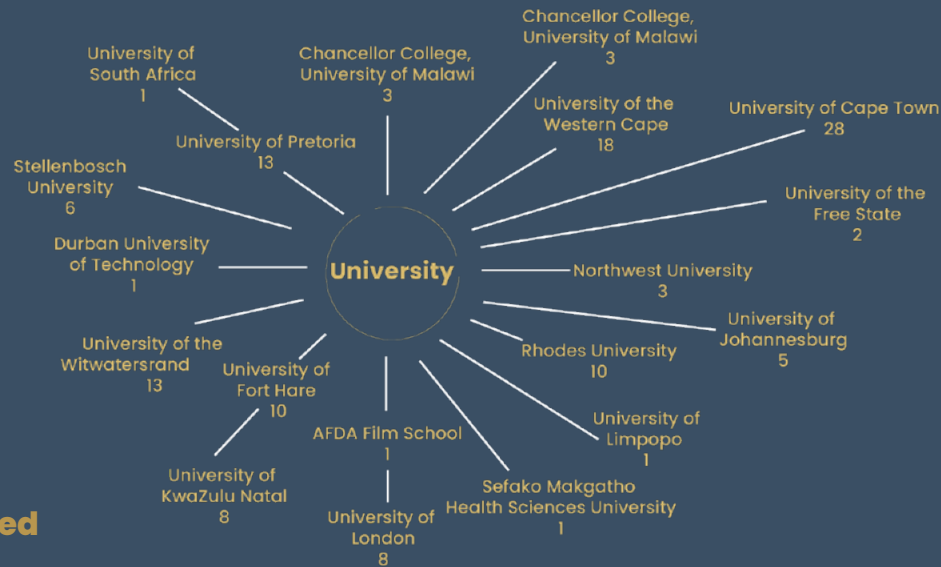
73 Female



57 Male



2 Non-binary



# BUILDING NETWORK LEADERSHIP FOR COLLABORATIVE, GENERATIVE CHANGE



“What has stood out most in 2025 is how people have shown up for one another, sharing experience, expertise, curiosity and encouragement in ways that shaped not only the work we produced, but the kind of community we believe in. This has set a strong foundation for what’s ahead in 2026 as we continue to nurture the living infrastructure of the CCT Network – the exchanges, collaborations and friendships that make better things possible.”

Dr Gillian Atwood, Engagement and Learning Manager



## Transforming Knowledge for Just and Sustainable Futures: A Seminar Series in Partnership

In October 2024, the Transforming Knowledge for Just and Sustainable Futures in Africa Project at the University of Cape Town began a conversation with the Canon Collins Trust about a shared ambition: to reimagine the role of research in advancing social justice. This led to a collaborative seminar series dedicated to transforming how knowledge is produced, shared and embedded in society.

Aligned with UNESCO's *Futures of Education* vision for democratised and co-created knowledge, the webinar series brought together senior and early-

career researchers, scholars, activists, policymakers, and community partners.

The first webinar in April 2025 with Leon Tikly, opened a critical conversation on reimagining dominant knowledge systems through inclusive governance and civic engagement. The second, in May 2025 with Rebecca Tarlau, examined scholar activism and social movement learning amid global attacks on higher education. The third webinar, featuring Enver Motala and Leon Tikly, engaged the "polycrisis" of the political economy and explored transformative alternatives emerging from social movements.

## Building Network Leadership for Collaborative, Generative Change

The Transforming Knowledge Seminar Series contributed to an important set of conversations about how research needs to evolve in a changing world.

Alongside this, the **Generative Research Community**—supported by the Mastercard Foundation's Employee Innovation Fund (EIF)—has been established as a sustained

initiative focused on strengthening network leadership and collaborative, relational approaches to knowledge creation. Bringing together scholars, alumni, and practitioners across Southern Africa, the Community creates an ongoing space for practicing these shifts.

Through facilitated convenings, peer learning spaces, and reflective practices, the initiative is cultivating the relational infrastructure that underpins effective collaboration—trust, shared language, and the capacity to work across difference. Participants report stronger connections across disciplines and geographies, increased confidence in collaborative work, and a growing ability to integrate more reflexive and inclusive approaches into their research.

Early outcomes include the emergence of new collaborations, shared areas of inquiry, and a deepening sense of belonging within the network. In this way, the initiative extends the value of the Canon Collins Trust scholarship beyond individual achievement towards a more connected, generative research ecosystem oriented towards collective impact.

[Watch recordings of all our events](#)

Images from the Conference



## The Writing Group

A key part of this community is the Writing Group, which meets every weekday morning. It provides a structured, supportive environment in which scholars can:

- ✦ Strengthen their voice and clarity
- ✦ Build confidence in their writing
- ✦ Practise generative methodologies in real time
- ✦ Create accountability with peers
- ✦ Develop cross-border relationships

This consistent daily rhythm has built deep trust and strengthened the cohesion of the wider network. Over time, it has shaped a distinctive community of practice defined by care, rigour, shared learning, and experimentation.

## Emerging Impact

Early participation shows strong interest from scholars across different countries and career stages. There are already signs of wider influence: participants are applying generative tools in their institutions, starting new collaborations, and rethinking their roles within broader research systems.

By investing in relationships and generative practice, this initiative supports more than individual growth. It is strengthening the Canon Collins Network itself – helping to build a more connected, resilient, and Africa-centred research ecosystem.

Writing Retreat



# NEWS

**Ivor Baatjes**, with scholars such as Helga Jansen-Daugbjerg, alumni like Prof. Monwabisi Ralarala, and Chairperson Keith Holdt, visited several universities last year, including the University of the Free State, Nelson Mandela University and the University of the Western Cape – to offer a message of hope. He inspired audiences to believe that community-driven and transformative education can help build a more just and humane future.



Keith Holdt at the Nelson Mandela University

**Dr Daniel Tau** has been appointed Chairperson of the University of Botswana Council drawing on his extensive leadership experience as former Vice Chancellor of the Botswana Open University.

## Voices Unbound

Last year, the Voices Unbound series – held in partnership with the Soul City Institute for Social Justice – created dynamic spaces for feminist reflection and dialogue. The first event, *Hells Belles? Women, the Church and Spirituality*, explored how women and queer individuals navigate patriarchal faith spaces and how storytelling can shift oppressive narratives. The second dialogue, *Patriarchal Princesses: Women Rejecting Feminism?*, examined internalised patriarchy, the impact of popular media, and young women’s growing disillusionment with feminist movements.

Through the series, scholars **Shakira Qwabe** and **Tumi Mampane** enriched discussions with their insights on feminist theory, identity, and lived experience. Together with feminist leaders and thinkers, they helped deepen collective understanding of gender, power, and social justice.

[Watch recordings of all our events](#)

2017 Scholars’ Scholar, **Dr Phila Msimang** was inaugurated into the South African Young Academy of Science. The honour recognises his leadership in advancing rigorous, impact-driven research and joins him to a community of exceptional young scientists in South Africa.

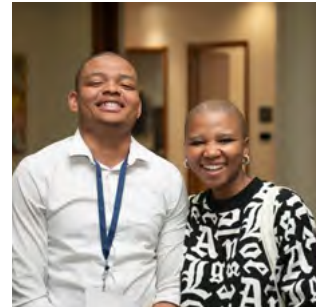
## Gathering for Justice: Building Caring Communities

The 2025 **Canon Collins Scholars’ Conference** brought together more than 150 scholars, alumni, and partners from across southern Africa for a weekend of learning, reflection, and collective purpose under the theme “**Gathering for Justice, Building Caring Communities.**” The event highlighted how research, activism, and community engagement intersect to drive social justice, with keynote speaker Nomzamo Zondo urging delegates to embrace honesty, accountability, and care as essential practices for sustaining meaningful change.

Across the conference, participants emphasised the importance of community building, solidarity, and shared spaces where ideas can be exchanged and renewed. The gathering affirmed the power of collective action and celebrated the contributions of Canon Collins scholars and alumni who continue to shape movements for justice across the region.

*“I left the conference with a sense of appreciation for being part of a network rooted in building communities of hope.”*  
Dr Fadia Gamielien

Images from the Conference



## The RMTF Change Maker Award

The Ros Moger Terry Furlong (RMTF) Change Maker Award provides three R20 000 grants to support scholar and alumni' social impact initiatives, amplifying their positive impact on communities.

This year's Change Maker Award winners were selected by a panel of fellow alumni and applicants were offered support and training in the application process.

These three projects were selected:



**Sandas Madziva** leads the **Shurugwi District Grade 7 Exam Access Initiative**. The project pays exam fees for more than 50 vulnerable but high-potential learners and provides essential revision materials. By securing access to exams, the initiative prevents school dropouts, and strengthens the long-term resilience of Shurugwi's next generation.



**Dr Cerene Rathilal** founded **STEM MentHER**, a national mentorship programme addressing gender inequality in STEM. Pairing high school girls with women mentors across seven universities, the programme provides workshops, mentorship, career guidance, and wellness support, with all mentees progressing to university.



**Ntokozi Sibahle Yingwana** is a researcher at the African Centre for Migration & Society ACMS. Her work documents and advocates for sex workers' access to human right. Her Change Maker Award project partners with **Mothers for the Future** to train sex worker mothers as accredited Early Childhood Development caregivers, advancing opportunity in a highly stigmatised community.

## Troubling Power Essay Competition



In his essay, **Gerson Ingashipola Shikukumwa** (pictured below) comments on how southern Africa's land systems remain shaped by deeply unequal and historically entrenched property structures. He shows how constitutional silence and the myth of neutrality have preserved colonial patterns of ownership – a perspective that earned him the top prize in the Canon Collins Troubling Power Essay Competition.



In her essay, **Kimberly Zvikomborero Mabaso** reflects on her life lived in in between ability and disability, citizenship and exile, recognition and misunderstanding. Her powerful essay earned the top prize in the Troubling Power Essay Competition. It challenges systems that force people to prove belonging and calls for structures that recognise individuals as they are, even when they do not fit prescribed categories.



# WOMEN IN SCIENCE

Across southern Africa, a powerful new generation of women scientists is reshaping the boundaries of knowledge, innovation, and social impact.

- We celebrate four scholars whose journeys illuminate the transformative power of research grounded in community, justice, and possibility.

From advancing climate-resilient agriculture in rural Limpopo to strengthening malaria diagnostics for vulnerable communities; from safeguarding Africa's food future to pioneering pharmacological research, these women are redefining what scientific leadership looks like across the continent. Their stories remind us that science can be a catalyst for equity and change.

Here, we honour their contributions, their courage, and their vision for a more just scientific future.



## BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE FROM THE GROUND UP

**Ntshobelo Maluleke**

MSc Environmental & Geographical Sciences, University of Cape Town

*“Real change happens when research and policy meet – and when communities are part of the conversation.”*

Growing up in the fast-paced environment of an urban township, Ntshobelo Maluleke never expected her scientific journey to lead her deep into the agricultural landscapes of Limpopo. As a child, she dreamt of becoming a meteorologist – a “weather person” – captivated by how weather shaped everyday life. That fascination led her to study environmental science. But

as she learned more about climate change and its unequal impact, her path shifted. She realised she wanted to work at the intersection of environment, agriculture, and community resilience.

Her turning point came during family visits to Maonisi Village in the Mbebe district. A defining memory of her yearly Christmas visits to the family village was the vegetables harvested from the back garden – a symbol of abundance. But over time that changed. “My family told me the season was no longer reliable,” she recalls. “One year, there was food. The next, nothing. For me, it was a childhood memory. For them, it was their livelihood disappearing.”

This loss – deeply personal yet widely shared among small-scale farmers, sparked Ntshobelo’s commitment to climate-resilient agriculture.

Today, as an MSc candidate in Environmental and Geographical Sciences, she studies how climate change affects future crop production and what solutions are feasible for impoverished farming communities. Her work blends climate science with socio economic realities.

*“Solutions must match people’s lived conditions. You can’t recommend expensive technology to someone who can’t afford a watering can.”*

Climate resilience, she explains, means farmers having knowledge, tools, and

options – whether switching to drought tolerant crops or reintroducing indigenous varieties proven to survive harsher conditions.

Ntshobelo is also passionate about bridging scientific and indigenous knowledge.

*“Rural communities already have coping strategies. They just need support to strengthen and adapt them.”*

Looking ahead, she hopes to work across research and policy, helping shape interventions that are both scientifically sound and socially grounded. “Research informs policy, and policy drives implementation,” she says. “I want to be at the point where those two meet.”

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## FIGHTING A FAMILIAR ENEMY

**Hlayisani Rihlampfu**  
MSc Zoology, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University

Hlayisani focuses on improving malaria diagnostics in South Africa.

*“Sometimes the standard tests miss malaria, especially when parasite levels are low or when the parasite evolves.”*

Early detection is critical. Untreated malaria can quickly become severe – especially for



individuals living with conditions like HIV.

Being a scientist in South Africa, she believes, carries a unique responsibility.

*“Access to healthcare shouldn’t depend on where you live or how much money you have. Science is one of the most powerful tools we have to close that gap.”*

Hlayisani also serves as a mentor to young scientists, helping them build confidence in the laboratory environment.

Looking ahead, Hlayisani plans to pursue a PhD and continue her work in infectious disease diagnostics.

*“I want the tools we develop in laboratories to reach those who need them most.”*

# CANON COLLINS TRUST AT THE SCIENCE FORUM SOUTH AFRICA

## CENTERING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

In November 2025, a Canon Collins delegation including two science scholars, hosted a session at the Science Forum South Africa called **“Scholarship Pathways Towards Centering Science, Technology and Innovation”**. In the audience were delegates from government, academia and industry.

The session explored how research and knowledge creation can advance socio-economic transformation and social justice across Africa.



## SECURING AFRICA'S FOOD FUTURE WITH NUMBERS

Catherina Kuetezang, MSc Bioinformatics University of Pretoria

Catherina Kuetezang is fascinated by understanding how life works at its most intricate levels. That curiosity has led her to bioinformatics, a field that blends biology, computer science, and statistics to decode complex biological data. She is using those skills to tackle one of Africa's most urgent challenges: food security.

Catherina's research focuses on maize, a crop that feeds roughly half of Africa's rural households. South Africa is Africa's leading producer, yet maize remains highly vulnerable to fungal diseases that undermine both yield and quality. Catherina studies plant pathogens, helping agricultural specialists better understand how to combat these diseases.

Catherina is a catalyst for change. She trains in technology and artificial intelligence, helping demystify STEM skills. She also pioneers science outreach initiatives such as local community quizzes. She believes that with the right support, young people can transform not only their own futures but those of their communities.

## SCIENCE SERVING HUMANITY

Reabetswe Maputle, MSc in Medicine, University of the Witwatersrand

Reabetswe Maputle is pursuing a Master of Science in Medicine with a specialization in clinical and experimental pharmacology. She is tackling one of the world's most enduring public-health challenges: malaria. Her research investigates plant based mosquito repellants. Reabetswe is asking: *Can nature provide safer, effective alternatives to protect vulnerable communities?*

Her research speaks directly to the lived realities of communities disproportionately affected by malaria, exploring solutions that could be sustainable, affordable, and accessible.



## USING DOCUMENTARY TO DISARM THE CULPRITS OF CLIMATE HARM



**Janet Solomon**

PhD Emancipatory Futures Studies  
University of the Witwatersrand

When powerful interests describe new oil and gas developments as “safe,” “modern,” or even “sustainable,” what is unsaid? For Janet Solomon, a PhD researcher at the University of the Witwatersrand, the answer lies in the language itself.

*“Words matter,” she says. “They shape what we believe is possible and what we accept as necessary.”*

Solomon’s research examines how tools meant to protect the environment can be appropriated to legitimise offshore oil and gas projects. In the process, dissenting voices are marginalised, particularly those of coastal communities whose livelihoods and cultural identities are bound to the ocean.

### SA’S MISGUIDED ENERGY GAMBLE



In this article, Janet Solomon analyses South Africa’s offshore oil and gas agenda, revealing how its high environmental risks conflict with the urgent realities of climate and ocean change. Drawing on expert reviews and market evidence, she makes a compelling case for moving away from fossil-fuel dependency.

*Scan to read*

## CLIMATE JUSTICE

Climate justice sits at the heart of today’s most urgent scientific and social struggles, revealing how environmental harm and inequality are deeply intertwined.

In this section, we profile Canon Collins scholars whose work shows that meaningful climate action must be grounded in communities, knowledge diversity, and systemic change. Itumeleng Lelojane,



## LISTENING FOR FROGS IN THE DARK

Itumeleng Lelojane, MSc Zoology, University of Pretoria

Frogs are early-warning indicators of ecosystem health. Their permeable skin absorbs pollutants, so when they decline, it signals deeper environmental stress. But frogs are difficult to detect. Many species are nocturnal, cryptic or breed unpredictably in temporary pools.

***“Protecting frogs ultimately protects people. Healthy ecosystems sustain water, food and livelihoods.”*** South Africa is home to 137 frog species – 37 of them threatened with extinction. By testing which methods best detect rare and threatened species, Itumeleng aims to develop practical, affordable monitoring protocols for conservation agencies in southern Africa.

## CLOSING THE LOOP

Leeroy Rupande, MSc Crop Science, University of Kwa Zulu-Natal

Leeroy Rupande is working at the intersection of sanitation, waste management and food security – three of southern Africa’s most urgent challenges.

Southern Africa faces a dual challenge: mounting green-waste backlogs and ever-increasing volumes of sewage sludge with limited disposal options. His research brings these waste streams together to create biochar that can be combined with organic fertilisers – including safely stored human urine treated under World Health Organization guidelines.

Improving soil health and nutrient availability is not just an agronomic challenge; it is a justice issue. While South Africa may be considered food secure at a national level, household-level realities tell a different story. ***“Many families are struggling. Many households experience food insecurity.”***

By transforming waste into useful agricultural inputs, his work offers a pathway for marginalised communities to grow food without relying on costly synthetic fertilisers or long travel to agricultural suppliers.



[Watch Leeroy's Video Story](#)



## LAND, LIFE AND SOCIETY

Katrina Lehmann-Grube, PhD in Sociology and Social Anthropology, Stellenbosch University

Katrina is a dedicated researcher and advocate for climate and economic justice whose research is rippling through the field. In 2025, she presented her research on the shifting dynamics of land, power and value within the country’s energy transition at conferences in South Africa, the UK and Colombia. At the Life, Land and Society Conference in Cartagena, she shared her PhD findings on how South Africa’s renewable energy expansion is reshaping rural geographies and the agrarian political economy.

# SCHOLARS IN ARTS & MEDIA

The arts this year reveal a powerful throughline: a commitment to storytelling that expands who is seen, heard and held. Whether through film, policy, or multisensory design, our featured practitioners are reshaping the cultural landscape by centring care, ethics and radical inclusion.

Together, their work underscores a shared belief: that art, at its most impactful, expands the possibilities of perception and belonging.



**Dr Kerri Leigh Wayne** has been appointed as a full-time Music Education Lecturer at the University of Pretoria's School of the Arts.

Dr Wayne holds a PhD in Music from North-West University, where she specialised in culturally responsive music pedagogy in South African secondary schools.



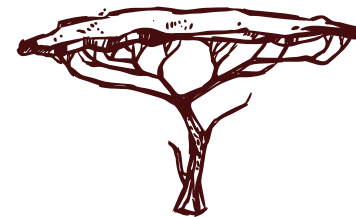
## WEST END SCHOLAR

**Goitseone DeAngelo Mogale** is currently performing on London's West End in INALA, the Grammy nominated Zulu musical. The acclaimed production has been extended due to popular demand, offering London audiences the chance to see Mogale perform alongside a new South African cast celebrating the country's rich musical and dance heritage.



## FOLK ALBUM OF THE YEAR

UK-based Zimbabwean **Edith WeUtonga** was one of nine artists nominated for the Folk Album of the Year Award for Varipasi, her first release since 2018 – a powerful blend of Afrojazz and Zimbabwean folk that transforms personal loss into an original work of remembrance. The Folk Album of the Year Award celebrates the most artistically acclaimed folk, roots, and acoustic albums produced in Britain and Ireland.





## Clothing the Broken Body: The Activist Cinema of Allison Fleur

Allison Fleur, MA Documentary Arts, University of Cape Town

For her MA, Allison Fleur is making a documentary about sexual trauma – but not in the way audiences might expect. Rather than centring the violent act or reproducing the shock-driven rhythms of news cycles, she shifts the focus to what stays behind.

*“I hope this film allows us to think about gender-based violence outside the parameters of the act itself,” she says. “Not just how someone is wounded, but how deep those wounds are.”*

For Fleur, trauma is embodied. *“Societies might discredit survivors, but the body doesn’t discriminate,”* she explains. Anxiety, eating disorders, dissociation – these are forms of testimony. *“When people are silent, the body speaks.”* By approaching trauma through the body, her film invites viewers to sit with experience rather than consume it. The aim is to counter desensitisation with compassionate reflection.

Because recounting trauma can itself be retraumatising, Fleur adopts a poetic, performative approach. Metaphor and visual abstraction serve as a protective layer – the art “clothes” rather than exposes.

She describes this practice as activist cinema, rooted in impact at the level of the individual viewer. *“This film is about survivors, but it’s also for survivors,”* she says.

In slowing the conversation down, Fleur hopes to reshape how trauma is seen – and how it is held.

## Telling Eswatini’s Inside Story

Celiwe Dlamini MA in Motion Picture Movement, AFDA

As Eswatini’s first Commissioning Editor, Celiwe Dlamini sits at the centre of a



cultural shift. Her role at the national broadcaster, Eswatini TV is both political and creative – shaping which stories reach the public, who gets to tell them, and how the nation sees itself on screen. With sixteen years in the SADC film and television industry, Dlamini has become a driving force behind a new wave of local storytelling.

Under her leadership, Eswatini TV is pushing to increase local content from 10% to 70%, a transformation requiring more than new programming. Dlamini has identified emerging talent with creativity but little business experience, supporting them to form production companies and navigate legal, contractual and delivery processes. Around fifteen new companies have already emerged through this capacity building work.

Dlamini's commitment to industry development extends into education. She established a partnership between Eswatini TV, the University of Eswatini and Limkokwing University of Creative Technology to give students hands-on production experience from their first year. *"The industry is practical," she says. "You cannot teach it only in theory."*

Increasingly, Dlamini is pushing for policy reform: stronger intellectual property protections, fairer remuneration, and social safety nets for creative workers. For her, culture is not decorative – it is economic, strategic and foundational.

Less glamorous than the red carpet, perhaps. But far more consequential.



## Feeling the Story: The Art of Tactile Design



**Tendai Chiwandamira**, PhD Visual Arts, Durban University of Technology

Tendai Chiwandamira was in the waiting room of the KZN Blind and Deaf Association, when he picked up a braille magazine. What struck him was not the presence of braille, but the absence of images. *"For sighted people, graphic communication carries images, hierarchy, visual storytelling," he reflects. "That was my eureka moment."*

Tendai had been shaped by more than a decade in advertising, an industry built on visual persuasion. His training sharpened his sense of clarity and narrative, but it was his curiosity that asked deeper questions.

*"Commercial practice asks: does it sell? Research asks: who does it serve – and who does it leave behind?"*

That question drives his doctoral research at the Durban University of Technology, where he is pioneering tactile graphic communication for visually impaired audiences.

A central piece of his work is an inclusive children's book designed for shared reading between sighted and visually impaired readers. A caregiver can read aloud while a child's fingers trace the raised outline of a dog or an elephant – forms distilled to their tactile essence.

Working in southern Africa shapes his approach. Many teachers of visually impaired learners struggle to teach STEM subjects without accessible diagrams. Tactile graphics can open new pathways to understanding science and spatial thinking through touch.

Tendai works closely with visually impaired participants and organisations to test, refine and redefine tactile communication from the ground up. Ultimately, he hopes this work will influence publishers, educators, exhibition designers and policymakers – but most importantly, expand the imaginative and educational worlds of visually impaired children.

# TRANSFORMATIVE LAW



Across southern Africa, scholars, lawyers, and activists are advancing new ways of thinking about rights, technology, and community-centred advocacy.

This collection highlights individuals whose courage, intellect, and persistence demonstrate that transformation is not abstract; it is lived, researched, litigated, and built – case by case, idea by idea.



## BECOMING MORE THAN SHE IMAGINED

Theshaya Naidoo, LL.D.,  
University of Kwa Zulu-Natal,

When Theshaya Naidoo reflects on her academic journey, she often returns to her memory of the girl who scored 16% for Mathematics in Matric and quietly accepted that certain doors were not for her. Today, that same girl is a **Canon Collins Scholars' Scholar for 2025**, a PhD candidate interrogating the legal and ethical frontiers of neurotechnology, and a thinker reshaping what justice might require in the world of AI. Theshaya's research occupies a rapidly shifting terrain. With expertise in health law,

human rights, AI governance, neurotechnology, and cryptocurrency, she studies how emerging tools of surveillance and cognition-tracking may reshape criminal justice. Beyond theory, she is developing tech solutions designed to advance equality, grounding innovation in ethics rather than extraction.

Her academic commitments mirror her political commitments. In her activism, Theshaya interrogates how South Africa's performance of gender-based violence prevention masks institutional failure.

Her story is one of transformation not as spectacle, but as discipline: step by step, year by year, becoming the scholar, and the advocate, she once thought she could never be.

Watch Kelly's Interview



## KELLY AND MARCO'S FIGHT FOR DIGNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA'S CREATIVE & COMMUNITY SPACES

Kelly Kropman, LL.M. University of London and Marco Lemmer Da Silva Almeida, LL.M., University of London

On paper, Kropman Attorneys is a three-lawyer firm. In practice, it behaves like a movement: client-centred, strategically academic, and unapologetically grounded in social justice. It began in 2018 in the spare room of Kelly Kropman's home. From those beginnings, the firm has shifted policy, won urgent protections for communities, and opened a long-closed door for the people who tell our stories—performers.

Kelly's legal imagination was sharpened by her LL.M. with the University of London. *"The course made me more lateral, more*

*willing to weave international norms into domestic arguments, to treat every case as a research question with human consequences."*

That orientation mattered in the Mountain View case: a community of roughly 2,000 people living on abandoned land at the base of a mine dump, precarious but rooted. The team argued not for an abstract "right to housing" but for a structured response to eviction that recognised the lives in motion. The court listened and law became what it promises to be: a tool for dignity.

The firm's impact reaches into cultural labour, too – work that often sits at the margins of legal protection. For years, South African performers were corralled into independent contractor status – flexible for producers, precarious for actors – and told that competition law barred them from collectively structuring their own pay and conditions. In 2025, working with the South African Guild of Actors (SAGA) and the Personal Managers Association (PMA), Kropman Attorneys secured a five-year exemption from key provisions of the Competition Act. That legal manoeuvre – part doctrine, part organising infrastructure – reframed performers not as atomised vendors but as workers with shared interests and legitimate collective voice.

If Kelly's method is creative rigor, Marco da Silva Almeida's is principled stubbornness, the kind that refuses to leave "fixable"

Watch Marco's Interview



problems unfixed. While completing his LL.M., Marco has been reshaping his casework through a child-centred lens interested in a long-term horizon of safety, identity and care.

Both attorneys insist their work is collective. They speak about the Canon Collins Network not as a badge but as a practice community – *"radically intelligent, kind people who get their hands dirty."*

The work reads like a syllabus in public-interest method: comparative reasoning, constitutional grounding, strategic exemptions, community-driven briefs. But its argument is simple. In a country where rights are routinely promised and unevenly delivered, stubbornness and imagination are not personality traits; they are legal methodologies.

Kropman Attorneys is small. Its work and theory of change is not.

## SYLVESTER STEIN

The Sylvester Stein Fellowship, established in 2016 to honour Stein's legacy of racial justice and investigative journalism, supports rigorous reporting and strengthens social-justice-driven investigations across southern Africa. These projects advance accountability, amplified community voices, and reinforced investigative journalism as a vital tool for justice and democratic participation.

## INVESTIGATING HOUSING CORRUPTION AND BUILDING CITIZEN JOURNALISM

The 2024 and 2025 Sylvester Stein Fellowships were both carried out in 2025.

The 2024 investigation examined how a hard-won government housing victory secured by the shack dwellers' movement Abahlali base Freedom Park was undermined by political interference, unlawful evictions, and the sidelining of community leaders. Canon Collins scholar and Mail & Guardian journalist Aarti Bhana led the investigation, drawing on evidence gathered by community members.

The published exposé revealed how rightful RDP homeowners with valid title deeds were left homeless after their houses were illegally occupied or reallocated, allegedly with the involvement of city officials. Despite municipal promises of corrective action, many residents remain displaced.

Alongside the investigation, citizen journalism workshops were held in Johannesburg and Cape Town, equipping housing activists with skills to document service delivery failures and government corruption.

This initiative strengthened democratic participation, deepened collaboration between media and communities, and supported emerging researchers advancing social justice through journalism.

## INDIGENOUS LAND RIGHTS AND A LANDMARK LEGAL CHALLENGE

In 2025, the Sylvester Stein Fellowship supported an in-depth investigation into a landmark land dispute in Goedverwacht, a rural mission station near Cape Town. Journalist and alumna Ilham Rawoot reported on a legal battle between local residents and the Moravian Church over ownership of the town and surrounding agricultural land.

For generations, the Church has held formal title and administered the land, collecting levies and enforcing its own governance structures. However, descendants of predominantly Khoi and slave families argue that they hold customary ownership centuries before colonial settlement.

The case challenges deeply embedded property systems shaped by slavery, colonialism, and apartheid, and is expected to set an important legal precedent for indigenous land rights and land reform in South Africa.

By amplifying this complex and sensitive dispute, the Fellowship once again upheld investigative journalism as a critical tool in advancing justice, restitution, and democratic accountability.



# LONDON MARATHON

This year, seven dedicated runners took on the London Marathon to raise vital funds for the Canon Collins Trust's work in southern Africa: **Dennis Piedra, Joshua Jameson, David Rushmere, James Hargreaves, James Macdonald, and Legend Manqele**, who, although unable to run due to illness, continued to play an important role in fundraising.

Our runners brought real creativity to their efforts, from raffling dinners, treats and sports memorabilia to collaborating on a Golf Day. Brothers David and Andrew Rushmere teamed up with James Hargreaves to organise a spirited event, which raised an impressive £1,700.

On marathon day, our runners showed strong commitment and perseverance.

James Hargreaves completed the course in just under four hours and raised more than £3,000.

**To all our runners and supporters: thank you.** Your efforts help drive our mission to advance education and social justice in southern Africa. We are grateful that you have gone the distance in every way.





## RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME

### A Conversation with Bill Frankel

Bill Frankel calls himself “a retired lawyer.” In reality, his life intersects quietly but profoundly with the history of the anti-apartheid movement and the mission of the Canon Collins Trust.

Born in Johannesburg and educated in Cape Town, Bill left South Africa in 1964 and settled in London. In 1966, shortly after joining a law firm in the City, he was invited to meet Canon John Collins at St Paul’s Cathedral. The South African government had just banned the Defence and Aid Fund, criminalising the receipt of its support inside the country. The question was urgent: how could funding for political detainees and their families continue?

The solution was discreet and daring – a network of confidential “cut-out” trusts through which funds could be channelled. Bill agreed to run the operation. What was expected to last a year or two continued for 25 years. Only two people knew of his involvement.

“We saved people from the gallows,” he reflects quietly. “We alleviated suffering on a large scale.” He resists personal credit, insisting it was collective work. Yet he remains deeply proud to have contributed, however modestly, to what he calls “one of the great political miracles” – South Africa’s transition to democracy.

Today, Bill’s commitment continues through his support of the Canon Collins Trust. Through the **Sol Plaatje Educational Project** he has invested in the postgraduate research of 179 Canon Collins scholars committed to social justice.

He praises the Trust’s efficiency and impact, but is candid about the global crisis in tertiary education. Rising costs and student debt, he argues, demand bold rethinking, including strong technical colleges and innovative funding models.

“For me, education and social justice are inseparable. Education equips leaders; social justice ensures the system they inherit is worth leading.”

*“If you find yourself in a moment where you can make a difference, you should.”*



The **2025 Legacy Lunch** at the House of Lords, graciously hosted by our patron Lord Peter Hain, was a moving celebration of extraordinary generosity, enduring commitment and friendship that has empowered thousands of Canon Collins scholars over 45 years.



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

## Special Thanks

Beverly Naidoo for royalties from her book **Journey to Jo' burg**; Irish Embassy South Africa for the Kader Asmal Scholarship Award Partnership; Microsoft Corporation for their annual software sponsorship; and Webber Wentzel for the scholar conference venue.

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