

ALUMNAE NEWS

Rustenburg Girls' Schools Alumnae Newsletter

December 2021

Editorial

As the year winds down, the RA committee find ourselves in urgent need of more engagement from the Rustenburg alumnae community. We have currently only four committee members. We would like to encourage alumnae to join the committee to help us with our work of administering bursary funds to assist current Rustenburg learners and alumnae to obtain an education, as well as build connections within the Rustenburg alumnae network.

The nomination form for committee members can be found at <https://www.alumnae.rustenburggirls.org.za/committee/>.

Completed forms can be sent to janehofmeyr@gmail.com or brought to the AGM next year. Please see the box below for preliminary details of the AGM.

The RA committee would also like to challenge the alumnae to join us in helping to fund the renovation of one of the science rooms at Rustenburg Girls' High School (page 2). The committee has managed to set aside enough funds to cover half of the renovations, but we need the help of our alumnae to make up the balance of funds needed. Please join us in investing in educating our future generations of scientists. We will be unveiling the new science room at 09:30 during the school's birthday celebration on 4 February 2022, so please join us for this and the RA AGM if you are available on the day. For those who cannot come to the school in person, the event is also planned to be live streamed.

-Lesley van Helden (E'03)



We would like to encourage alumnae to join the committee to help us with our work

Notice: Rustenburg Alumnae AGM

The next annual Rustenburg Alumnae AGM will be held at 09:30 in the new science room, Rustenburg Girls' High School, after the unveiling on the school's 128th birthday celebration on Friday, 4 February 2022.

The celebration will be opened at 08:30 with a welcoming ceremony. Thereafter, food trucks, live music and a tea garden will be available until 14:00.

The RA AGM will take place after the welcoming ceremony and the unveiling of the science room, with tea and snacks for all attendees. All alumnae will be informed of the AGM by email.

Please nominate committee members for 2022 using the nomination form at <https://www.alumnae.rustenburggirls.org.za/committee/>.

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Join us in taking on the challenge of funding the RGHS science room

Dear Alumnae

The RA Committee has agreed to assist RGHS in upgrading the Science Room and bringing it into the modern era of learning.

We have put aside funds for this purpose and the project is underway but we cannot complete the upgrade unless we appeal to all past learners for funding assistance. The Room will be named the "Alumnae Science Room" in honour of us alumnae that have helped the School.

So far the revamp is an harmonious mix of old and new. The beautiful wooden floors and windows have been refurbished and blend in well with the modern colour scheme and wall fittings. The work stations with their pipes and fittings, as well as chairs, are next on the list to make the room functional for the learners if we can come up with some funds. The old piping and connections were unfortunately antiquated and irreparable.

We are encouraged that we have received R5000 already by spreading the news by word of mouth and so appeal to all of you to consider a donation, large or small, to this project.

The Science Room Project will be an extra undertaking as the RA Committee will continue with awarding and increasing scholarships to learners from our limited funds.



Science room so far: needing new workstations and connections

Donations can be made using our bank details below. Please provide us with your email address or cell so that we can contact you directly to thank you. Donations can also be made at <https://www.backabuddy.co.za/champion/project/women-in-science>

Payment Details	
Name	Rustenburg Old Girls Union
Bank	Nedbank
Operating Acc No	2046561015
Branch Code	198765
Branch Name:	Claremont
Reference:	Your name. Donation.
Kindly email proof of payment to	juneawatson@gmail.com

Still a Rustybug after 78 years

Hilda Fairbairn matriculated from RGHS 78 years ago in 1944. She recently journeyed from Durban with her daughter, Ingrid, to visit her high school and arrived with letters, school magazines and school memorabilia as well as with a keen interest in the present school and memories of her school life. She is an energetic, interesting and interested retired teacher and librarian who has engaged with RGHS for more than 50 years.

Hilda attended RGJS when Miss Orton was Headmistress and went on to RGHS when Miss Hazel was Headmistress.

We toured most of the school and noticed that a few more impressively modern buildings have appeared since Hilda was at school but the main quad was timeless in its appearance and brought back memories. She remembers the swimming pool being built during her years at the high school.

The hall has changed direction with its enlargement and added foyer but Hilda could imagine the old dais where Miss Hazel took assembly. We visited the old gym and reminisced about those sleeveless tunics and imagined the wall apparatus and ropes as they had been.

Hilda's memories of school years during World War II are the precautionary

trenches dug in the Rustenburg grounds for refuge should enemy planes appear. Luckily the trenches were not used and she remembers her feeling of relief on a subsequent visit to the school at seeing the trenches grassed over.

Hilda's family relocated to Bulawayo, Rhodesia after Hilda's matric year as her father was transferred. A few years later her mom relocated the family (and pets) to Durban and Hilda attended teacher training college in Pietermaritzburg. She taught at Redhill School in Scottburgh and enjoyed teaching grade 1s. When she married, her surname changed to Coventry. She had three daughters and returned to teaching at Scottburgh Primary School as a full-time teacher-librarian.

Hilda attended her 50 year matric reunion at Charlie's Hope in 1994. Her school friends were still easily recognizable and all were interested in each other's life stories. She remembers the Centenary celebrations with music concerts and garden party and still has a keen interest in Rustenburg affairs.



In the RGHS library: June Watson from the RA committee with Hilda Coventry and her daughter, Ingrid Coventry

Alumnae excelling in their careers

Belinda Petersen, the current principal of Rustenburg Girls' Junior School, was nominated as a finalist for two categories in the 9th Gender Mainstreaming Awards this year.

She was named winner in the category of Positive Role Model and runner-up for Inclusive Leader Regional and Southern Africa.

Belinda, who has been in education for 18 years, is passionate about leading by example. She had the following to say:

“It is vital to show young children, especially young girls, that they can achieve anything. I wanted young girls to see that the only limitations we place on ourselves are the limitations we place on ourselves.”

She is also working hard at RGJS to enable girls and women of colour to be represented in all parts of society, allowing young girls to have many more positive role models in whom they may see themselves.

Although the subject of transformation can be a challenge to approach, she is facing it head-on.

“Through having uncomfortable conversations about privilege, biases, equality, racism, gender-based violence, cultural appropriation, acceptance vs belonging, we uplift our children. When these important topics are ignored, we are perpetuating them.”

The Gender Mainstreaming Awards are an initiative of Business Engage and were established by their chief executive, Colleen Larsen. The aim of the awards is to showcase people and organisations that are promoting gender mainstreaming and creating inclusive spaces through innovative leadership. They hope these awards will inspire others and create positive change in society.



Belinda Petersen



Candice Nassen (E'12) has been selected to join the team at Tokara Wine Estate as Assistant Winemaker.

Candice not only has a degree in Viticulture and Oenology from the University of Stellenbosch, but also degrees in Psychology and Sociology from the University of Cape Town. She recently completed the Business of Wine Course at UCT's Graduate School of Business and finished top of her class.

She has previously completed vintages at Cederberg, Boekenhoutsloof and Boschloof wineries, as well as abroad at Domaine Yves Cuilleron in the Northern Rhône wine region in France.

Tokara's General Manager, Karl Lambour, sees something special in Candice: “From our first meeting with Candice we knew that she was an extraordinary candidate and I am exceptionally proud to welcome her to our dynamic team. Candice joins us as the industry emerges from a most difficult period and I know that she will play an essential role in our future endeavours.”

Candice Nassen



**No Bare Back, after Embah
(Photo: Sotheby's)**

Sotheby's held a very successful contemporary art auction, The Now sale, in New York in November 2021. The opening lot was *No Bare Back, after Embah* (2017) by Rustenburg alumna, Lisa Brice (E'86).

The bidding began before the auctioneer could even open the sale and, after six minutes, the painting was sold for \$2.6m (\$3.1m with fees). This is 91 times the artist's previous record.

Calling all Frank Joubert alumni

The Frank Joubert Art Centre/ Peter Clarke Art Centre is building an alumni database to keep in touch with all former students. Those who are interested, please fill in the Google form at <https://tinyurl.com/alumnipcac>

Congratulations to Kirsten Pienaar (E'15) who received one of the University of Stellenbosch 2021 Rector's Awards for Excellent Achievement in Academics.

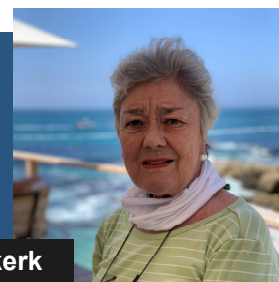


Kirsten Pienaar

Obituaries

Janetta van Niekerk (neé Muller) (E'66) passed away on 19 June 2021 after battling oesophageal cancer.

Her loss will be felt by many as she was very active in the Hermanus community. She is survived by her sister Stephanie van Niekerk (E'71), her two daughters Sally (E'92), and Steph (E'94) and her son Alex.



Janetta van Niekerk

Pat van Schoor (E'53) passed away recently at the age of 83. Her contribution to the community of Hermanus was recognised in a letter by Mayor Dudley Coetzee.

Pat served in several roles on the committee of and was a former chairperson of the South African National Tuberculosis Association (SANTA) for 10 years. She established the Toastmistresses club, to develop public speaking skills amongst its members. This later developed into Quest, a club which studies interesting topics while providing social engagement. She was also known in the community for being passionate about bridge and teaching her skills to others. Pat even banded together the Rustenburg alumnae in Hermanus, forming the Rustenburg Register that met every year to share news, memories and sing the school song.

Her friend of many years, Sue Holmes, shared that she was always an excellent hostess and her parties were full of good food and wine, company and laughter.

Pat is survived by her three children and four grandchildren, who have fond memories of spending holidays and visiting her in Hermanus.



Pat van Schoor

Rustenburg alumnae were saddened to hear of the passing of Chris Murison in July 2021 as a result of COVID-19.

Mr Murison was a well loved and respected maths teacher at RGHS for 15 years after he retired as Headmaster of Rondebosch Boys High School in 1997. Mr Murison was also the founder of the 12 Club for Grade 12 girls who took turns to present topics of their own interest to the other members. He also prepared learners who took part in the various Mathematics Olympiads and competitions and was a senior examiner for Matric Mathematics for many years.

For those who knew him at RGHS, Mr Murison will be fondly remembered as the inspiration behind Wednesday staffroom teas, always wearing his Rondebosch Old Boys' tie with pride on a Friday and his Tweety or cartoon ties on a Thursday.

Courtney Wallace (E'12) wrote the following tribute:

Where does one begin to describe a legend? Does one start with a Tweety-bird tie or a briefcase adorned with stickers? Does one describe the simple retort of "Be like Nike. Just do it." When crowds of girls struggled with sums? The reality is that there are no words to sum up a legend; they just are.

When I heard of the passing of Mr Murison, the world stood still for a moment. It seemed impossible. There are no words to describe the hole he leaves in the teaching profession, despite not actively being involved in teaching any longer. Thankfully, his legacy lives on in many teachers that he has inspired, me being one of them. He made teaching look easy and he made learning easier. He was a natural in the classroom and made knowledge seem so simple that everyone wanted to acquire even a slice of it. He dealt with the teenage girl spirit so well, despite years of being around the boys just up the road. It truly seemed like there was nothing he couldn't do. And the best part? He had not one bit of arrogance around him, despite his genius mind. He was compassionate and simply put, a good human. I know that this spirit will live on and hopefully from it, many more legends will be born.



Chris Murison

Ms Bridget Cameron, former Head of Mathematics wrote in the 2013 school magazine:

A favourite portrait of his is of the back of a girl's head. His teaching ambition was to capture her attention and get her to turn around. He loves problems, crossword puzzles, detective stories and TS Eliot's poetry. He thrills at seeing a new angle to a piece of Mathematics. Young teachers who visit his classes find his natural approach to the subject somehow opens doors for those he teaches. They have sat mesmerised by his engaging manner. He can always be distracted to discuss Mathematics that is outside the realm of the syllabus, but interesting.

Ms Jackie Weston, who has worked at Rustenburg for many years, added the following:

Chris was a champion when it came to his interest in sport and his remarkable memory for the details of any cricket or rugby game. He was the champion behind the staffroom crosswords – something in which a number of the staff competed. Who could forget his talent for making award-winning fudge. It was legendary and, if you were super lucky then on the occasion of your birthday you might be presented with a jar of it all for yourself.

A wonderful man who was a deep thinker, considerate, compassionate and dependable to the last.

Tributes poured in on social media from alumnae, many of whom had personal stories of how he encouraged and motivated them, allowing them to excel at a subject they had otherwise struggled in. It is clear he made a significant difference in many lives.

Rustenburg Alumnae Membership

If you are receiving this newsletter you are probably already registered as an alumna on the Alumnet website – <https://rustenburg.alumnet.co.za/>. Don't forget to amend your email address if it changes to continue receiving news about reunions, alumnae events and what past pupils are doing now. Please encourage your classmates to register.

If you would like to join Rustenburg Alumnae, please visit our website at <http://alumnae.rustenburggirls.org.za/> where you will find the link to the membership form under 'About Us'. Everyone who matriculated after 2000 automatically became a member. For those who matriculated before 2000, Life Membership is R300. Alumnae are welcome to make a voluntary donation on our website. A substantial portion of our income is used for the Rustenburg Alumnae Bursaries.

Follow us on social media

Have you joined Alumnet yet? <https://rustenburg.alumnet.co.za/>

Find us on Facebook and Instagram @rustenburgalumnae. Our Facebook page can also be found at <https://www.facebook.com/rustenburgalumnae/>

Any pictures or news of interest for social media should be shared with Pam (see below).

Contact Us

Please feel free to contact any of the Committee members for information or suggestions.

Please also send news of alumnae and interesting stories to alumnae@rustenburggirls.org.za or Lesley.vanhelden@gmail.com for inclusion in future newsletters.

Rustenburg Alumnae Administrator

Jane Hofmeyr alumnae@rustenburggirls.org.za

Rustenburg Alumnae Committee

June Watson (Treasurer) juneawatson@gmail.com

Jane Hofmeyr (Secretary) janehofmeyr@gmail.com

Lesley van Helden (Newsletter) lesley.vanhelden@gmail.com

Pam Heiberg (Social Media) pamheiberg23@gmail.com

