



NEWSLETTER OF THE
ANATOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

2024

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Message from the President of the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa



Professor Albert Van Schoor
ASSA President

Greetings, ASSA Members,

You may have noticed that there was no conference of the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA) this year due to the International Symposium on Morphological Sciences Congress held in Cape Town in 2023. However, we are eagerly anticipating our Society's Golden Jubilee conference, hosted by the University of the Witwatersrand. This landmark event will be the 50th conference of the ASSA and promises to be one to remember! The conference website is open, and you can find all the information at (<https://anatomy.wits.ac.za/assa/>). I look forward to seeing you all there from 6 to 9 April 2025.

As the academic year draws to a close, I would first like to thank the ASSA Council for their unwavering support and hard work throughout the year. A special thanks goes to Prof. Erin Hutchinson for her dedicated effort in preparing this edition of the ASSA newsletter, which has brought so much enjoyment to our readers. Prof. Hutchinson, along with our institutional liaisons, works tirelessly to create this newsletter. Unfortunately, this will be her last ASSA newsletter as she completes her second and final term as Honorary Editor. On behalf of the ASSA Council and all members, I would like to extend our

gratitude for her outstanding contributions over the years.

I would also like to bid farewell to Dr. Nkhensani Mogale, who has served as Honorary Secretary for the past two terms. We deeply appreciate her hard work and dedication, and she has earned a well-deserved break. Succeeding her as the new Honorary Secretary is none other than Prof. Hutchinson (erin.hutchinson@wits.ac.za). Welcome, Erin!

Mr. Jacob Mekwa, who has served as the crucial link between institutions in anatomical services and technical matters, is also completing his term. Jacob has made significant strides in fostering communication among technical staff across Southern Africa. We extend a warm welcome to Ms. Jade Naicker (naicker.jade@up.ac.za), our newest Technical Representative to the ASSA Council, and wish her success as she builds on the initiatives established by her predecessors.

Notable events in 2024 included the 21st Congress of the International Federation of Associations of Anatomists in Gwangju, Korea, held in September, and the 5th Annual ASSA World Anatomy Day online symposium, organized by Dr. Pam Pillay and her team. You'll find more exciting reports of events and achievements within the pages of this newsletter. I encourage all departments to document these events, achievements, and individual accolades, and to submit them to the Honorary Editor for inclusion in future editions of the ASSA newsletter, allowing us to celebrate them with our community.

In conclusion, on behalf of the ASSA Council, I would like to wish all members, along with their friends and families, a safe and restful December and a joyous New Year. May 2025 be a remarkable year for all.

Warm regards,

Prof. Albert van Schoor

IFAA Matters

Professor Helen Nicholson elected as International Federation of Anatomical Associations President



Professor Helen Nicholson
IFAA President

University of Otago researcher Professor Helen Nicholson was recently elected as President of the International Federation of Anatomical Associations at the 21st Congress of this association held in Gwangju, South Korea. Professor Nicholson is the first New Zealander to lead an international

organisation of anatomical sciences. She succeeds Emeritus Professor Beverley Kramer, who was the first female and African president of the IFAA.

Helen, whose research is in clinical anatomy and medical education at Otago, has been a member of the Executive Committee of the IFAA for 15 years, first as editor of *Plexus* – the IFAA newsletter – and more recently as Chair of the Federative International Committee for the Support of Anatomy Professionals (FICSAP).

She is honoured to be elected president of the IFAA. “It is a real privilege to provide leadership to the IFAA and work to promote the discipline of anatomy.”

A recent IFAA project Helen led surveyed anatomists around the world at differing stages in their careers to gauge the factors that helped develop their pathway, and what support would be useful. This led to a pilot programme in collaboration with Flinders University for emerging anatomists in Africa to develop their expertise in educational research.

Adapted from a recent piece by *Claire Grant, Communications Advisor, School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Otago*

IFAA President's Emergent Anatomists Programme



Since the inception of the PEAP programme at the 2019 Congress of the IFAA in London, UK, the PEAP event has fast become a regular feature of IFAA Congresses. These events provide an opportunity for emergent anatomists from around the world to engage with anatomy and anatomists. The presentation room of the beautiful Kim Dae Jung Convention Centre in Gwangju, South Korea on the 6th September 2024 provided an ideal platform for

yet another exciting engagement. This year, a speed mentoring session entitled “Bridging generations of anatomists” provided emergent anatomists with an opportunity to discuss their dreams and goals with senior anatomists from around the globe. It also provided an opportunity for the emergent anatomists to meet and hear questions and concerns of their peers from distant regions. Emergent anatomists circulated between international senior anatomists,

thus providing the junior anatomists with insights from various geographically different backgrounds.

The 21st Congress of the International Federation of Anatomical Associations also bid farewell to the outgoing inaugural co-Chairs of PEAP, Prof Jose Sanudo and Dr Carol Hartmann. A sincere vote of thanks to both Jose and Carol for their hard work in providing a platform for emergent anatomists to engage globally. The IFAA now welcomes Dr Isabel Andradós Moran and Dr Kutlwano Xulu as the new

co-Chairs of PEAP. We look forward to seeing what exciting events you have planned!

For further information on PEAP, its workshops, webinars and forthcoming events, please contact the co-Chairs of PEAP:

Dr Isabel Andradós Moran: iadrados@ucm.es

iadrados@ucm.es

Dr Kutlwano Xulu: Kutlwano.xulu@wits.ac.za

**Emeritus Professor Beverley Kramer &
Professor Erin Hutchinson**



Greetings from the 21st Congress of the International Federation of Anatomical Associations meeting in Gwangju, South Korea

University of Pretoria: Department of Anatomy

2024 has been a year of growth, collaboration, and innovation in our department, and none of it would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our incredible team. Join us as we look back at some highlights from the past year.

News in the Department

In 2024, we bid farewell to Dr Giel Roode as he steps into retirement. His wisdom, warmth and kindness have made our workplace brighter and more inspiring. We wish him well as he relocates to spend more time with his family and enjoy the well-deserved joys of retirement. As we say goodbye to one chapter, we are excited to welcome a new one with the arrival of **Ms Nivana Mohan**, who joins us as a Lecturer specializing in **Clinical Anatomy**.

We are extremely proud of two of our staff members for receiving their ratings from the Y2 NRF ratings:



Dr Lané Prigge

Dr. Lané Prigge, Senior Lecturer in Clinical Anatomy, achieved an Y2 NRF rating, marking a significant

milestone in her research career. Lané's doctoral thesis focused on regional nerve blocks in paediatric patients, with an emphasis on optimising techniques for anaesthesia. Currently, her postgraduate students are engaged in research exploring the vasculature of the brain and mapping peripheral nerves for nerve transfers and regional nerve blocks.



Dr Alison Ridel

Dr Alison Ridel, Lecturer in Biological Anthropology, also obtained her Y2 NRF rating. Dr Ridel is an expert in computerized facial approximation methods with a strong focus on 3D imaging and advanced statistics, and her experience exemplifies this potential.

Excellence in teaching

Faculty of Health Sciences Teaching and Learning Award (2024)

Dr Gerda Venter, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Anatomy at the University of Pretoria, was honoured with the second prize in the Faculty's

annual Teaching and Learning Awards on October 3, 2024.

This recognition celebrated her innovative contributions to game-based learning in first-year anatomy practical sessions, enhancing student engagement and understanding. Dr Venter also introduced reflective assignments that guided students in documenting their learning journey throughout their anatomy coursework. Her dedication to educational excellence had previously earned her a shortlist for this award in 2023.



From the left: Prof. Vanessa Steenkamp (Deputy Dean of Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Health Sciences), Prof Prashilla Soma (Head of the

Anatomy Department), Dr Gerda Venter (Awardee)

Additive Manufacturing Laboratory and the use of 3D prints

With Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) funding from the Bakeng se Afrika and Dirisana+ grant projects, the Forensic Anthropology Research Centre (FARC) established an Additive Manufacturing Laboratory within the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Pretoria. The lab has produced, amongst others, a complete skeleton for osteology education, various fossil models for teaching human evolution, bone trauma models for educational purposes, and anatomical models to support medical students in learning emergency procedures.

3D anatomical prints are invaluable tools that expand access to learning beyond traditional medical school settings. These models provide hands-on experience in osteology, enhancing students' understanding of bone structure, trauma, and even pathology. The impact of 3D printing extends across various disciplines, enriching courses in criminalistics, anthropology, forensic science, and more. By offering detailed, tactile representations of anatomy, 3D prints allow students to explore complex structures in depth, fostering a more interactive and practical learning experience.

The laboratory provides 3D-printing services, workshops on 3D imaging and printing, and consultation with researchers who are using 3D data in their projects. For more information, please visit: <https://3dbioanthro.co.za/> or contact us at farc@up.ac.za.



Examples of the prints produced by the additive manufacturing laboratory which allows for innovative teaching.

Celebrating World Anatomy Day at UP: A Journey Through "Human Anatomy: A Living Canvas"

On October 15, the Department of Anatomy hosted an unforgettable celebration for World Anatomy Day, embracing the theme *Human Anatomy: A Living Canvas*. The event brought together over 200 attendees from various faculties and campuses, all of the University of Pretoria, showcasing the profound beauty and complexity of the human body in both scientific and artistic dimensions.

Part 1: A Fusion of Art and Science

The celebrations started with an artistic contribution competition, featuring categories such as Creative Writing, Artwork, 3D Models, and Video. The submissions, from staff and students, demonstrated the deep intersection between anatomy and creativity, highlighting how art can illuminate the intricacies of the human body. From intricate sculptures of the internal organs to inspiring paintings and captivating poems, participants presented unique perspectives on the marvels of anatomy.

Part 2: The Anatomy Showcase

The second part of the event was the highly anticipated anatomy showcase. Attendees embarked on a guided journey through a curated

exhibition of anatomical specimens, exploring the remarkable organs that sustain life and examining pathologies that reveal how things can go awry. Without sensationalising the human body, attendees were educated on the body organs and system, as well whole-body donation and the use thereof in education and research.

Complementing the anatomical displays were the creative contributions from the artistic competition, forming a seamless blend of real anatomy and artistic interpretation. The showcase also featured a lively selfie-corner, where attendees captured memorable moments, adding a touch of fun and camaraderie to the day.

A Resounding Success

The event was a testament to the interdisciplinary nature of anatomy and its ability to connect people across fields. The Department of Anatomy, UP extends heartfelt thanks to all participants, attendees and staff from the Department of Anatomy for making the celebration an inspiring and engaging experience. As we reflect on this year's World Anatomy Day, we are reminded that anatomy is more than a field of study—it is a canvas that tells the story of life, health, and human resilience. We look forward to celebrating again next year and continuing to explore the fascinating world of the human body.



The winners of the drawings and model categories, respectively and students having fun in the selfie corner



A student looking at histological slides using a light microscope.



Staff and students walking through the showcase venues.

Conferences and Workshops

VICONAF conference in Brasília, Brazil 30 July to 02 August, 2024

At the VI National Congress of Forensic Anthropology (CONAF) hosted by the Associação Brasileira de Antropologia Forense (ABRAF) at the National Institute of Criminalistics in Brasília, Prof. Ericka L'Abbé presented her expertise in forensic

anthropology through both a workshop and a lecture. In her invited workshop, titled "Analysis and Interpretation of Traumatic Injury from Bone," Prof. L'Abbé led a 4-hour hands-on session that utilized 3D prints to provide participants with practical skills in identifying and interpreting trauma on skeletal remains. In addition to the workshop, Prof. L'Abbé delivered an invited lecture alongside colleagues Ms Meg-Kyla Erasmus, Dr Alison Ridel and Dr A

Oberholster on the "Biomechanics and Interpretation of Projectile Trauma to Bone." This lecture examined the biomechanical processes involved in projectile injuries and offered insights into the forensic analysis of these complex traumas.

University of Oulu 3D Imaging Workshop

Dr. Alison Ridel led a 3D imaging workshop at the University of Oulu in Oulu, Finland, from June 8 to 10, 2024. The workshop was facilitated by her postgraduate students—Mr. Pieter de Wet, Ms. Miksha Harripershad, and Ms. Thandowelthu Mbonani—as well as her colleague Mrs. Hafiza Parker. Staff and postgraduate students explored the application of 3D technologies in archaeological, anthropological, and medical research. The workshop focused on the practical uses of 3D imaging, medical image processing, and bioprinting in both research and education. In addition to theoretical discussions, Dr. Ridel led hands-on demonstrations of 3D scanning and modeling software, offering attendees the opportunity to gain direct experience with these technologies. The workshop highlighted the growing importance of digital tools in the preservation, study, and dissemination of archaeological and anthropological knowledge, positioning 3D imaging as a vital resource for future research and education in these fields.

British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology (BABAO) conference

Dr. Alison Ridel was a keynote speaker at the British Association for Biological Anthropology and

Osteoarchaeology (BABAO) conference, where she addressed the theme Virtual Anthropology: The Digital Evolution of Forensic Sciences. In her talk, Dr. Ridel explored the transformative role of digital technologies in the field of forensic anthropology, highlighting recent advancements in 3D imaging, virtual modeling, and digital preservation techniques. She discussed how these innovations are reshaping the way forensic scientists analyze skeletal remains, engage in virtual reconstructions, and collaborate across disciplines. Her presentation was met with great enthusiasm, showcasing her expertise and the growing intersection of digital tools and forensic research. PhD student Ms Miksha Harripershad also presented an oral presentation and poster presentation at the conference. Her oral presentation was entitled: Exploring Craniofacial Asymmetry in a South African Sample (oral) and her poster presentation was entitled: A Comparison of Three Modalities to Assess Pathological Lesions on the Cranium (poster).

South African Ballistics Organisation (SABO) workshop

On 31 October and 1 November 2024, Prof. Ericka L'Abbé and her PhD student Meg-Kyla Erasmus attended the Workshop for the South African Ballistics Organisation (SABO). Meg-Kyla presented her PhD research, titled *Considering Energy Transfer in Cases of Ballistic Trauma to Long Bones: A Proposed Experimental Methodology*. Her presentation outlined a collaborative approach to studying ballistic trauma, integrating expertise from forensic anthropology, mechanical engineering, and private-sector ballistics specialists.



Prof L'Abbé, Mr Kobus du Plessis, and Ms Meg-Kyla Erasmus attending the SABO workshop.



Research presentation and workshops at the VICONAF conference in Brasilia, Brazil.



Presenters and attendees at the University of Oulu 3D Imaging Workshop

**Leandi Liebenberg
University of Pretoria**

University of Johannesburg: Department of Human Anatomy and Physiology (HAP)

Awards Day

HAP hosted their Annual Awards Day function, which acknowledged the top achievers in Human Anatomy and Physiology for the 2023 academic year in March

2024. The function was held at the Kerzner Building, School of Hospitality and Tourism in Bunting Road Campus. The top achievers received a certificate and an Exclusive Books voucher.



Top Achievers and HAP Staff members

Conference Presentation and International Visit

Dr Nicolene Jooste attended the South African Association of Health Science Educationalist (SAAHE) Conference that took place from 26 to 28 June 2024 in Umhlanga, KwaZulu-Natal, where she presented a short communication titled "Anatomy first-year grade classification using a decision tree model and admission criteria". Prof Shahed Nalla, Dr Thandi Fasemore, Dr Glen Paton and Dr Sundika Ishwarkumar-Govender attended and presented their research in the symposium at the IFAA conference in Gwangju, South Korea in September

2024. Prof Shahed Nalla and Dr Sundika Ishwarkumar-Govender visited the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the National University of Singapore (NUS) in Singapore to view their facilities and with the aim to create collaboration links in Anatomy teaching, learning and research with the University of Johannesburg. In addition, Prof Pilani Nkomozezi and Dr Thandi Fasemore attended the Zebrafish handling course at Karolinska Institutet and Nordic Zebrafish Meeting 2024 in Sweden from 11 to 15 November 2024.



Left to right: Dr Glen Paton, Dr Brendon Billings, Dr Pamela Pillay, Dr Sundika Ishwarkumar-Govender, Prof Beverley Kramer and Prof Shahed Nalla



Prof Shahed Nalla exhibiting some dance skills in merging Indian with South Korean dance moves

Public Lecture

Prof Ahmed Moustafa visited HAP from 16 April to 25 April 2024. He conducted two insightful workshops entitled, “Reviews and Meta-Analysis” and “Postgraduate Supervision: Expectations and Deliverables” as well as a public lecture on “Computational Modelling and Machine Learning Studies of the Brain and Behaviour”.

Funding

Dr Nicolene Jooste received funding for her proposal, entitled, "The impact and perceptions of 3D printed models on undergraduate anatomy" from University Research Committee (URC), which is an ongoing PhD project that she is supervising within HAP. Dr Asma Shaikh-Kader and Dr Thandi Fasemore also received funding from URC for studies entitled, “The effect on diabetic wound healing in adult zebrafish in response to photobiomodulation” and “Potential protective effects of Combretaceae species extract on zebrafish cognitive behaviour”, respectively. Prof Pilani Nkomozepe and Dr Sundika Ishwarkumar-Govender were awarded the University of Johannesburg’s Teaching Innovation fund for their proposals entitled, “Ultrasound Scan as a pedagogical resource in anatomy teaching and learning” and “3D Printing of Anatomical Models for Teaching and Learning of "Generation Z" students”, respectively. This funding will assist HAP in creating a more blended and holistic learning environment for their allied Health

Science students. Prof Shahed Nalla and Dr Sundika Ishwarkumar-Govender received funding for the UJ Global Excellence and Stature 4.0 for Societal Impact (GES 4.0 SI) Catalytic Initiative: Impacting Society Positively project that will allow for the purchase of 3D printers and consumables to print school learning materials for the schools in Gwawkwani, Limpopo

Community Engagement

The annual HAP book- and toy-drive was very successful this year. Approximately 500 books and a few boxes of toys and puzzles were collected and donated to three beneficiaries: Charlotte Maxeke Hospital: Pediatric Ward; Lefika La Phodiso Foundation and UJs Gwawkwani Village project. Moreover, this drive attracted the attention of renowned author Zoleka Filander who generously donated ten copies of the isiXhosa translated version of “Where the Weird Things Are”, which is entitled "Indawo Ekukho Kuyo Izinto Ezingaqhelekanga" to the HAP book-drive. In addition, HAP conducted a drive for essential goods (non-perishable food, clothing, sanitary products and bedding) between June and July 2024. These items were donated to individuals affected by the KwaZulu-Natal tornado and underprivileged individuals within the Actonville area in Gauteng.

HR Matters : New Staff Members and Promotion
HAP welcomed, Prof Rajesh Kumar, a Professor in Artificial Intelligence, and we look forward to his

contribution to our department. Dr Sundika Ishwarkumar-Govender was promoted to Senior Lecturer in the department.



Prof Ahmed Moustafa at the Public Lecture in April 2024



Sorting of books and toys (Prof Shahed Nalla, Dr Asma Shaikh-Kader, Mr Imraan Patel and Dr Sundika Ishwarkumar-Govender)



Distribution of books and toys to the beneficiaries (Left to right: Ms Portia Koma, Mr Thandazile Juwele, Mr Abdul-Hamid Jalal, Mr Nkosana Ngwenya, Dr Sundika Ishwarkumar-Govender, Ms Rakhee Barlow, Prof Pilani Nkomozepe and Mr Rivalani Khubayi)

Dr Sundika Ishwarkumar-Govender
University of Johannesburg

University of Cape Town: Department of Human Biology

World Anatomy Day celebrations at the Department of Human Biology, UCT

On the 15th of October 2024, the Division of Clinical Anatomy and Biological Anthropology (CABA) at the University of Cape Town (UCT) honoured World Anatomy Day with a series of engaging events that highlight the significance of anatomical education and community involvement. This annual celebration, recognized by the International Federation of Associations of Anatomists (IFAA), honours Andreas Vesalius, the father of modern human anatomy, who died on 15 October 1564.

The day started at Groote Schuur High School, where Anatomy Lecturer Jeshika Luckrajh-Williams addressed Life Sciences students from grades 10 to 12. Her presentation focused on the history of anatomy and provided insight into some of the anatomical work and research being done at UCT. The highlight was the generous donation of two anatomical models representing heart and renal structures, presented to the school by Jeshika and postgraduate students from CABA.



Postgraduate students from CABA with 3 or the 4 models that were handed over to Groote Schuur High School.

Following this outreach, the festivities continued at the Anatomy Building, where staff and students took part in a variety of interactive activities designed to educate and entertain. The afternoon was filled with anatomy quizzes, a spirited rendition of "30 Seconds", and canvas painting. A creative twist of the classic "Pin the Tail on the Donkey" transformed into "Pin the Muscle on the Human," allowing both staff and students to engage with human anatomy in a fun and memorable way.

To give back to the community, organizers of the event arranged a special raffle encouraging staff at the Department of Human Biology to donate sanitary pads for an entry and a chance of winning a R500 Takealot voucher. The sanitary pads were later handed over to the Thulani Dasa Foundation, a non-profit organization operating within impoverished communities in and around Cape Town. The pads will assist grade 12 girls currently busy with their final examinations, ensuring that the financial burdens that comes with menstruation does not hinder their education

By: Mrs Megan Petersen





Jeshika Luckrajh-Williams and postgraduate students from CABA together with Mr Thulani Dasa from the Thulani Dasa Foundation.

It is with great joy that we share news from the Clinical Anatomy and Biological Anthropology division at UCT. Prof Victoria Gibbon received a service of excellence award in Global Citizenship on Wednesday, 27th November 2024, from the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town. She received the award for her work with government in influencing national policy for ethical resolution. She demonstrated exceptional leadership and citizenship through her involvement in the Sutherland Reburial Programme since 2017. Despite the complexity associated with this initiative, Professor Gibbon took on leadership roles beyond her core work, volunteering her time to manage research, partnerships (both national and international), and community engagement over the five-year period. All

her efforts resulted in new national policies for the restitution of unethical human remains, with South African National Policy adapted through her contributions. Through this, Professor Gibbon has significantly enhanced UCT's reputation and positioning as a leader in ethical restitution practices through outreach activities and sourcing international funding for innovative projects. She played a pivotal role in aligning the project with UCT's mission, empowering the affected families and communities and offering them insights into their heritage. Her ongoing advocacy for community memorialisation and promotion of forensic anthropology in schools reflects her dedication to sustainable impact, promoting public health and wellbeing while bridging academia and community.



Professor Victoria Gibbon receiving her Global Citizenship award

15 – 17 July 2024: Seattle Science Foundation Mini Medical School, Seattle, Washington, United States of America

Dr. Kentse Mpolokeng participated in the **Seattle Science Foundation (SSF)** Mini-Medical School July 15-17th 2024 as a Visiting Lecturer/Member of Faculty. The SSF, is a non-profit organisation that

celebrates and supports physicians worldwide through education, research, innovation, and technology.

She delivered an anatomy review session where she lectured on the Gastro-Intestinal system followed by a practical demonstration the following day. Her presence inspired future medical students and provided unique insights from an anatomists perspective.



Dr. Mpolokeng (left) and members of the SSF doing a practical demonstration in the Bioscience skills lab to a group of students participating in the Mini Medical School.

IFAA Congress 2024, 5 – 8 September
Gwangju, South Korea

Four members from the University of Cape Town attended the 21st International Federation of Associations of Anatomists (IFAA) 2024 conference as delegates presenting in both the oral and poster

sessions. The presentations were well received with positive feedback from the delegates. Dr. Kentse Mpolokeng presented a poster titled: A unilateral accessory head of the semitendinosus muscle: an unusual variation.

<https://doi.org/10.5603/FM.a2023.0037> Mpolokeng, K.S., Luckrajh J., Avilova O.



From Left Dr. Itumeleng Ntatamala from the School of Public Health, Dr. Kentse Mpolokeng and baby Katlego, A. Prof. Geney Gunston and Mrs. Jeshika Luckrajh-Williams.

Dr Mpolokeng also co-chaired an oral session in **Trends in Embalming of Human Bodies for Teaching Anatomy with Prof. Tracey Wilkinson from University of Birmingham, UK** where Dr Mpolokeng also presented an oral paper titled: **A South African case study on anatomical embalming for human body donation programmes with toxicological considerations**, Kirsten van der Heyden, Victoria Gibbon (PhD), Kentse Mpolokeng (PhD).
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aanat.2024.152296>.

Both papers that she presented in this congress are published in recognised international journals in the field: *Folia Morphologica* and *Annals of Anatomy*.

Dr. Mpolokeng was awarded the iNNo-Anat (Innovative Anatomy) prize for the Best Poster presentation and cash prize of \$1000. The iNNo-Anat award is for innovation in anatomy for the research that contributes to the continued development of anatomy.



Dr. Mpolokeng presenting her poster to Prof Niels Hammer during the poster session.



Dr. Mpolokeng with Prof. Tracey Wilkinson



Dr. Kentse Mpolokeng receiving her best poster iNNo-Anat award presented by the president of the Korean Association of Anatomists.

Women in Global Health Leadership Fellowship (2024/5)

Dr. Mpolokeng was accepted as one of the 16 women to join the Women in Global Health Leadership Fellowship (2024/5) cohort. This year-long fellowship is designed to advance the leadership skills of talented African women scientists and healthcare professionals who are passionate about gender equity in global health systems. The fellowship includes a comprehensive curriculum in global health policy, leadership, knowledge translation and mentorship skills delivered by experts

through innovative lectures, case studies, role plays, workshops, discussion forums and reflective exercises, all while supported by an amazing group of mentors.”

<https://www.dlsph.utoronto.ca/womeninglobalhealth/>

Student mid-year graduation:

Three University of Cape Town students, Mbalentle, Jessica and Reagobaka all graduated for their Masters degree in Anatomy during the September 2024 graduation period. Their theses are as follows:



Ms. Mbalentle Madolo: A dissection and angiographic study of anatomical variations in the anterior communicating artery complex in a South African sample.



Ms. Jessica Garlick: Variations in the Circulus Arteriosus Cerebri in a South African Cadaveric Sample.



Ms. Reagobaka Lichaba: A morphometric study of the brain ventricles of patients diagnosed with Chronic Hydrocephalus at Groote Schuur Hospital.

**Department of Radiation Medicine Research Day
Groote Schuur Hospital, 14 November 2024**

Ms Reagobaka Lichaba was selected to do an oral presentation at the 2024 Department of Radiation

Medicine Research Day Groote Schuur Hospital where she presented her MSc results titled: A morphometric study of the brain ventricles of patients diagnosed with Chronic Hydrocephalus at Groote Schuur Hospital.



Ms Reagobaka Lichaba presenting her MSc results.

Ms Mablentle Madolo also delivered a poster presentation at this Research Day where she presented her MSc results titled: a dissection and angiographic study of anatomical variations in the anterior communicating artery complex in a South African sample. She received the 3rd prize in the category of the best poster award. Congratulations Mballi!



Ms Mablentle Modolo with her MSc supervisors: Dr Kentse Mpolokeng (left), and Dr Stuart More (right).

University of the Witwatersrand: School of Anatomical Sciences

In December 2024 the School of Anatomical Sciences bid farewell to Emeritus Professor Maryna Steyn and Mrs Glynis Veale as they embarked on their retirements.



Emeritus Professor Maryna Steyn

Emeritus Professor Maryna Steyn has over the course of her career been a teacher, mentor and friend to many. Among her many accolades she was awarded the “ASSA Distinguished Member Award” in 2022. Prof. Steyn has been a member of the Society for over 30 years, and in this time has made a significant and lasting impact on both full members and student members of the Society, as well as the Society itself. She has been the recipient of the Antoinette Kotze award for the best first-time presenter and a number of her students have also received the Antoinette Kotze award as well as the ASSA Award for best oral presentation by a young presenter (previously the Bob Symington) for their ASSA presentations.

In line with her significant contributions to the field of Forensic Anthropology both locally and internationally, Prof. Steyn was instrumental in establishing the Forensic Anthropology Interest

Group (FAIG) for which she acted as the representative on Council.

As a member of the ASSA Society and one of the past presidents of ASSA, she is also recognised as a leader in the field of forensic anthropology and have received various awards and accolades for her work. As invited and/or keynote speaker, she has represented the Society at various local and international conferences and symposia where she has established a plethora of local and international collaborators.

She has served as reviewer for various journals, including Clinical Anatomy which used to be associated with the Society and has served as a member of the Editorial Board of Forensic Science International since 2006. She has published over 160 papers and 15 book chapters and have supervised more than 20 MSc and 15 PhD students. She is dedicated to continuous education and has organised various workshops for students and practitioners.

In addition to her various roles within the Anatomy community, Professor Steyn also served as the Head of the School of Anatomical Sciences at Wits and was the founder and inaugural of the Human Variation and Identification research unit (HVIRU). Her dedication to the field of Forensic Anthropology and to the community at large is not only evident in her mentoring and teaching contributions but also in her community work through the forensic case work she does as part of HVIRU.



Mrs Glynis Veale

Glynis first joined Wits University in 1980 and spent 6 years in the Zoology department as a Senior technician in the late Prof Shirley Hanrahan's lab. During that time, she had the privilege of working with (amongst others) Professor Boris Balinsky, processing and cutting his butterfly eggs for electron microscopy. He came to the lab every week until he was too frail to do so anymore. She also met her husband Rob in the Zoo dept (as it was affectionately called back in the day) and he has been instrumental in helping her grow both professionally and personally with his unwavering support over the years. After 6 years of service in Shirley's lab, that Glynis lovingly shared with her goggos - locusts, Namib beetles and axolotls she left wits to explore other opportunities.

But as fate had it, she discovered there was a post of Senior technician in Anatomy, and she returned to Wits in 1987 to join the Anatomy department and move from the goggos and other pathology tissues

to work with cadavers where she has remained for 37 years (this past September), a long and colourful journey which has included one amalgamation and another merger pending soon. Glynis has had the opportunity to work with 8 heads of schools, all different personalities but some of the most dedicated individuals. Together with them, she has contributed to many achievements and milestones in the school. In her role as chief technician and chief finance officer, Glynis has headed a team of 18 individuals and has commented that working with such an incredible team has been one her greatest joys.

Reflecting on my time in anatomy, she is reminded of the countless memories we have created together and has expressed her thanks to each member in the school for their support, friendship, and collaboration which has made every day an adventure. Glynis has been like a second mom to many in the school and this is reflected in her interactions with many staff who have grown up from first being mischievous students when she first met them in the school and are now senior tenured staff members with great achievements. From the hilarious mishaps to the triumphant successes, every moment has been a part of this wonderful journey. While reflecting on the years in anatomy Glynis expressed her heartfelt thanks for laughter she has shared with so many and how she will cherish these moments forever.

Finally, as she embarks on this new chapter in life, she is excited about the new adventures that await her and Rob as they look forward to exploring perhaps even traveling to places they've always dreamed of visiting. To all her dear colleagues, thank you for the wonderful gifts and flowers that you have given her. She has been privileged to work with some of the most dedicated, and inspiring individuals which she will always cherish.



Members of the HVIRU and support staff from left to right: Mr Tony Meadows, Mr Bradley Khoza, Professor Desire Brits, Professor Erin Hutchinson, Dr Tshegofatso Rhampaleng, Dr Candice Small, Dr Devin Finaughty, Dr Nicholas Bacci, Ms Monique Niekerk, Mrs Natasha Loubser. Front row: Emeritus Professor Maryna Steyn, Mrs Glynis Veale and Dr Deona Botha.

On the morning of the 3rd December 2024, members of the HVIRU and support staff bid farewell to Emeritus Professor Maryna Steyn and Mrs Glynis Veale at a skull painting workshop hosted by the Creatory in Johannesburg. The workshop served as a fantastic opportunity to get everyone to express their creative side while bidding farewell to two much loved and respected colleagues. Professor Steyn first founded the Human Variation and Identification and served as its inaugural director; she is succeeded by Professor Desire Brits.



Professor Erin Hutchinson (right) and Dr Deona Botha's artistic offerings from the workshop



Professors Maryna Steyn and Caroline Wilkinson, the current president of IACI, who handed over the award at the conference dinner

IACI Lifetime Achievement Award

Professor Maryna Steyn received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the IACI (International Association for Craniofacial Identification) at their 20th conference held in Granada, Spain, in October 2024. Professor Maryna Steyn will also be retiring as the Director of HVIRU (Human Variation and Identification Research Unit). Prof Desire Brits will take over the Directorship.

Centennial Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in the Human Variation and Identification Research Unit (HVIRU)

In May 2024, Dr Devin Finaughty, previously of UCT, moved back to South Africa after a 5-year stint in the UK to take up a Centennial Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in the Human Variation and Identification Research Unit (HVIRU), School of Anatomical Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand. Dr Finaughty's research, hosted and mentored by Prof. Desiré Brits, is focused on generating entomological and taphonomic data from wildlife to support the growing need for wildlife forensics in South Africa. Dr Finaughty's research is taking him to stakeholders across South Africa where he is engaging with first responders, reserve owners, NGOs, provincial wildlife authorities, and the SAPS towards improving wildlife crime scene investigation and the outcomes thereof.



Dr Devin Finaughty

International conferences

Forensic Anthropology Society of Europe (FASE) Basic Course and Symposium

The Forensic Anthropology Society of Europe (FASE) Basic Course and Symposium was hosted by the Department of Medical Biology, Amsterdam UMC, the Netherlands from 26-31 August. Prof

Desiré Brits, Prof Maryna Steyn and Dr Deona Botha all contributed towards the teaching of the Basic Course and Prof Brits and Dr Botha both presented posters during the one-day symposium. We also wish to congratulate Prof Brits, who became the secretary of the Forensic Anthropology Society of Europe.



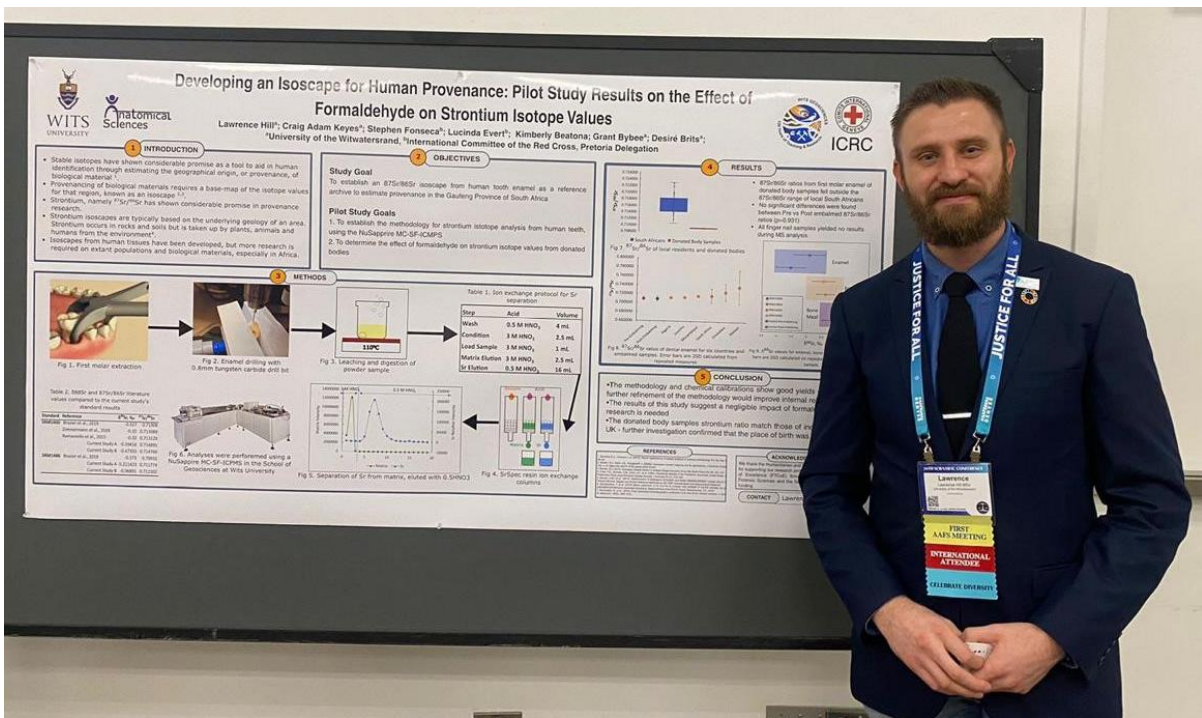
Dr Botha (Wits), Dr Van der Merwe (Amsterdam UMC), Prof Steyn (Wits) and Prof Brits (Wits) (left to right) at the Forensic Anthropology Society of

Europe (FASE) Basic Course and Symposium, Netherlands

American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS)

Mr Lawrence Hill was afforded the opportunity to present results from his PhD at the Humanitarian and Human Rights poster session at the 76th American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) Annual Scientific Meeting, Denver, Colorado, USA (19-24 February 2024). Mr Hill's poster was entitled "Developing an isoscape for human provenance: Pilot study results on the effect of formaldehyde on strontium isotope values" and was co-authored by CA Keyes, S Fonseca, L Evert, K Beaton, G Bybee and D Brits.

The National Institute of Justice and the Forensic Technology Center of Excellence along with the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) Humanitarian and Human Rights Resource Center has contributed funding towards Mr Hill's research.



Mr Hill presenting his poster at the Humanitarian and Human Rights poster session at the 76th American Academy of Forensic Sciences, Denver, Colorado, USA

Local conferences

Postgraduate students from the Division of Biological Anthropology, School of Anatomical Sciences shared their research during the 2024 World Anatomy Day presentations. This included a presentation by Ms T Mashego (Nyathela), who share the results of her Honours project in a presentation entitled "Variation in the biomedical response and fracture pattern of pig (*Sus Scrofa Domesticus*) ribs subjected to variable loading rates"

and Mx Tempest who shared their MSc results in a presentation entitled "Testing the accuracy and repeatability of Transition Analysis 3.0 in a Black South African population". Mx Tempest also presented their MSc research at the 15th Cross-Faculty PG Symposium, University of the Witwatersrand (2024).

IACI conference 2024

The IACI (International Association of Craniofacial Identification) 2024 biennial conference was held in Granada, Spain between 02 - 06 October at the Universidad de Granada in joint host with the Panacea cooperative. In attendance (pictured below) was Prof Steyn (from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits)) who was awarded the IACI lifetime achievement award, Dr Tshegofatso Ramphaleng (Wits) whose presentation was titled "clines of the African face", Dr Nicholas Bacci (Wits) whose presentation was titled "Quantifying quality: Image quality effects on forensic facial comparison", Ms Nelly Matine (Wits) whose presentation was titled "Precision in Profiles: Investigating WFCS for forensic facial comparison in Black African male" and

Ms Pearl Mamathuba (from Stellenbosch University (SUN)). The conference started with two days of workshops focusing on AI applications in craniofacial identification and 3D facial data collection, and a tour of the laboratories at the University. Research presentations were on the 4th-5th of October which Dr Tshegofatso Ramphaleng was the first to present and kicked started the interesting and informative oral program. The 6th of October was tourism day which began with a visit to the Alhambra (castle on the hill), followed by a scenic walk down to the city centre to view the chapel and cathedral. Overall, it was a hands-on and engaging conference with the warm and welcoming IACI family, packed with a lot of interesting discussions, cutting-edge research presentations, and collaboration prospects.



From left to right: Dr Tshegofatso Ramphaleng (Wits), Professor Maryna Steyn (Wits), Ms Pearl Mamathuba (SUN) and Dr Nicholas Bacci (Wits).



The in-person attendees for the IACI 2024 conference

IFAA 2024 Conference

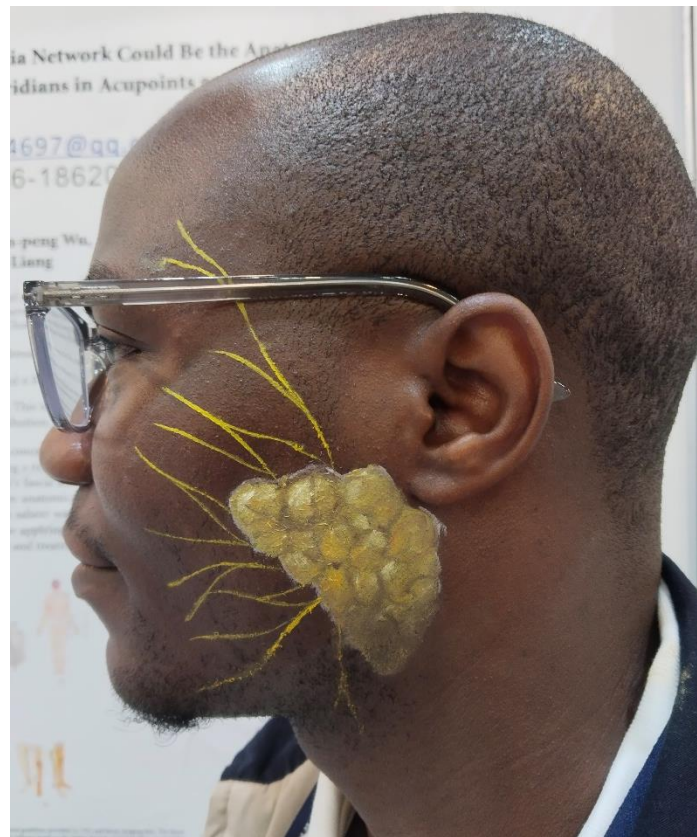
The 21st IFAA (International Federation of Associations of Anatomists) 2024 biennial conference was held in Gwanju, Korea between 5 – 8 September organised by the Korean Association of Anatomists. This well-attended conference included well over 1000 people and was a sight to behold from the impeccable organisation to the social events, and the high volume of interesting and innovative scientific presentations and posters. It was a fantastic networking opportunity for anyone with an anatomy interest with some fascinating research being presented. From South Africa, more than 25 ASSA members were in attendance. The conference was particularly well supported by members from the School of Anatomical Sciences which included chairing of various sessions including the IFAA President's Emergent Anatomists speed mentoring session as well as presentations ranging in topic from the use of eponyms to occlusal relationships between the maxillary and mandibular dentition.



Dr Tobias Houlton, Mr Keagan Meiring, Dr Brendon Billings, Dr Nic Bacci, Ms Kerri Keet, Dr Glen Paton



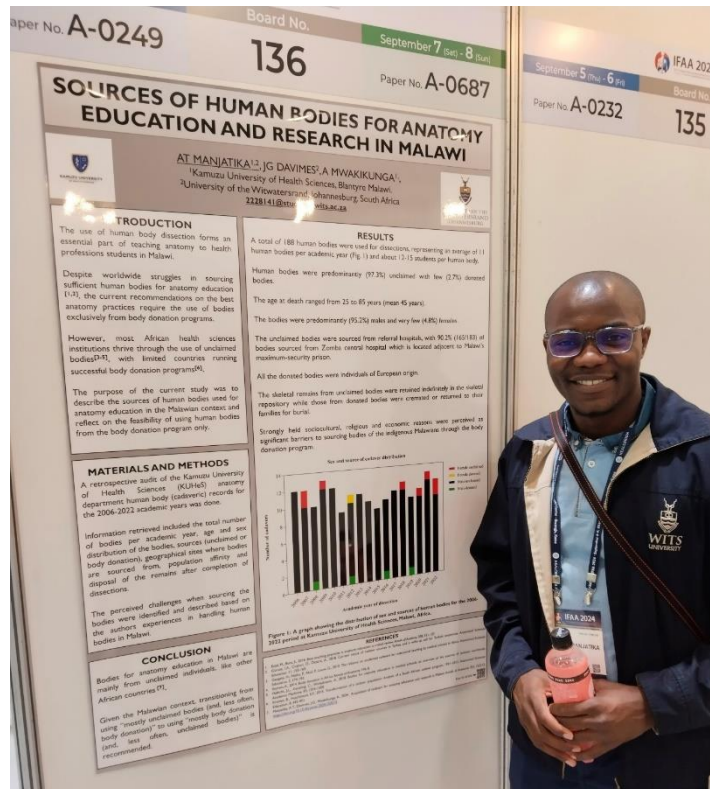
Emeritus Professor Beverley Kramer and Professor Erin Hutchinson co-chaired the IFAA President's Emergent Anatomists Speed Mentoring session



Dr Arthur Manjatika was among many anatomists who took time to enjoy the face painting stand



Conference attendees also took time to enjoy a traditional Korean Barbeque in the heart of Gwangju



Dr Arthur Manjatika featured at his poster presentation entitled: Sources of Human Bodies for Anatomy Education and Research in Malawi

Art & Poetry in Anatomy



Takundiswa Mundondo

My name is Takundiswa Mundondo, I am a second year medical student. When I was 13 years old, I started listening to hip hop music. The vivid imagery and storytelling in the lyrics inspired me to start writing poetry. I have a passion for storytelling as an artform because our experiences are some of the most valuable things we have to give one another. I spend my spare time either attempting to soak up as many narratives as I can or learning how to knit for the umpteenth time.

Gratitude

In the Summer, I am clumsy and curious
And I can't wait to meet you,
The elevator hums with the mythical superstitions of
19-year-olds

The door is open, and you command respect.

We say the creed and it echoes in me week after
week.

We open the circle around the table,
You're shrouded in white and plastic
You have taken something holy and made it eternal.
I hold my scalpel and reach for the vastness within
The rivers and tennis courts you contain,
Billions of cells screaming "I was here."

And here you are, in a room with empty walls
Sacrificing a slice of the peace you'll rest in to give
me insight.

Layer after layer you lead me to solving this great
mystery

And I try to thank you, but the words are heavy
they fall to the floor as they leave my lips

So, I take your arms and lay them on the table,
Bring the formalin and replace the shroud.



Naomines Kabamba

Naomines Kabamba is a second-year medical student at the University of the Witwatersrand, with a growing interest in paediatrics. She previously attended Roedean School (SA), where she earned nine distinctions upon matriculating. Beyond academics, she is an active member of Wits Friends of Médecins Sans Frontières (Wits FoMSF) and maintains a strong relationship with her faith, which is central to her life. In her free time, she enjoys crochet, drawing, reading, and running, balancing personal interests with her studies.

From mortal coil, a selfless act of grace
 A gift of life and a solemn space -
One, I had to honour at my own pace.

Even now, my memory holds complete,
 That there a body lay, waiting to meet
Too vivid, the unfolding of that white sheet.

I hesitated, unsure of where to start
 So **three** breaths I took to steady my heart
 Before studying the skin, an intricate art.

Extensive was my study: freckles, wrinkles, and how
 it weaves,

For-wards I traced it like the veins of leaves

All my attention it receives

For **five** minutes or more I wandered through my
 mind,

How one small act could lead to such depths behind
 What life revealed, and how death outline,

These vessels conserving a lifeline which knows
 This person's journey, the ebbs and flows
 In a crimson conduit of **sixty** thousand miles - as
 science shows.

A journey twice around the Earth's sphere,
 But in front of me lay more than the **seven** wonders
 held dear,

For your worth stands alone, that was infinitely
 clear.

Knowing this was a hefty choice, but it was one your
 muscles could bear,

Each and every fibre carried its share,
 And I, too, bear the **weight** in this pilgrimage, aware
 this wisdom is rare.

Did you foresee the **benign** legacy you'd leave,
 If these nerves, living wires, told you what you
 would achieve

How our ignorance and shallowness would grieve?

Because your osseous scaffold, strong and well
 designed

Fulfilled your **intention**, to find -
 An enduring wisdom in bone enshrined.

So it took ten paces to understand Ecclesiastes'
 belief,

That with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the
 more knowledge, the more grief

Because in this space of learning, the truth brings
 no relief.

But in grappling with the sorrow that we unveil,
 We will find that in our hands, future generations will
 prevail.

I am Nokulunga Sosibo, a second-year medical student – at the University of Witwatersrand.

I have always been interested in reading poetry – in the way it enables a person to express their emotions, using colourful words - and share their experiences with others, who might relate. I usually read other poets' work, as an outlet. However, this time, I challenged myself to write a poem and face my own emotions while processing them on paper.

I believe that poetry can be used as a medium to heal, bringing connection through compassion for each other's life experiences.

Revealed

everyday begins with the dark:
the dark
the unknown, the uncertainty, the hidden
our journey was no different
you and I
except ours began with a blinding light
a light that held you within our sight
unhidden from our eyes
secrets concealed by nothing,
but a thin white sheet
all - waiting to be discovered
a new start

with uncertainty and caution
we traced the plane of your skin
made our first incision
and travelled deep within
revealing the unfamiliar parts of ourselves

we're no different
revealing all the parts that lie concealed
by the veil of our skin
revealing all that we **are** in between
you allowed for it all to be seen
the deeper we explored
the more we uncovered
bringing a clarity,
a light to our new journey

and all the unknown
all the hidden
and all the uncertainty
marked our reality

UPCOMING EVENTS

ASSA 2025

50TH CONFERENCE - ANATOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



"Anatomy Intelligence: Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Anatomical Sciences"

6TH – 9TH APRIL 2025
GLENBURN LODGE & SPA
JOHANNESBURG, RSA

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GREETINGS FROM THE EDITOR

The resilience and dedication of our anatomists as always serves as a shining light and the future looks bright for the next generation of anatomists. We have also seen the resumption of more and more face-to-face academic meetings and we welcomed the excellent IFAA Congress which took place in Gwangju in September 2024. As a member of the ASSA 2025 organising committee, it is my sincere hope that you will join us in April 2025 for what promises to be another wonderful and exciting opportunity for us as the anatomy community to engage and grow. Once again hearty congratulations to the organisers and presenters of the 2024 ASSA World Anatomy Day Virtual Symposium.

As this is my final newsletter in the capacity as editor, I wanted to take the opportunity to once again extend my thanks to all news contributors, the news presented is the news provided and as such without your contributions we would not have this platform. Editing the ASSA newsletter has been a privilege, and I wish the incoming editor all the best! I would once again like challenge everyone to embrace the spirit of World Anatomy Day and keep the news coming! Lastly, I would like to wish all readers of this newsletter all the best for 2025!

Best wishes



Erin Hutchinson