

# National Science and Technology Forum

## Science and Technology Awards 2002

*And the Winners are ...*

South Africa's Science and Technology elite gathered at the Sandton Hilton Hotel on Friday 30 May, where the National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) honoured the winners of this, the fifth annual Science and Technology Awards event. These awards acknowledge the most outstanding contributions of individuals and organisations in the field of Science, Engineering and Technology (SET).

Dr James Hlongwane, CEO of the NSTF explains that it is only through the efforts of individuals, either on their own or collectively in organisations that science and technology will flourish. "Our awards are to individuals and organisations and it is our hope that through this recognition we can encourage other individuals and organisations to greater efforts".

Nominations received increased by 23% since last year, an indication of the increasing esteem in which the awards are held.

The winners were announced as follows:

In the category **An Individual over a lifetime** - Dr Kelvin Kemm of Stratek, Pretoria. He is best known for his forceful advocacy of a common sense approach to science and technology, particularly in environmental matters, through public and school lectures, his TV series, print media contributions and on the radio. Through these he has made substantial contributions to the public understanding of science and technology. The runner up in this category was Dr Michael J Kahn, Executive Director Knowledge Management, at the HSRC.

In the category **An Individual through Research and Innovation over the last two years** - Professor Sarah Howie, Associate Professor Curriculum Studies and Centre Head, University of Pretoria. Professor Howie's research work, focussed on the development of the teaching and learning of maths and science in schools, was the first in South Africa based on statistical methods, which allowed comparison between learners locally, provincially and abroad. It also explored the all-important relationship between language and mathematics. Her work has informed the development of the Maths, Science and Technology Strategy, and has focussed on the plight of previously disadvantaged individuals in the school system. The runner-up in this category was Dr Winston Leukes, Head of Biotechnology at Rhodes University.

In the category **An Individual through Activities other than Research and Innovation over the last two years** - Professor Peter Clayton, Head, Computer Science, Rhodes University. The award acknowledges his contribution to capacity building and the public understanding of Science and Technology through the growth of his own research group in the ICT field, building a partnership with Fort Hare, stimulating a research culture on that campus in the ICT field through school programmes in the poorer areas of Grahamstown and participation in many Puset forums, most notably the SASOL SciFest, of which he is a founding member and has chaired the Advisory Committee for the past three years. The festival grew to 558 events in 2002 and was attended by 45 000 participants. The runner-up in this category was Lebs Mphahlele, Chief Education Specialist, Department of Education.

In the category **A Not-for-Profit Organisation over the last three years**, the winner was Africabio from Centurion. This stakeholders association has provided the forum for informed debate on bio-technology issues and the promotion of its safe, responsible and ethical use, with significant contributions in the areas of education and Puset. Small-scale farmers have been empowered through training and advice; the growth of the sector has been facilitated through start-up companies and involvement with the co-ordination of Biotechnology Regional Innovation Centres; participation in the development of state policy and the Biosafety Protocol has been effected; and the development of the all-important National Biotechnology Strategy and its subsequent roll-out have been major contributors towards the realisation of the potential offered to the national economic growth by this sector. Runner-up in this category was Coaltech 2020.

In the category **An SMME over the last three years** the winner was Röth Medical Components (Pty) Ltd, Cape Town, for the design, development, patenting, and manufacturing of innovative orthopaedic implants and associated medical devices and surgical instruments. These include external fixators for orthopaedic applications, a pedicular screw spinal system, a bone harvesting device, and a femoral drill guide. Success is founded on a world-class machining shop, displaying dominance of both the local and global medical industries in this field and which has been recognised internationally for the quality of the products. The runner-up was BreatheTex Corporation (Pty) Ltd of Port Elizabeth.

*To Celebrate South African Genius*



**In the category A corporate organisation (or Department or Division) over the last ten years**

The winner was the ARC Exotic Diseases Division at Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute, Pretoria, for its quiet, unromantic, dedicated leadership of the national effort to manage foot and mouth disease and African Swine Fever and hence for the containment thereof with significant benefit to the economy. The runner-up was the Research, Development & Demonstration Division of Eskom at Rosherville.

In addition to honouring individual scientists, S&T organisations, innovative corporations and small businesses, the NSTF Awards also now acknowledge and recognise:

The top **Female Matriculants in Mathematics and Science** as identified by the Department of Education and sponsored by the Telkom Foundation, being:

Ms Kenosi K Rapoo (Gauteng), Ms Brenda E Mpaphuli (Limpopo), Ms Zibuyile Mncwabe (KZN), Ms Boitumelo S Motshwanedi (North West), Ms Anima Osei-Amankwah (Eastern Cape), Ms Matseliso Thabane (Free State), Ms Vuyisile Manqele (Mpumalanga), Ms Faith Z Gwangqa (Western Cape), Ms Precious D Melakeco (Northern Cape).

The best **teachers in Mathematics and Science in SA**, as identified by the Sowetan/Telkom/Protec Teacher of the Year Awards and sponsored by the Telkom Foundation, as follows:

Mr Frans C Murphy (Northern Cape), Mr M P Masango (Limpopo), Mr M L Zulu (Mpumalanga), Mr Steve Maditjana (North West), Mr A Makhubedu (Gauteng), Mr Martin Tshabalala (Free State), Mrs Maryna de Lange (Western Cape), Mr Z R Sonkwala (Eastern Cape), Mr T Mchunu (KZN), and Mr Felang Pebane (Retired Teacher of the Year).

**Top Schools in Mathematics and Science in SA**, sponsored by the Telkom Foundation, being Mbilwi High (Limpopo), Makgetse High (North West), Metlife-Raucall Senior (Gauteng), Zingiza Senior Secondary (Eastern Cape), Leseding High (Free State), Kasselsvlei Comprehensive High (Western Cape), Inkomazi Senior Secondary (Mpumalanga), Mshweshwe High (KZN), Carlton Van Heerden High (Northern Cape).

Furthermore, the Department of Science and Technology (DST): Puset Directorate has expanded its role in the NSTF's Awards to largely support and encourage girls in S&T. This supportive role has resulted in additional recognition to girls that have excelled or shown outstanding promise in a variety of S&T competitions or activities.

The top ten girls recognised in this category are:

**Expo for Young Scientists** - Kimantha Naidoo, Lavanya Naidoo and Londiwe Ntuli

**Mathematics Olympiad** - Tamara von Glehn, Marietjie Venter, and Ishara Sukhraj

**Science Olympiad** - Lidia Auret, Virlene Goliath and Jane Stamp

**Technology Olympiad** - Jenna Keightley

This newly adopted approach by the NSTF is commendable and has the effect of "bringing the awards closer to home", due to the recognition of "ordinary individuals" (such as educators and students) who make a significant impact in Science. In many respects this simultaneously moves the awards into the "Science and Society" domain - a move away from the recognition of professional scientists only. At the same time these "ordinary people" become role models for others and are encouraged in Science, Engineering and Technology.

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