



Invitation Uitnodiging Taletšo



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
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Inaugural address

Professor Steve Cornelius

Head of the Department of Private Law,
Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria

6 September 2016

The Faculty of Law of the University of Pretoria cordially invites you to the inaugural address of

Professor Steve Cornelius

(Bluris LLB (Unisa) LLD (Pret) FA Arb SA L Akad SA),
Head of the Department of Private Law
titled

'Run, Pheidippides, one race more!' Meditations in the Shadow of the Global Sports-Media Complex *

Date

Tuesday 6 September 2016

Time

18:00 for 18:30

Venue

Senate Hall, Hatfield Campus, University of Pretoria

GPS coordinates

S25° 45' 21" E28° 13' 51"

Dress

Business attire

RSVP

By 26 August 2016 (click on the invitation to access an online RSVP form)

Enquiries

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Refreshments and snacks will be served after conclusion of the address.

* Please refer to page 2 for an abstract of the inaugural address.

Abstract

'Run, Pheidippides, one race more!' Meditations in the Shadow of the Global Sports-Media Complex



So, when Persia was dust, all cried, "To Acropolis!"
Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the meed is thy due!
Athens is saved, thank Pan, go shout!" He flung down his shield,
Ran like fire once more: and the space 'twixt the fennel-field'
And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through
Till in he broke: "Rejoice, we conquer!"

- Robert Browning, *Pheidippides*

In the year 490 BC, Greek defenders secured a decisive victory over a massive Persian invasion force. According to legend, a report runner named Pheidippides, ran almost 40 kilometres to bring news of the Greek victory to Athenians who were eagerly awaiting the outcome of the battle. With his last breath, Pheidippides famously exclaimed "Rejoice, we conquer!", and then, over-exerted, his power spent, Pheidippides collapsed and died.

It is perhaps more than fitting that the legend of this report runner – the fastest news medium of his day – would serve as the inspiration for one of the headline events at the modern Summer Olympic Games. The event, named after the battlefield where the Greeks scored their decisive victory, has become known as the Marathon and today it celebrates the heroic feat of Pheidippides. Not only did Pheidippides exude all the qualities associated with sportsmen today – masculinity, honour, tenacity, perseverance, determination, self-sacrifice, team spirit – but his story and the race it inspired also highlights a link that has probably always existed between sport and the media.

From prehistoric rock art that apparently depicts scenes of ancient people participating in sprints, swimming, archery and wrestling in front of spectators, to modern sports broadcasts that are beamed instantaneously to homes across the globe, it seems that sport and the media have always had a symbiotic relationship in which self-interest could be served best by serving the other. It is therefore probably no coincidence that the arrival of the first electronic media in the 18th century also coincided with the rise of modern sport in the sense we know today, or that the rise of broadcast media gave rise to the first superstars of sport.

In the course of the 20th century, this symbiotic relationship would give rise to multinational media houses and powerful international sports federations – a development which Sut Jhally coined the Sports-Media complex. It is a symbiosis that has shaped the destinies of people and nations; that commands respect from even the most powerful among us; that endures despite questionable legal foundations; that defies accountability and regulation but shamelessly protects self-interests; that continues to cement stereotypes of race – White men can't jump – of masculinity and femininity, of virtue and vice.

Join me as I reflect on the global Sports-Media complex.