

PROF ANNET OGUTTU, DIRECTOR AFRICAN TAX INSTITUTE

Speech at the Riel Franzsen Gala Dinner: 29-30 April 2024

I first met Prof Franzsen in 2003, when I joined the employee of the University of South Africa as a tax law lecturer. By then, he was the Head of the Tax Law Group. Prof Riel Franzsen was also by then the Executive Director of the Southern African Tax Institute (SATI) (the predecessor of the ATI) which had been launched in 2002 at the University of Pretoria.

In 2004, I registered for doctoral studies on an International Tax topic at UNISA. By then the Southern African Tax Institute offered Winter Programs in Taxation annually. I attended the Winter Program in 2004 and 2005 and was greatly inspired by the lectures on Tax Treaties and International Tax which were taught by Prof Brian Arnold (with whom I have the pleasure to co-author the paper we presented at this symposium). Two years into my doctoral studies, one of my co-supervisors resigned and Prof Franzsen took over the co-supervision.

When the African Tax Institute was officially launched in 2007, Prof Franzsen moved to University of Pretoria in 2007 but he retained me as one of his doctoral students at UNISA. I completed by doctoral studies in 2008 and since then, Prof Franzsen has been a mentor and a resounding board for many of the career development decisions I have had to make.

Since 2012, Prof Franzsen invited be to be an instructor on “International Taxation” at the ATI. He was very Instrumental in getting me to join the University of Pretoria in 2018 and I know that he must be please that one of his own students is following in his footsteps as the new Director of the ATI.

Many of Prof Franzsen’s students have gone on to be of great influence in their countries. We received an email from Dr Olav Lundstøl an Economist at the Royal

Norwegian Embassy in Tanzania, who asked us to extend this message to Riel. “I owe Riel much for the warm invitation to join the PhD program, as well as his contact, continuing support and supervision over many years. He is an inspiration and a great human being I would say, a very warm and thoughtful person, in addition to being a first rate academic and professional. His commitment to the ATI and to so many generations of mid-career tax professionals from Africa and beyond, is incredible and what a legacy!”.

Well-done Prof for impacting many lives for the better. The ATI has arranged a token of appreciation for you. May I please ask the ATI Symposium Organising Committee to please come forward – thank you colleagues for all you have done to make this event a success.