

NEWS RELEASE

UP alumna and fashion designer Judy Sanderson wins Global Brand Prize



Corporate woman turned fashion designer, Judy Sanderson

France - Fashion designer and University of Pretoria (UP) alumna [Judy Sanderson](#) became a recipient of the [2024 Global Brand Prize](#), courtesy of France's [Maison Mode Méditerranée Endowment Fund](#). The award is sponsored by industry giants like Louis Vuitton and Chanel, and recognises exceptional work in cultural heritage preservation and handcrafts.

"It was an indescribable moment of joy and validation for my fashion brand," said Sanderson, who graduated from UP with a [BCom degree in Accounting Sciences](#) in 2007. "It was an honour beyond my wildest dreams, and a testament to the dedication and passion I've poured into my work. This win marks a significant milestone that will undoubtedly propel my portfolio to new heights in the fashion world. This recognition validates my

brand's commitment to quality, creativity and innovation, elevating its credibility and visibility on an international scale.”

The corporate woman turned fashion designer concedes that she did not expect such prestigious recognition, and believes that with this accolade, she is well positioned to enhance her brand, broaden its reach and establish a solid presence in the global fashion landscape.

“It was a humbling reminder of the impact and reach of my brand on a global scale,” Sanderson said. “This achievement has not only bolstered my confidence, but also inspired me to continue pushing boundaries and pursuing innovation in the fashion industry. The prize will open doors to exciting opportunities for collaborations, partnerships and expansion into untapped markets. Moreover, it reinforces my brand’s position as a leader in the fashion industry, attracting attention from investors, influencers and consumers alike.”

While she was growing up in Nkowankowa, a township in Tzaneen, Limpopo, the absence of prominent role models in the arts was apparent to Sanderson. During that time, she said, parental influence dictated career paths, and pursuing anything outside the norm seemed risky. That’s why she opted for a degree in accounting after high school.

As a creative studying accounting at the time, she faced the challenge of balancing her artistic passion with the technical demands of the accounting curriculum.

“To overcome this, I leveraged my creativity to find innovative study methods that made complex concepts more relatable and engaging. Additionally, I sought out extracurricular activities and creative projects to nurture my creativity and provide a balance to my academic pursuits, bridging the gap between my two interests.

“I knew that venturing down [the artistic] path was frowned upon, and deemed to be more of a hobby than a viable career option. But deep down, the yearning to express myself creatively never waned, silently urging me to defy convention and carve out my own path in the creative world. After working for P&G South Africa and Kenya, I quit my corporate job, and studied fashion design in Hong Kong.”

Her degree provided her with invaluable analytical skills, attention to detail and financial acumen that have greatly benefitted her career as a fashion entrepreneur, Sanderson said. She describes her love for fashion as something that stemmed from a deep-seated passion for artistic expression and the exhilarating process of bringing fresh concepts to life.

“Transitioning into fashion design allowed me to explore my creative passions and expand my skill set further,” she said. “Each educational experience has shaped me, enabling me to evolve professionally and personally. Now, as the owner of a global fashion company, education continues to be a driving force, empowering me to innovate, lead and navigate the complexities of the fashion industry with confidence and vision.”

For Sanderson, alumni can play a role in shaping the future of UP by making use of their expertise, resources and influence to support its continued growth and excellence.

“Additionally, we can serve as ambassadors, promoting the University's reputation and values in professional and personal spheres.”

She described her time at UP as one that was filled with camaraderie, laughter and unforgettable memories.

“From late-night study sessions with friends to spontaneous outings exploring the vibrant city of Pretoria, every moment was cherished. Living in the campus residence fostered a sense of community and belonging, where lifelong friendships were formed and bonds strengthened.”

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ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on its Hatfield Campus in Pretoria. This 115-year-old institution is also one of the largest producers of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). It is the only university in the country with a Faculty of Veterinary Science, which is ranked the best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The [2024 Times Higher Education subject rankings](#) placed UP first in South Africa in the fields of Law, Veterinary Science, Accounting and Finance; Agriculture and Forestry and Electrical and Electronic Engineering. Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranked the University among the top five in Africa, as part of their [2024 World University Rankings \(WUR\)](#). UP was the only South African university featured in the [2023 World University Rankings for Innovation \(WURI\)](#), falling within in the 101-200 range of innovative universities.

For more information, please go to www.up.ac.za