

NEWS RELEASE

University of Pretoria honours internationally acclaimed Afrikaans poet, Professor Antjie Krog



Prof Antjie Krog delivers a moving poem with Barileng Malebye after receiving an honorary doctorate from the University of Pretoria

PRETORIA – The University of Pretoria (UP) has honoured one of South Africa’s best-known Afrikaans poet, Professor Antjie Krog, with a doctoral degree in recognition of her contributions to literature, language and social justice.

She received her honorary doctorate in Literature at a UP Spring Graduation ceremony on 4 September 2024.

“The life of a writer is solitary,” Prof Krog said in response to this latest acknowledgement. “One is therefore both daunted and honoured by such a recognition – especially when awarded by a university that has changed significantly since one was there. To become part of UP’s broad diversity is a privilege I will cherish.”

Prof Krog is an internationally acclaimed poet and writer whose works have received numerous awards including the Hertzog Prize, a Lifetime Achievement Literary Award from the South African Literary Awards, and the Alan Paton Award. Internationally, she has been awarded the Stockholm Prize from the Hiroshima

Foundation for Peace and Culture, the Open Society Prize from the Central European University, and the Dutch Gouden Ganzenveer ('golden goose quill') award, among others.

"Her work demonstrates a deep commitment to exploring the complexities of the human experience, promoting linguistic diversity, and promoting social justice and reconciliation," said Prof Willie Burger, Head of the Department of Afrikaans in UP's Faculty of Humanities.

"One of Krog's most significant contributions to literature is her use of language as a tool for political activism and social justice. She has explored themes such as identity, language, and apartheid in her writing, offering a unique perspective on the experiences of South Africans. Her poetry is deeply introspective and often speaks to the complexities of human emotions and relationships, making it accessible to a wide range of readers."

Prof Burger added that Krog has been a prominent advocate for the preservation of the endangered Khoisan languages of South Africa, which are at risk of extinction due to the impact of colonialism and globalisation. She has written extensively on the importance of language and the need to protect linguistic diversity.

Prof Krog obtained a master's degree in Afrikaans literature from UP in 1982 and completed her BA, and then a BA Honours in English, at the then University of the Orange Free State (now the University of the Free State) in 1976. She also holds a teaching diploma from the University of South Africa. She was, until 2023, an Extraordinary Professor of Literature and Philosophy in the University of the Western Cape's Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

"Krog has been a guest of the University of Pretoria's Afrikaans Department on various occasions, delivering lectures," Prof Burger said. "Her work has been studied extensively and is set for undergraduate students on almost every year level... In addition to her literary contributions, Krog has also played a vital role in promoting social justice and reconciliation in South Africa."

Prof Krog gained international recognition in the late 1990s when she worked as a journalist reporting on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which investigated human rights violations committed during the apartheid era. Her work on the TRC inspired her internationally acclaimed book *Country of my Skull*.

"Antjie Krog's contributions to literature, language, and social justice make her an exceptional candidate for an honorary doctorate. Her work demonstrates a deep commitment to exploring the complexities of the human experience, promoting linguistic diversity, and promoting social justice and reconciliation."

Prof Burger said Krog's work has also been discussed in UP's Faculty of Law and Philosophy Department.

He concludes: "Krog's extraordinary ability to renew her own poetry is seen in her latest volume, *Plunder/Pillage*. Her work takes such a central place in the Afrikaans canon, that it will definitely be studied in the Afrikaans Department for many years, as her work is important in postcolonial studies, feminism, whiteness studies, and social justice."

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>> **[Watch Prof Krog deliver a moving poem at the graduation ceremony](#)**

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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