

## NEWS RELEASE

### **‘UP Beetle’: The heritage behind the car that’s generating renewed nostalgia – and online buzz**



*Interim Vice Chancellor, Prof Themba Mosia, inside the VW Beetle that will be raffled to raise funds for the UP Giving Matters Campaign.*

PRETORIA – When it comes to the Volkswagen Beetle, it's the stories that stick and make the beloved “Bug” more than just a car. Regardless of the geographical location or language, there’s a sentimentality that is unique to Beetles, so much so that there’s an entire Hollywood movie franchise centred around it (the *Love Bug*/ *Herbie* movies).

As an avid collector and proud owner of one of South Africa’s largest Beetle collections, Francois Louw doesn’t only place great value on the cars themselves. “It’s also the stories and little artefacts – such as an old knit blanket draped on an old Beetles’ backseat – that make the car precious,” he says. Louw is also a member of the oldest Beetle-owner club in the country, the Jacaranda Beetle Club. “I try my best to preserve the story... and it goes with the car,” he emphasises.

As you might know, the one-of-a-kind 1967 model that is [up for grabs as part of this year’s UP Giving Campaign](#) holds its own unique #ProudlyUP institutional history and heritage. It was even reported that the vehicle donated by the family of former UP Vice-Chancellor Professor Casper (CH) Rautenbach started trending on social media in Pretoria when the competition was announced.

The iconic 1967 “UP Beetle” enjoys the status of having been the official vehicle to Prof Rautenbach, who was UP’s longest-serving VC – for 22 years, from 1948 to 1970.

As [Professor Susan Adendorff](#), the Director of [Facilities Management](#) at UP explains, Prof Rautenbach’s love for his Beetle led to a “cult-like” appreciation of the car. “According to a book by Prof Flip Van der Watt which chronicles the life and times of UP VCs from inception to VC Prof Calie Pistorius [VC from 2001 to 2009], Prof Rautenbach was short and chunky in stature and was nicknamed Nap, which was short for Napoleon... They say he was small in stature, but larger than life in personality.”

According to the book, Prof Rautenbach used his 1967 Beetle as his official vehicle, and when he was asked why he had such a modest vehicle, he said: “I give status to my vehicle; it doesn’t give me status.”

Prof Adendorff adds, “Because of his love of Volkswagen at the time, he caused a rush of this cult-like love and appreciation of the vehicle in Pretoria, because everybody wanted a vehicle like his.”

As Louw and other collectors would attest, the community and familial stories collected through generations as the cars get passed down are what make Beetles a treasure trove of history and heritage.

### **Industrial heritage and paying it forward**

[Hannes Engelbrecht](#), a Heritage and Cultural Tourism lecturer in the [Department of Historical and Heritage Studies](#) at UP, explains that South Africa’s industrial and car-manufacturing sectors also enjoy a significant connection to the Beetle.

This is thanks to the fact that on 31 August 1951, South Africa’s first VW Beetle rolled off the assembly line at the VW plant in Uitenhage (now Kariega). This historic vehicle, which reportedly retains its original engine, is still around, and is owned by a Dr Johan Van Rensburg of Kimberley.

Of course, at the moment another historic South African VW Beetle is grabbing attention. “This raffle campaign not only celebrates the remarkable legacy of Prof Rautenbach, but also reflects the University of Pretoria’s enduring commitment to community and support,” says UP Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal Prof Themba Mosia.

“We are honoured to offer this iconic Beetle with a rich South African history, and deeply appreciate everyone’s contributions, because no amount is too small.”

### **How you can be part of SA’s motoring history**

Buy your raffle ticket [here](#). All proceeds directly support deserving students in need of financial assistance. Raffle ticket/s, starting from as little as R67, will throw your name in the hat for the draw to win the 1967 “UP Beetle”. The raffle is still open, and the final draw will take place on 23 September 2024. You can buy your tickets until 23:59 on 22 September 2024.

The following tiers of tickets are available for purchase. The higher the tier, the more entries you get:

Tier 1: Starter pack - R67 = 1 ticket

Tier 2: Value pack - R100 = 2 tickets

Tier 3: Power pack - R200 = 5 tickets

Tier 4: Corporate pack - R6 700 = 110 tickets

Best of luck!

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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](http://www.up.ac.za)

