



SAARS Bon Voyage 2025

**Held at The Vineyard Hotel, Conference Centre
Saturday, 06 September 2025**

The Bon Voyage weekend on 5-6 September, organised by the Southern African Association of Rhodes Scholars (SAARS), was a wonderful success.

At a dinner on 5 September, generously hosted by **John Roome** (South African College School, Newlands & Lady Margaret Hall 1983) the Scholars-elect had an opportunity to engage with the Deputy National Secretary, **Malebogo Ngoepe**, the Regional Manager, **Beverley Johnson**, and a number of senior scholars.



Phemelo Matie, John Roome, Oyama Mzayidume, Malebogo Ngoepe and Inae Kim at dinner

The following day, **Lisa Klein** (South Africa-at-Large & St Antony's 1994) opened the programme – a literary theme focusing on how leaders deal with crisis - and posed a crucial question for the Scholars-Elect to consider: “How am I going to impact the world?”

The first panel saw **Malebogo Ngoepe** (South Africa-at-Large & Wadham 2010) in conversation with **Max Price** (South Africa-at-Large & Magdalen 1980) about his book, *Statues & Storms: Leading Through Change*. Max took us into his confidence and shared his experiences as Vice Chancellor of UCT steering the university through the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements (2015- 2016). The discussion touched on the importance of having the right team during a crisis, the difficulties involved in delegating responsibilities for negotiating with ‘the other side’, and being nimble and flexible in adapting to challenges.

The panel was followed by an insightful talk by **Robert Plummer** (Diocesan College, Rondebosch & St John's 1992). A Senior Managing Editor of nonfiction at Penguin Random House South Africa, Robert explained the ins-and-outs of local publishing, the economics of the book market in South Africa (vs globally), and shared many amusing anecdotes about his 25 years in the industry.



Max Price in conversation with Malebogo Ngoepe



Robert Plummer

Niahm Ahern (South Africa-at-Large, Scholar-Elect 2025) and **Wonderful Khumalo** (South Africa-at-Large, Scholar-Elect 2025) did a fabulous and highly entertaining job introducing the Scholars-Elect.

After a wonderful lunch enjoyed with a view of the mountains and The Vineyard gardens, Lisa Klein was in conversation with **Gareth Morgan** (South Africa-at-Large & Linacre 2000) about his book, “Becoming Good at Crises: a Field Guide for Leaders”, co-authored with Peter Willis. Gareth holds the position of Executive Director of Future Planning and Resilience at the City of Cape Town, a complex and probably unique role in cities globally. Drawing on his experience of navigating the city’s response to Day Zero (a few years ago Cape Town faced a severe drought and ‘Day Zero’ meant municipal water would be switched off) and Covid-19 crises, Gareth shared key lessons for leaders managing other crises.



Lisa Klein in conversation with Gareth Morgan

The official programme closed with drinks and networking. The Scholars-Elect went on to a dinner in Camps Bay, hosted by Niamh Ahern’s mother, during which they were able to bond as a cohort in a more informal setting and share in their excitement about going up to Oxford.



The Bon Voyage weekend was a wonderful celebratory send-off for the Scholars-Elect, and an opportunity for senior scholars to reconnect with friends and make new ones.



We wish the Southern African Rhodes Scholar-Elect 2025 bon voyage and every success

Contributors

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