



SAARS *Bon Voyage* 2024

Held at the Wits Club, Johannesburg
Saturday, 31 August 2024

Last weekend, Rhodes Scholars-Elect (2024) from South Africa, Namibia (Bertha Tobias), Zimbabwe (Brendon Mahere and Nyasha Mukonoweshuro) and China (Xiang Chen) met up in Johannesburg for the *Bon Voyage* with Rhodes alumni.

We had a full programme planned for the Scholars-Elect: starting with an informal dinner on Friday evening hosted by the National Secretary, Ndumiso Luthuli, and Alisha Wade at their home; the introduction of the Scholars-Elect to the broader Rhodes community at the annual SAARS BV and Alumni Conference held at the Wits Club on Saturday; and concluding on Sunday morning with a guided tour of the Constitutional Court, hosted by Edwin Cameron (South Africa-at-Large & Keble 1976) and Lwanda Xaso, an Atlantic Fellow for Racial Equity, and trustee of the Constitutional Court Trust.

The SAARS Organising Committee, Lisa Klein (South Africa-at-Large & St Antony's 1994) and Mari Rabie (South Africa-at-Large & St Catherine's 2010), crafted a wonderful programme of speakers for the 10th Annual *Bon Voyage* and Alumni Conference.

The morning commenced with a keynote address by the ever-eloquent Edwin Cameron, who spoke about his work as the South African Inspecting Judge of Correctional Services and shared insights on reforming the penal system and rehabilitation.

Marisa de Bruyn (St Andrew's College/DSG & Trinity 1999) shared her personal journey of finding fulfilment, as she navigated the transition from high-flying corporate economist to wife and mother on a cattle breeding farm in the Free State. Marisa has recently self-published a magnificent cookbook, *Seasons*, to raise funds for a newly-established primary school in Ladybrand.



Marisa de Bruyn, Edwin Cameron & Mari Rabie

Robotist, Bonolo Mathibela (South Africa-at-Large & New College 2009) spoke about the benefits of AI, how we should use and implement AI, and noted that "the spirit", could not (yet) be replicated by AI.

Julie Taylor (Zimbabwe & St Antony's 2003), founder of the Guns & Rain Gallery, presented on an art exhibition she recently curated at Rhodes House entitled "Entangled: Southern African Artists reflect on Colonialism, Monuments & Memory". She spoke about the challenges faced when reimagining Rhodes House, and the importance of the images and works represented in our physical spaces.



Lisa Klein, SAARS President



Julie Taylor and Kgaugelo (KG) Sebidi

SA Rhodes Scholars-Elect, Sagel Kundieko and Daniel Erasmus, used the model of the recently installed Government of National Unity (GNU) in South Africa to introduce the Scholars-Elect to the community in a humorous, creative and memorable presentation.



For the "GNU" Scholars-Elect, both local and international, *Bon Voyage* was transformative: they were inspired by the various topics discussed, humbled by the interest and warmth of the Scholar community, and energised by their weekend together!

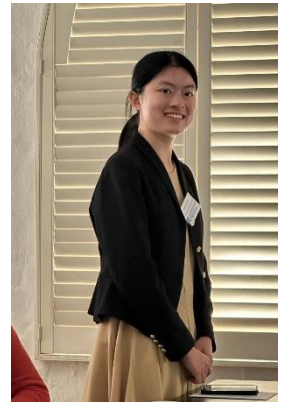
Bon Voyage gave Scholars from across the decades the chance to reconnect and to learn about the multiple paths taken by fellow Scholars as we each continue to find our own way of *fighting the world's fight*. This gathering of the Scholar community helped to forge bonds and re-establish friendships; build community; and provide the new cohort of Scholars with the opportunity to engage with senior Scholars about their hopes and fears.



Justine Crook-Mansour & Daniel Tate



Sagel Kundieko, Savannah Verhage, Brad Segal & Brendon Mahere



Xiang Chen

As the Class of 2024 prepares to travel to the UK later this month, SAARS wishes the Southern African Rhodes Scholars-Elect (2024), *Bon Voyage* and every happiness and success in Oxford.



Rhodes Alumni and Scholars-Elect group visit to Constitution Hill, 01 September 2024

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05 September 2025