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ON THE COVER

A furrow that made the desert blossom like a rose

by Gustav Hendrich, WCARS

For centuries, the Orange River flowed to the sea through a largely barren desert. Yet in Gordonia, at a site named Kakamas — derived from a Khoisan term meaning ‘swimming water’ because it was the only place they could cross — the seeds of a thriving settlement were sown. European explorers and hunters had first traversed the area, but it was only after Cape Parliament discussions in 1893 addressing the ‘poor white question’ that resettlement efforts began, placing impoverished settlers on the farms of Zoetap, Neus, and Kakamas along the river.

Supported by the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, a labour colony was envisaged. In June 1898, the first settlers arrived at Neus, prioritising irrigation. A south furrow was quickly built to divert water from the river, but rising demand soon made it insufficient.

On 13 April 1899, work began on the north furrow, funded with £15,000 from the government.¹ Clergy, volunteers, and labourers worked primarily by hand under the pioneering missionary CWH Schröder, assisted by JJ (Oom Japie) Lutz. The South African War interrupted progress, and construction resumed only in 1908.

Nearly 120 labourers took part in the formidable task, often motivated by religious conviction to transform the desert. The furrow’s construction involved a heavy stonewall and rockwork up to eight meters high, tunnels to direct water, and drilling through hard blue rock. Working conditions were extreme; midday heat made the tunnels unbearable, requiring air pumps and water to cool the equipment. Both furrows were supplemented by patent-made waterwheels with wrought-iron buckets. The north furrow was completed in August 1909, and two years later, 800 visitors from Upington and Kenhardt attended its formal opening and blessing by Rev. BPJ Marchand. Tobie Louw would later inspect the furrow for leaks by drifting

in a boat on Voetvat’s dam. The north and south furrows became vital for irrigation, supporting the cultivation of sultanas, wheat, and cotton. A masterpiece of early 20th-century furrow construction, the north furrow was declared a Heritage Site of the Northern Cape Province. Historian HC Hopkins noted its transformative impact, enabling the ‘desert to blossom like a rose’.²

1. Hopkins, CH. *Kakamas — uit die wildernis ’n lushof* (Goodwood: Nasionale Boekdrukkery, 1978), p. 109.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

The **Cape Librarian** extends its gratitude to the WCARS for making available its rare collection of vintage photographs for the cover images of the magazine in 2025.

Picture credit: R544 Kakamas Canal

If ever there was a time that libraries endured a spell where past, present and future clashed so fiercely, it has to be 2025. In retrospect, the Western Cape Library Service commemorating its platinum anniversary highlighted our resilience and relentless commitment to excellence over the past 70 years.

But every milestone is as much a reflection as it is a horizon.

In Library Week, a pledge was made to advance the cause of sustainability and engagement with the communities we serve. Far too many of our citizenry still bear the scourge of South Africa's greatest ill — namely inequality — though are now empowered through the priceless social upliftment, literacy and digital initiatives provided by libraries in the hearts of those communities.

That said, these are often at the coalface of additional external adversity such as service delivery protests, with libraries often viewed as soft targets for vandalism or theft.

And this in a time where all government departments are struggling to fill funding gaps, and specifically, local libraries are battling to buy books when hampered by a weak exchange rate and increasingly unfavourable terms by publishers of electronic library materials, although this phenomenon was in no means unique to 2025.

Unquestionably, though, the meteoric rise of artificial intelligence (AI) — not just in the library sphere (think Tilly Norwood in Hollywood) — was the single most transformative phenomenon of the year. As usage of technology moves into the mainstream, expect to see the governance thereof and establishment of a more formalised and robust ethical framework that will be the foundational principle driving its widespread, safe, and sustainable adoption across industries.

Clearly, 2025 was a bumpy ride. And indicative of our uncertain times, the next few years are going to be both unnerving and similarly exciting — to witness AI becoming ingrained in our daily lives.

If that's too much to bear or comprehend, just know that if you were born around the 1980s, you're fortunate enough to have grown up analogue but lived through humanity's steepest technological advancements: from cellphones to the internet to social media to AI and self-driving cars (and, quite possibly in our lifetime, even the beginning of off-planet settlements) — a cataclysmic transition so unparalleled that no other generation of humanity will ever be able to lay claim to the same in magnitude.

Welcome to the future. And it starts in 2026.

Happy New Year.



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A word of thanks from our director



Colleagues and Friends of our libraries,

As we wrap up another year, I want to thank every public library staff member, municipal partner, volunteer, funder and community member who has stood with us, in public libraries, on Stoepstories, in meetings and on the long road of reform.

This year has been one of transition, of making policy real, and of deepening our work where it matters most: in people's lives.

We marked a major milestone when the Western Cape Public Library Services Act was enacted and operationalised this year, a legal foundation that clarifies roles, strengthens coordination and commits us to equitable access across the province. This Act gives us the tools to advocate more effectively for library infrastructure, staffing and services so that every resident can access information and opportunity.

From the opening of a new depot library in De Novo in Stellenbosch; the installation of a new Rural Library Connectivity Project point at Hoeko Public Library – to the growing popularity of our e-resources, we've continued to make knowledge accessible to everyone, no matter where they live. I'm especially proud of how we've embraced

digital transformation, because every time someone downloads an ebook or joins an online forum, we're breaking down barriers and opening doors to learning.

But what really stands out for me is the heart behind the service. Our librarians have gone above and beyond, hosting reading and outreach programmes, engaging young minds, and creating safe, welcoming spaces for all. You've shown that libraries are not just about books; they're about people. And that's what gives our work its impact, and makes its reach so meaningful.

Of course, we've faced challenges: funding pressures, the need for more infrastructure, and the ongoing task of bridging the digital divide. Yet, through it all, we've stayed focused on our mission: building a province where knowledge is shared freely and communities thrive.

As we look to 2026, let's keep dreaming big. Libraries are evolving, and we have the chance to lead that change, making them hubs of innovation, creativity, and lifelong learning. Together, we can ensure that every person in the Western Cape has access to the resources and opportunities they deserve.

Thank you for your passion, your resilience, and your commitment. You are the heartbeat of this service, and I'm honoured to work alongside you.

Wishing you a joyful festive season and a new year filled with inspiration and discovery.

Cecilia Sani, Director: Western Cape Library Service

Bathandi, babhali, bafundi besiXhosa, sihlaba ikhwelo kuba ikhwelo lityala. Sicela nithumela amabalana, amangaku, nako nakuphi okunokuphucula, kufundise, kwazise, kukhulise, konwabise kuphinde kukhuthaza ukubhalwa nokufundwa kolwimi lwesiXhosa. Sikhuthaza ooSozilwimi ukuba imisebenzi yabo yophando eshankathelweyo ngesiXhosa ingangeniswa nayo ukuze ipapashwe njengengaku eliyakufundwa luninzi lwabantetho isisiXhosa nabanqwenela ukusifunda.

Showcasing the Western Cape Library Service at LIASA 2025

From 30 September to 3 October, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport's Western Cape Library Service (WCLS) proudly participated in the annual Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) Conference, held at the Boardwalk Hotel, Casino and Convention Centre in Gqeberha.

In addition to presenting, WCLS also hosted an exhibition stand to showcase and market the wide range of resources and services we provide to 375 public libraries across the Western Cape. Highlights from our contributions included the ALMAL Stoepestories initiative, ALMAL Minister's Book Club, and the **Cape Librarian** publication, still the only professional library journal of its kind in South Africa.

This year's conference theme, *Libraries as innovation hubs: Empowering communities*, underscored the important role that libraries continue to play in shaping knowledge societies. In his welcome address, LIASA President Charlie Maphuntshane Molepo reminded delegates that 'across South Africa and beyond, libraries are evolving into dynamic spaces where ideas are born, skills are nurtured, and communities are empowered... we are no longer just custodians of knowledge – we are catalysts for change'.

Reflecting on the importance of the conference, Cecilia Sani, Director: Western Cape Library Service, said: 'Participating in platforms such as LIASA allows us to showcase the innovation and impact of the Western Cape



LIASA attendees at the WCLS Exhibition

Library Service on a national stage. More importantly, it creates opportunities to learn from peers, share best practices, and ensure that our service continues to grow in relevance and value for the communities we serve.'

Cecilia Sani, Director: Western Cape Library Service

Local library leader takes top national honour

Tygerberg residents have extra reason to be proud – their local library manager has just been named South African UKS/LIASA Librarian of the Year. If you've visited any of the nine local libraries lately – from Tygervalley to Durbanville, Brackenfell to Kraaifontein – you've benefited from the leadership of Linda Ntaka, who has just received the country's most prestigious library award.

Linda's recognition as South African UKS/LIASA Librarian of the Year celebrates more than just professional excellence – it honours a career dedicated to bringing quality library services directly to the communities.

Linda's journey into public libraries began in 2007, after spending five years as a teacher-librarian.

Her passion for the profession was sparked by mentor Dr Flippie van der Walt, who introduced her to the Library and Information Association of South Africa (Liasa) in 2008. That introduction changed everything.

'I'm not selling Herbalife – I'm promoting professional recognition!' Linda often jokes when encouraging fellow librarians to join professional associations. Her infectious enthusiasm has made her a beloved figure in library circles nationwide.

While Linda's day job keeps her busy managing the local Area East libraries, her impact extends far beyond the Tygerberg area. She has travelled to deep rural areas across the Eastern Cape, delivering training and advocating for quality library services where they're needed most.



Her impressive resumé includes serving as National chair of the Public Libraries Interest Group, Eastern Cape Branch chair, and National Public Relations Officer from 2020 to 2023. In 2012, she participated in the prestigious Carnegie Institute Continuous Development Programme, a four-week leadership initiative for future library leaders across sub-Saharan Africa.

Linda's leadership philosophy shines through in how she manages the nine local libraries: Bothasig, Brackenfell, Durbanville, Edgemoed, Eikendal, Fisantekraal, Kraaifontein, Scottsdene, and Tygervalley. Under her guidance, Area East has become the City of Cape Town's best-performing library sub-area.

(Tygerburger Bellville, 15/10/2025)

Western Cape Library Service turns 70!

The largest library service of its kind in Africa celebrated its 70th year during a special function held on 10 October this year.

Ablly hosted by the assistant director for the Eden and Central Karoo region, Jongi Mbanga, the red carpet was rolled out for 250 current and former staff members held at the glamorously decorated Cape Town Civic Centre's ball room.

The Western Cape's Library Service, run by the provincial department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, was established in 1955, and at the time still included the Northern and Eastern Cape provinces' libraries. Currently it has 375 service points, which is subdivided between primarily libraries and a handful of depots.



In her address Cecilia Sani, director of the Provincial Library Service, thanked staff for their tireless contribution throughout the year, of which the passing of the Western Cape Public Library Services Act was the highlight.

Deputy director of the Regional Organisation, Ronel Mouton, delivered a fascinating recount of the most influential moments experienced by the Western Cape Library Service in the past ten years. She emphasised the importance of the evolving role of the library as a social hub and provider of services to ensure its future survival.

Of course, no anniversary celebrations is complete without a celebration of the first slice. As the highlight of the event dignitaries were invited to the stage for the ceremonial cutting of the enormous branded birthday cake.

This poignant moment symbolised a decade of shared success alongside the beginning of a new chapter; one that builds on the solid foundation of the past ten years while simultaneously looking ahead to the future as a continued symbol of connection and commitment in the communities we serve.

A proud milestone and a bright future: happy 70th, Western Cape Library Service!

Braam Peens, Western Cape Library Service

WCLS Seminar sparks innovation and collaboration in Cape Town

The Western Cape Library Service (WCLS) hosted a dynamic two-day seminar on 30 and 31 October at the Garden Court Nelson Mandela Boulevard in Woodstock, Cape Town. The event brought together library professionals, government representatives, and thought leaders to reflect, strategise, and innovate for the future of library services in the province.

The seminar was officially opened by Director Cecilia Sani, who shared key highlights of the Library Service's recent achievements, ongoing challenges, and strategic priorities. Her address set the tone for a forward-looking and collaborative gathering.

Delivering the keynote address, Chief Director Carol van Wyk inspired delegates to engage meaningfully: 'As we embark on this seminar, let us share insights, celebrate achievements, and explore new possibilities. Let this gathering be more than a meeting, let it reaffirm our

shared purpose. Together, we can build a library network that is inclusive, innovative, and indispensable to the people of the Western Cape.'

One of the standout presentations came from Wayde Groep, who emphasised the evolving role of libraries as vibrant community hubs. 'Libraries are not just about hosting programmes — they are shaping communities. Libraries need to be findable to be fundable.'

Thembelani Dzedze, Project Coordinator at the South African Library for the Blind (SALB), provided updates on the Mini Libraries for the Blind Project, while Chantelle Jacobs, librarian from the Breede Valley Municipality, shared powerful stories of the project's impact on local communities.

The seminar programme featured a wide range of insightful discussions, including:

- Library achievements and challenges
- Conditional Grant status and funding strategies
- Infrastructure development
- Innovative library design for community empowerment
- Integration of Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI
- Cybersecurity in library systems
- Rollout of the E-Kiosk Programme

Reflecting on the event, Deputy Director Carmen Lucas noted: 'The annual Library Service Seminar remains a cornerstone of our calendar, offering an invaluable opportunity to strengthen intergovernmental relationships across all spheres of government. It reflects our shared commitment to collaboration, transformation, and future-readiness.'

The seminar reaffirmed WCLS's dedication to building a library network that is not only resilient and resourceful but also deeply rooted in the needs of the communities it serves.



Cecilia Sani, Director: Western Cape Library Service



Delegates at the seminar



Chief Director Dr Carol van Wyk

Sharon slaan tweede plek in skryfkompetisie los

Groot-Brakrivier se Musefees is aan die einde September oor twee dae aangebied. As kultuurgeleentheid was daar verskillende aktiwiteite op die spyskaart — onder andere, die blitsfiksie-skryfkompetisie. Ek het toe ook besluit om in te skryf en het toe my storie, *Paultjie die gebroke seun*, ingestuur. Ek het nie geweet wat om te verwag nie, maar dit was nog altyd my droom om te skryf.

Só het dit gekom dat ek ook aan die kompetisie deelneem. Onder die beoordelaars was bekende skrywers soos Sidney Gilroy wat my storie gelees en goeie terugvoer verskaf het. Dit was amper ongelooflik om te dink dat so 'n bekende skrywer my storie self onder oë gehad het. *Paultjie die gebroke seun* is 'n punt van 82/100 toegeken, wat die tweede hoogste puntetelling was.

Ek kan tot vandag toe nie glo dat ek tweede plek met my storie behaal het nie, en raak nou nog sommer 'n bietjie emosioneel wanneer ek daaraan dink. Vir my persoonlik was dit 'n groot prestasie asook 'n inspirasie om nog verder te skryf. Daarom is daar definitief nog skryfwerk oppad, maar dis té vroeg om nou al oor daardie brood in die oond te praat!

Sharon Muller, Streeksbibliotekaresse: Eden en Sentrale Karoo



From Bonteheuwel to the World Stage: how coding is changing lives at the library

On Tuesday, 30 September, young coders from **Bonteheuwel Library**, represented South Africa at the 2025 Tangible Coding World Cup hosted by Tangible Africa at Amazon. Guided by YeBoneer Alexis Booysen as part of the YeBo Libraries Programme, five young participants showcased their coding skills on a global stage — proving that libraries are far more than just spaces for books — they are vibrant hubs for learning, creativity, and community growth.

The Bonteheuwel Coding Crew was one of only two library-based teams to represent South Africa, competing alongside school teams from across the country. Their efforts saw them move to an impressive 11th place out of 400 teams on the world leaderboard — a remarkable achievement that speaks to their talent, teamwork, and dedication.



YeBoneer and Team engaging with the coding challenges

'We never thought our trips to the library would take us this far,' shared one participant, reflecting the transformative power of after school spaces.

The coding crew — Aesha Abrahams (15), Lutha Ganga (17), Abu Bakr Abrahams (14), Rameez Jardien (16), and Abu Bakr Jacobs (17) — each bring unique stories and aspirations to the group. For many, the library was a new world: Aesha overcame initial nerves as the only girl in the crew and now thrives in a supportive, skill-building environment. Lutha discovered coding after joining a book club and quickly became a driving force in growing the crew. Abu Bakr Abrahams is already dreaming of designing video games, while Rameez combines coding with interests in medicine and mechatronic engineering. Abu Bakr Jacobs found confidence and community through coding and skateboarding with his peers. Together, they've built not just skills but lasting friendships and a shared sense of purpose.

Bonteheuwel Library has long been a pillar of community development, but the addition of coding programmes has truly brought after school spaces to life. 'People come here for books, but now they leave knowing how to code and solve problems,' Alexis explains. Local schools are also taking notice, eager to introduce learners to these opportunities.

The partnership between YearBeyond and DCAS Library Services highlights the incredible value young people gain when they engage in meaningful work and give back to their communities. From skills development to leadership, teamwork, and confidence, the YeBo Libraries Programme shows how libraries can spark curiosity, open doors, and transform lives. From the heart of the community to the world stage, these young coders are proof that after school programmes and supportive mentors like Alexis can change trajectories, inspire futures, and shine a light on new possibilities.

Wayde Groep, YearBeyond: Knowledge Management and Communications

Overhex Library: a dream come true for the community

The brand-new **Overhex Library** in the Breede Valley Municipality officially opened its doors on 11 September for public use — a proud and emotional moment for the community. What began in 2014 as a small room with two Wheelie Wagons has grown into a modern modular library, thanks to years of hard work and support from the Western Cape Library Service.

The library now offers four public computers with internet access and a growing collection of 2,788 books — a big step forward for learners and farm families in the area.

At the opening, library assistant Chriconia Verwey paid tribute to community helpers who've been there since day one, saying: 'This library isn't just about books — it's about people.'

Councillor Naomi Nel and Ethney Links, Assistant Director: Public Library Enhancement cut the ribbon, marking the beginning of a new chapter for Overhex.

This library belongs to the community — a place to read, learn, and grow together.

Christine Gerber, Library Manager: Breede Valley Municipality



Hermon's happy holiday programme

Hermon Public Library hosted an action-packed activity programme in the September school holidays.

Run over five days, the programme sought to engage all members of the community, fostering interaction and making learning enjoyable through multiple means of storytelling.

On the first day, a movie day was hosted to provide an engaging and educational experience for library visitors through films. The goal was to encourage reading and literacy, introduce educational and cultural content.

An intergenerational story swap (also called *Storiesuil* in Afrikaans) was held on the second day. Young and old came together to share personal stories and learn from one another's experiences.



Library Olympics were held on Day Three: a fun, educational event where children participated in games and challenges inspired by the Olympic Games — but with a library twist! The aim was to promote literacy and library participation through enjoyable learning, reading, and teamwork experiences. The book-themed challenges included a book balance relay (balancing books on participants' heads), Dewey Decimal Dash and trolley Dash.

On Day 4, the Mini Market taught participants basic financial and social skills through role-play. Using fake money, participants gained understanding of budgeting, buying, and selling while building confidence and teamwork. The event encouraged practical learning and strengthened community engagement at the library. Toy sharing followed, where children handed unused toys to support underprivileged peers. The activity promoted kindness, empathy, and social responsibility while teaching the value of giving. It also encouraged a spirit of community and gratitude.

On the final day, a pajama theme day was organised to create a fun, relaxed, and welcoming atmosphere that encourages people — especially kids and families — to visit and enjoy the library.

Overall, the programme promoted social interaction, community engagement, and a love for reading, while providing a safe, structured and enjoyable environment during school holidays.

Hildegard Adonis, Librarian: Hermon Public Library

Libraries as community recreation spaces: classic cinema at Wynberg Library

On Tuesday, 16 September, the WCLS, in partnership with **Wynberg Public Library**, hosted a special film show celebrating cinema classics of the 1900s. This bi-monthly programme, designed especially for elderly community members, has become a much-loved tradition at Wynberg Public Library. Guests were treated to timeless films such as *Coney Island* by Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle, and *The cure* and *Triple trouble* by Charlie Chaplin. Beyond their role as gateways to knowledge, libraries continue to demonstrate their importance as recreational and social spaces. According to Cecilia Sani, Director: Library Service: 'Initiatives like these highlights how libraries bring people together, creating opportunities for connection and a sense of belonging.' As part of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport's commitment to delivering inclusive library services across the Western Cape, programmes such as the film shows demonstrate the evolving role of libraries as vibrant community hubs that foster both learning and leisure.

Neville Adonis, Assistant Director: Information, Research, Publication and Promotions



Community members watching the 16mm film show

Hermanus Regional Public Library Forum creates valuable space for engagement

On 30 September, staff from public libraries in the Theewaterskloof and Overstrand Municipalities gathered at **Kleinmond Public Library** for the Hermanus Regional Public Library Forum, hosted by the Overstrand Municipality. The forum creates a valuable space to share experiences, address daily challenges, and gain inspiration to enhance library services.

Aron Gcotyelwa, Manager: Integrated Human Settlements and Development, welcomed attendees with encouraging words: 'You are here to develop yourselves and engage with colleagues. You are the heartbeat of the municipality. You are very important people, do not rate yourself less.' He reminded all that libraries are the keepers of information and knowledge.

A key highlight was a presentation on Client Services by Ronel Mouton, Deputy Director: Regional Organisation, Western Cape Library Service. She opened by saying:

'I love libraries, I believe in the impact and importance of libraries, and to me it is also important that you function well. My function this morning is thus to motivate you to upskill yourself.'

Mouton shared practical tips for excellent client service, ranging from being a resource expert and communicating professionally to creating a welcoming space, staying organised, and even dressing well as a sign of respect. She left the audience with a motivational challenge: 'What is one change you can make today or tomorrow to make a library user happy? Start where you are, use what you have, and do what you can.'

The second presentation, *From shelves to success — A librarian's journey through study and service*, was delivered by Ashton Assure, Administrative Officer: Selection Support, Western Cape Library Service via MS Teams. He shared his journey from intern to earning both a Library and Information Science degree and an Honours degree in the field. He encouraged colleagues to pursue further studies: 'It is never too late to study. You are not alone, we are here to help each other grow.'

He reflected on how education boosted his career and strengthened his ability to serve his community. He closed with two memorable quotes: 'The only thing that you absolutely have to know is the location of the library,' by Albert Einstein and 'The most important asset of any library goes home at night — the library staff,' by Timothy Healy.

Belinda May, Senior Librarian at Hawston Public Library, wrapped up the forum with a heartfelt thank you to all attendees.

Yvette Herbst, Assistant Director, Cape Winelands and Overberg Control Area



Hermanus Forum attendees

Sandhills Library celebrates reading excellence

What began as a small one-room library has grown into a beacon of hope for its community. On 3 October, **Sandhills Library** in the Breede River Municipality was honoured with the ATKV Woordveertjie Award for its outstanding contribution to promoting reading among young children.

The event, hosted on the farm where the library is situated, was a joyful celebration attended by community members, dignitaries, and special guests including Deputy Executive Mayor Cllr Juben von Willingh, Cllr Felicity Vaughn, Yvette Herbst from the Western Cape Provincial Library Service, and former BVM Libraries Manager Christine Gerber.

During her welcome the owner, Mara le Roux, shared the inspiring story behind the library's founding and her vision to showcase librarian Mary-Ann Oliphant's dedication and the community's passion for reading. Once a humble initiative, the library has since captured public attention through local media and now national recognition from the ATKV.

Speakers paid tribute to the spirit of collaboration that made the achievement possible. Cllr von Willingh commended the project as proof of what can be achieved when 'community and local government walk hand in hand'.

An emotional Mary-Ann expressed gratitude to all who have supported the library, saying, 'This award belongs to every parent, child and community member who believed in us. All of this is by the grace of our Father in Heaven.'

Today, Sandhills Library serves over 500 members, offering storytime sessions, homework support, literacy



Mara le Roux (owner of the farm), Mary-Ann Oliphant (Sandhills Librarian) and Christine Gerber (retired Library Manager)

programmes, and free Wi-Fi. With plans to expand into a larger space, the ATKV award will help move this dream closer to reality.

More than just recognition, this celebration marks a community triumph, a reminder that when passion, partnership, and purpose unite, the love of reading can truly transform lives.

Yvette Herbst, Assistant Director, Cape Winelands and Overberg Control Area

Jamestown Library officially reopens

The **Jamestown Library** in the Stellenbosch municipality was reopened on 29 September after serious structural upgrades to the building. It was opened the first time on 16 July 2010 and was in such demand during the closing for the upgrade that the community made regular enquiries to counsellors. The facility is in the heart of Jamestown, next to the clinic, and looks pretty and functional, a space that will be well used.

Luzé-Marlene Botha, a self-published author, signed and donated her first children's book, **Finding kindness**, to the library. She is a mother of two girls who are in the top five most prolific users of the library because as she says, they may take out 17 books on average at a time. She also makes use of CliftonStrengths that is a tool from Gallup, based on research in positive psychology, that helps people discover what they're naturally good at.

Instead of focusing on weaknesses, it highlights natural talent — the ways someone thinks, feels, and acts that come most naturally to you. Think of it like personal superpowers: when you know them, you can grow them into real strengths by practising and using them more often.

Charmaine Horne Kruger, a gender-based violence survivor who is an activist and an artist, created the artwork on the walls of the children's library. One of her quotes is on the wall of the library: 'The library is a child's spring garden.'



Library officials with author Luzé-Marlene Botha

Ronel Mouton, Deputy Director: Western Cape Library Service quoted Sidney Sheldon: 'Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve and contribute to improving our quality of life. Libraries change lives for the better.' She thanked the Stellenbosch Municipality for their commitment to provide library services to their communities like Jamestown and so empower them with opportunities and resources like this library.

Ronel Mouton, Deputy Director: Regional Organisation

Die Biblioteekdiens groet Neville Adonis



Ek kan nie die presiese dag onthou nie maar dit was in die jaar 2009 toe Neville by Publikasies ingestap het. as die nuwe hoof van die afdeling.

Soos dit maar gaan wanneer dinge waaraan 'n mens gewoond is, verander, het nie een van ons in Publikasies geweet wat om te verwag nie. Neville Adonis het so stil-stil sy plek agter die lessenaar ingeneem waar Stefan Wehmeyer, ons vorige hoof, vir baie lank die fort gehou en ons in al ons projekte met groot entoesiasme ondersteun het.

Daar was geen fanfare nie, geen onmiddellike veranderinge nie — maar wat ek nooit sal vergeet nie, is hoe alles in sy kantoor van Dag Een af altyd eksie-perfeksie op sy plek was. Daar was nie 'n rafel uit sy plek uit nie. En soos die jare aangegaan en hy al hoe meer groot projekte aangepak het, hoe meer het die lêers geword. En die plakkate. En die trofeeë: alles waarin hy 'n hand gehad het. En die verstommendste was altyd vir my dat ek op enige dag, op enige tyd, daar kon instap en hom iets vra oor 'n projek of 'n publikasie — al was dit 'n obskure vraag — en hy kon sy hand op die lêer lê waar die inligting was wat ek gesoek het. Ongelooflik!



Van my beste herinneringe om saam met Neville te gewerk het was sy onblusbare entoesiasme vir die **Kaapse Bibliotekaris**. My tyd by die tydskrif sal vir ewig die hoogtepunt van my loopbaan wees en het Neville, net soos sy voorganger, Stefan, daardie liefde eenhonderd persent gedeel. Dit was heerlike tye. Altyd wanneer die tydskrif afgelewer is, is die eerste een haastig oopgemaak en vinnig deurgeblaai om seker te maak alles is op sy plek. Gevolg deur Neville, wat dan altyd ewe formeel vir my sê — met daardie klein *smiletjie* van hom: 'dit lyk goed'.

Neville het in die jaar toe hy in die destydse Reklame en Publikasies oorgeneem het, vyf artikels vir die tydskrif geskryf: dit wil gedoen wees, want dit was nog nooit maklik om bibliotekarisse te kry om te skryf nie; en ten spyte daarvan dat hulle met hope kennis rondloop en oor die algemeen goed ingelig is, is dit 'n ander ding om hulle te kry om dit op papier vas te lê. Maar gee vir Neville 'n sperdatum en dit is lank voor die tyd op jou lessenaar!

'n Ander baie besondere herinnering is toe ons besluit het om 'n museum (later bekend as die Library Memorabilia Room) in die spasio waar die ou ingang vir die Biblioteekdiens was, te skep. Sy entoesiasme het myne amper oortref. Hy het net so hard daaraan gewerk om artefakte en interessantheide uit te snuffel as ek. Geen voorstel was te veel moeite vir hom nie en sy ywer om dit 'n spesiale projek te maak was aansteeklik. Ten spyte van baie spanning en allerhande praktiese probleme het ons groot pret gehad om artefakte uit die argiewe op te diep en om op die ou einde 'n baie spesiale lokaal in te rig.

So het ons ook in 2015 die Biblioteekdiens se 60ste verjaardag in dieselfde lokaal met groot sukses gevier — nóg 'n geleentheid waar sy hand duidelik sigbaar was, net soos dit ook tydens die onlangse spesiale viering van die Biblioteekdiens se 70ste verjaardag was. Die pragtig geraamde collages van historiese foto's wat hy met die hulp van sy personeel saamgestel het, en wat steeds teen die Biblioteekdiens se mure pryk, sal altyd 'n treffende en blywende herinnering van Neville se toegewyde strewe na detail wees.

As hy 'n projek aanpak móét alles net reg wees.

Ek glo een van Neville se hoogtepunte in die Diens was sy





rol in die Minister van Kultuursake en Sport se Mondelinge Geskiedenisprojek, wat hy met oorgawe bestuur het. Hierdie inisiatief was deel van die Minister se visie om ongedokumenteerde verhale en ervarings van individue in die gemeenskap te bewaar deur vertellings op te teken, dit te verfilm en aan die breër gemeenskap beskikbaar te stel.

Neville was sedert 2014 aan die stuur van 25 van hierdie aanbiedinge wat oor die lengte en breedte van die provinsie aangebied en deur meer as 400 mense bygewoon is. Die laaste aanbieding was in 2024. Aan sy sy was die uiters lojale Szerena Knapp (ook my eertydse regter- en linkerhand maar wat nie meer met ons is nie), Hoeda Salaam en Tyrone Williams. Niks was te veel moeite vir hulle nie; soms onder uiters moeilike omstandighede. Maar dat die projek onder sy leiding 'n wegholsukses was, is nie te betwyfel nie. Om nie te praat van al die staaltjies ná die tyd nie...

'n Verdere passie van Neville was sy passie vir die navorsingsafdeling. Daar het hy en sy regterhand, Helga Fraser, gewoeker om 'n databasis van bibliotekprofielie op te bou — 'n reuse-onderneming. Elke bibliotek en depot in die

Wes-Kaap se data is bygewerk met gedetailleerde inligting oor die gebou, die personeel en enige interessante inligting met foto's. Voorwaar 'n aanwys vir navorsing.

Ook onder sy hand is studies oor skoolbibliotek, dubbeldoel-biblioteke, LIS-opleiding in Suid-Afrika en meer — onderneem. Hierdie werkstukke, asook die baie interessante Gemeenskapsprofielie (waar inligting oor ras, geslag, gemiddelde ouderdomme van gebruikers en opvoedingsvlakke oor die gemeenskap wat elke bibliotek bedien aangedui word) wat hy laat opstel het, is 'n belangrike databank vir die Bibliotekdiens. Inligting kan nou met die druk van 'n knoppie verkry word.

Nog een van Neville se inisiatiewe was die saamstel van 'n kaart van bibliotek met GPS-koördinate en adresse: 'n besondere hulpmiddel vir beide personeel en die publiek. Sy ander baba was natuurlik die Jaarverslae... 'n uiters stresvolle oefening van bymekaarmaak van inligting wat uit alle oorde verkry moes word en wat, die gewoel en werskaf tenspyt, en met Wynand Coetzee se geduld en fyn oog vir ontwerp, altyd pragtig uitgelê en betyds reg vir verspreiding was.

Niks was ooit té veel vir Neville nie. Waneer 'n personeelid sy of haar kennis op 'n vakgebied wou uitbrei deur verdere studies, het hy op die daad met goed geskrewe motivering van sy kant af gesorg dat daardie droom 'n werklikheid geword het. Ek self het daarby gebaat en kon ek weer vir 'n ruk student wees — wonderlike tye!

Net so het talle PAYE- (as deel van die Premier se jeug-ontwikkelingsprogram) en EPWP-werksassistentie (Uitgebreide Openbare Werkeprogram) onder sy vlerk uiteindelik permanente aanstellings in die Diens gekry. Sommige het sedertien tot al 'n honneursgraad in Bibliotek- en Inligtingsdienste verwerf.

En nou is dit ook die einde van 'n era vir hom. Daar is baie wat oor Neville gesê kan word maar ek weet ek het al amper te veel gesê — die kalklig is nie sy ding nie — hy verkies om in die agtergrond te woeker en te werskaf. Vir my was dit 'n spesiale tyd in my lewe om saam met jou te werk, Neville (en dankie vir al die male sonder tal wat jy my 'somme' gekorrigeer het).

Ek kan my amper nie indink dat jy nie meer veel langer agter daai mooi netjies blinkgepoetse lessenaar gaan wees nie. Maar ek weet ook — jou hart se punt was nog altyd die droom van afsaal in Genadendal.

Daardie oomblik het nou aangebreek. Mag jy ryklik geseënd skryf aan hierdie volgende hoofstuk in jou lewe.

Grizéll Azar-Luxton, voormalige redakteur: Kaapse Bibliotekaris



Leilani van der Berg, Librarian, **D'Almeida Public Library**, writes:

Nizibone Lubisi is an environmental science graduate who faced connectivity issues on her phone to participate in an interview for the DFFE Municipal Environmental Graduate Programme on 24 July.

She visited the library seeking for help, detailed her issue and expressing a desire to use the ICT computers. My initial thought was that the ICT is too preoccupied with various distractions and not suitable for such an important interview, so I invited her into my office, offered her a comfortable seat, and shut the door. I helped her log in using my personal phone, and she managed to conduct her interview for 20 minutes. In her email, she mentioned being accepted into the two-year programme, and I am very proud that Team D'Almeida was once again able to assist our unemployed youth.

'I would like to sincerely thank you and the entire team at D'Almeida Public Library for your incredible support during my job application journey. From assisting me with the application process to providing a welcoming and helpful environment, your kindness and professionalism truly stood out.

I especially want to express my deepest gratitude for what you did on the day of my interview. When I experienced network issues, your willingness to connect me to the internet using your personal phone made it possible for me to attend the interview without any problems. I'm thrilled to share that I got the job!

Your support made a significant difference, and I am truly grateful.'

Nizibone Lubisi, D'Almeida Public Library



Met 'n trotse en dankbare hart kan ek baie dankie sê aan **Duivenhoks Biblioteek** en sy personeel. Ek was vantevore nie bevoorreg om rekenaargeriewe te hê nie, dus het ek altyd soontoe gegaan om my take daar te doen.

Die personeel het my altyd met 'n glimlag ontvang en dit het my baie tuis laat voel. Nooit het ek gestres oor hoe en waar ek my skoolwerk sal doen nie, want die biblioteek was die heel tyd beskikbaar. Ek kon rustig en in stilte my take voltooi. Daar was genoegsame hulpbrone wat gehelp het dat my werk van goeie gehalte is. Die personeel het 'n omgee-hart en wou altyd hê dat ek moet strew na sukses.

In Graad 11 het ek begin aansoek doen om verder te studeer. Die biblioteek het my gehelp met aanlynaansoeke. Hulle het my stap-vir-stap gehelp om seker te maak alles is in orde. Gedurende my vier jaar van studeer het ek altyd biblioteek toe gegaan, wanneer ons aanlyn toetse, take of self weer aansoek moet doen. Alles te danke aan die geriewe en hulpbrone.

Ek onthou dat hulle voortdurend wou weet hoe my studies vorder. En tot vandag kan ek enige tyd 'n afdruk gaan maak en nog steeds 'n hartlike welkom verwag.

Die biblioteek is 'n aanwinst vir ons gemeenskap. My suster studeer tans en die feit dat sy biblioteek toe kan gaan om haar take te doen is wonderlik. Vandag is ek 'n onderwyser en Duivenhoks Biblioteek het daartoe bygedra.

Baie dankie vir julle impak op my lewe. Julle is toeganklik en behulpsaam. Duivenhoks Biblioteek is enig in sy soort.

Virgenic Cillie, Duivenhoks Biblioteek

Met my eerste besoek aan **Protea Biblioteek** was ek aangenaam verras deur die rustige, vreedsame atmosfeer wat my begroet het.

Ek het onmiddellik besef dat dit 'n plek is waar jy kan ontspan, asemhaal en jouself emosioneel vind en versterk.

Ek het dadelik tuis gevoel; dit was soos tuiskoms na 'n lang afwesigheid.

Die rye boeke was so netjies en ordelik; daardie kenmerkende reuk van boeke; die gevoel van die blaai tussen my vingers, alles het my teruggevoer na jare se reistog met boeke en die gevoel wat dit weer in my wakker gemaak het.

Dis heilig. Dis onbeskryflik.

Die biblioteek het my vasgevang; ek moes van daar af net al hoe meer gereeld besoek aflê, boeke uitneem en sommer net tussen die rakke rondkuier.

Met aanmoediging en ondersteuning van die biblioteekpersoneel het 'n klein breigroepie in ook Augustus 2024 die lig gesien. Daardeur kon ek sosialiseer en mense leer ken en waardeer wat ek daarsonder nie sou kon doen nie.

Intussen hoop ek dat meer mense geïnspireer sal word om van die biblioteek as waardevolle skatkis van kennis gebruik sal maak.

Hartlike dank aan die personeel van die Protea Biblioteek vir uitmuntende, professionele diens wat u aan die gemeenskap, soms onder moeilike omstandighede, na die beste van u vermoë lewer. Mag u groei van krag tot krag, in ledetal sowel as funksionaliteit — in die toekoms.

Rosetta Vallentyn, Protea Biblioteek, Albertinia



Ek het Anneline Kistor ontmoet toe ek nog baie jonk en klein was. Ek was 'n leerder by Vermaaklikheid Mission School toe hierdie biblioteek in die gemeenskapsaal op een perseel saam met die sopkombuis gehuisves was. Twee klein blou trollies met vier deure elk; dis waaruit die biblioteek bestaan het. Anneline is vir my as persoon alles-in-een: my mentor, my steunpilaar en my lig in donker tye toe ek niks en niemand gehad het nie — sedert my laerskooldae by Brakfontein Primêr en tot waar ek my hoërskoolloopbaan voltooi het by Gerrit Du Plessis Sekondêr.

Sy is vir baie 'n voorbeeld — van oud tot jonk — asook 'n rolmodel. En natuurlik 'n skouer om op te huil.

In 2023 het ek met Anneline se hulp vir werk aansoek gedoen as assistent by Tiny Treasures Kleuterskool te Vermaaklikheid. Ek was eers skepties oor my vooruitsigte omdat ek geen ondervinding gehad het in vroeë kinderontwikkeling (VKO) nie.

In 2024 help sy my om aansoek te doen by Oudtshoorn Bronnesentrum vir Vlak 4 in VKO. Met baie selftwyfel oor waar ek die geld gaan kry, want my ouers het nie geld om my deur die jaar te help nie. Sy het my aangemoedig om by plaaslike inwoners aan te klopp om te vra of hulle bereid sal wees om my finansieel by te staan. Met al die ondersteuning en aanmoediging van Anneline kon ek my Vlak 4 met trots voltooi.

In Januarie vanjaar nader Anneline my weer en vra of ek my Vlak 5 gaan voltooi vir hierdie jaar. Weereens kom die vrae oor die geld. Want ek is 'n enkelmamma van 25 jaar met twee jong dogtertjies, en met net 'n naweekwerk.

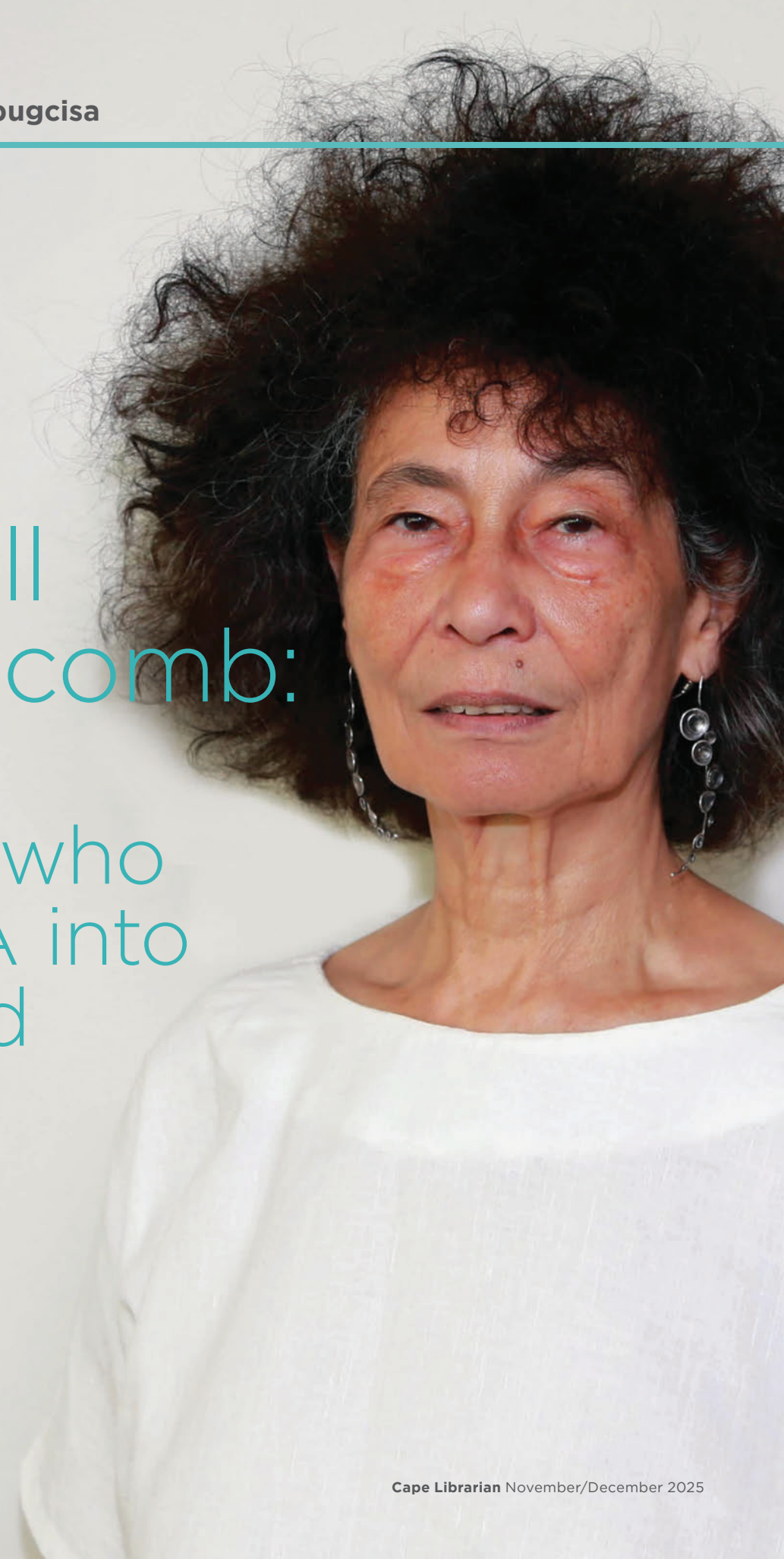
Sy moedig my aan en sê, 'Kom ons begin weer by die donateurs van laasjaar vir hulp.' Ek gaan klopp maar weer aan dieselfde persone se deure en weereens was hulle bereid om my ook hierdie jaar by te staan met Vlak 5-opleiding. Waar sou ek vandag sonder haar wees? Verval in dwelms? Verval in al die negatiewe euwels van die wêreld? Daarvoor sal ek Anneline altyd dankbaar wees wat die potensiaal in my raak gesien het, toe niemand anders het nie. 'n Goeie, eerlike, opregte mens vol liefde, dissipline en omgee.

Amelia Beukes, Brakfontein Biblioteek, Riversdal



Farewell Zoë Wicomb: the vivid voyager who wrote SA into the world

by Mark Gevisser





When Zoë Wicomb arrived in Britain at the age of 22 in 1970, just off the SS Southern Cross from Cape Town, the first thing she did was make her way to Carnaby Street where she bought herself a big black hat. In the days following her death last week, this story was retold by several of her friends and family: as an emblem of her vitality, style and pluck; of the passion that defined her writing and her life. She was the daughter of a conservative coloured schoolmaster raised in a small rural Namaqualand community — and here she was in Swinging London!

It would be incorrect to say ‘she did not look back’, because she did, all the time. Dislocation drove her creativity, and all eight of her books — four novels, two story collections and one of essays — are about South Africa or rooted in it, even if they are written from the United Kingdom in which she made her home and raised her family.

But in the way she must have tied that hippie hat over the Afro she refused to tame, she forged her own utterly distinctive voice. Her first book, a collection of interconnected stories called **You can't get lost in Cape Town** published abroad in 1988, was praised by Toni Morrison — one of her icons — as ‘seductive, brilliant and precious’; when it was finally published in South Africa two decades later, David Attwell wrote in the introduction that the stories stood out ‘as exquisite embers in the ash of so much apartheid-era writing, speaking powerfully to post-apartheid sensibilities’.

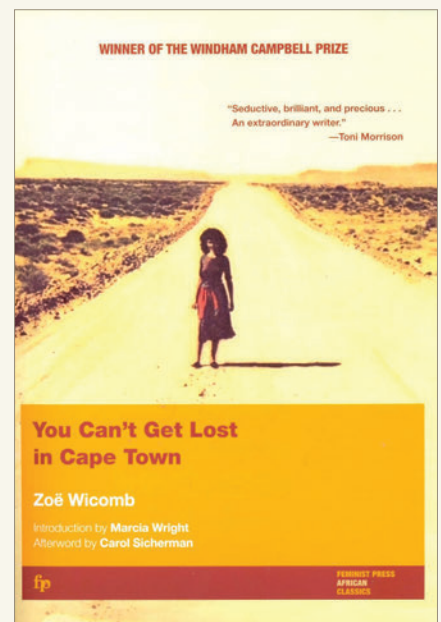
This is spot on. The stories might be deeply rooted in the author’s

experience of Beeswater, the rural community outside Vanrhynsdorp where she was raised, or of coloured Cape Town, where she went to high school and then to the just-opened University of the Western Cape (UWC) in the ‘bush’, but they have a breadth to them that draws on her erudition.

They have an edge to them too: a striving beyond the confines of what Wicomb called the ‘totalising’ identity of declaring oneself ‘coloured’ — or ‘black’, or anything, for that matter — into what she described as ‘multiple belongings’. The words of the exiled poet Arthur Nortje that she uses as an epigraph to **You can't get lost** could well serve as her epitaph: ‘Origins trouble the voyager much, those roots/ that have sipped the waters of another continent...’

The novelist Damon Galgut recalls ‘feeling jealous’ when he picked up **You can't get lost**, ‘because it was a book I wish I’d written myself. Later the jealousy was supplanted by the pleasure of getting to know Zoe a little. She was always a delight’.

Another friend was the writer Ivan Vladislavic. She was ‘one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary literature’, he says. ‘Her fiction is so finely wrought and extraordinarily rich in its language and insights. She was marvellous company too, witty,





Zoë Wicomb in Cape Town, 2019

often provocative and occasionally dauntingly regal.'

We were friends too, albeit not close. I last saw her last year, on her annual visit to Cape Town with her partner of 49 years, the artist Roger Palmer. Dressed in one of her characteristically colourful 50s-style full skirts (she loved to twirl these while dancing), she dominated the dinner table: sparring with Roger, as was their way, arguing furiously with me over the state of South African media (she insisted it was 'captured by white monopoly capital'), laughing uproariously, and declaring the day — which had begun with an ocean swim — to be 'the best of my life'.

'She said this all the time,' recalls her friend, the legendary Cape Town bookseller Henrietta Dax, who was present at that dinner. 'Good company, a great swim, a fine bottle of sparkling wine. Every good experience was "the best".'

But this wasn't just hyperbole: her *joie de vivre* was infectious. For Dax, her singular quality is the way she balanced this enthusiasm with care: when Dax was ill, Zoë and Roger dropped what they were doing to come to Cape Town to look after her.

But there were shadows, too. When I asked Zoë at that dinner what she was working on, she responded categorically that she would never pen another word. She always said this. She found writing

an ordeal and was scathing in her self-criticism, often riven by self-doubt. She doted on her grandsons and played a large role in raising them in Glasgow, which is one of the reasons she could not settle permanently in South Africa after she retired.

She dedicated *The one that got away*, a short story collection, to her first grandson, Finn, and her novel **October** to the second, Theo. When Hannah, her daughter, had a third boy, Milo, Zoë exclaimed: 'Damn! I guess I'll have to write another book!' She did — her last one, **Still life**, published in 2020.

Deteriorating health

Of course, she wrote on. She was due to give a paper at next month's *Nobel in Africa* conference at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies on the work of Vladislavic, one of her very favourite writers. And despite her deteriorating health, she collaborated with Roger for the first time in their 49 years together, on a book about the Pietermaritzburg street-sign artist Fanlo 'Chickenman' Mkhize, whom they had known for decades, to be published this year.

'Just last Sunday we were sitting at the kitchen table crossing the t's and undotting the i's,' Roger told me. 'She thought her lead essay was "a load of rubbish. Give me two weeks and I'll turn it into something".' Of course, it was 'something' already: in a way that only Zoë could, it parses Chickenman with Dickens' **Bleak house**.

So obsessed was Zoë with rewriting, her former student and close friend Mariangela Palladino told me, that every time she had to prepare for a public reading, she would do so with a red pen, 'changing the printed words and giving the audience something new and different from what was on the page'. Vladislavic says he is 'sure the self-doubt, the endless questioning, is part of the reason she produced such superb fiction'.

This self-doubt, says Palladino, was entirely at odds with her gusto in the classroom at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, where she was a legendary professor of literature and of creative writing: 'She shook the world of her students. She could open up horizons by clicking a finger.' She was a strict PhD supervisor, but also an

unfailingly generous one, a life guide as well as a teacher.

Palladino believes that this ability to be 'authoritative without being authoritarian' is something she learned from her upbringing. Her parents, from Griqua stock of the Eastern Cape, had migrated to Namaqualand where they became community leaders because they were educated and spoke English.

Visionary Griqua chief

Zoë's mother was a direct descendant of the visionary Griqua chief Andries le Fleur, a legacy that was important to Zoë. Her friend, the activist and politician Lynne Brown, told me that there was always an internal conflict about this: 'When I said, "I'm Hessaqua", she responded, "Rubbish! There's no such thing. There's no Khoi or San!" You would get a long story about identity formation. But it did mean something to her. She wanted to break free, but she also had a sense of belonging.'

This tension is manifest in her writing, and in her life. She insisted on being herself, whatever the price, which was sometimes high.

Once, when Brown went to visit Zoë in Glasgow, her host led her through town wearing cats-eye sunglasses and a thrift-store faux leopard-skin jacket. When children mocked her — 'Golliwog! Golliwog!' — she was distraught and devastated, but when Brown ran after the children to admonish them she got even more upset, and begged her friend to let it go.

Hearing this story reminds me of one that Roger told me, of how, when they moved to Glasgow and needed to use black cabs, his seemingly confident partner could not lift her arm to hail one. He understood this to be a legacy of her upbringing, as a rural coloured girl in apartheid South Africa.

The Wicomb family was forcibly removed from Beeswater, a fragmented rural community of about sixty homesteads near Vanrhynsdorp, to a windswept township called Die Bulte outside Vredendal. Zoë's mother died when she was 13; this, she often said, liberated her in that it opened the door for her to Cape Town, to go to high school and stay with family: 'There was a conscious need to be somewhere more exciting, more challenging,' Roger told me.



Zoë Wicomb and her grandsons Finn, Theo and Milo McLure

Had she known about Steve Biko's new Black Consciousness Movement, Zoë had said, 'I would not have felt so despondent and anxious to get away'; as it was, she did not encounter a live performance, an art film, or any work by a black writer until she arrived in England.

Ann Harries

As Zoë was boarding the Southern Cross in 1970, she was introduced by her cousin, the activist Gertrude Fester, to a young white South African woman named Ann Harries. Harries, who would become a distinguished novelist herself, recalls 'a dismissive nod that

put me in my place at once'. But when she came up for dinner that evening, she found that was seated with the 'strikingly beautiful' Zoë and two young blond Afrikaners, one of whom expressed his racist disgust at having been seated with her.

Overcome with rage, Harries got up and slapped him: 'Zoë burst into delighted laughter, the two men fled, and thus began a lifelong beautiful friendship between two liberated South African women.'

In London, Zoë supported herself by working as a supply teacher: she would march her students up Box Hill to make Jane Austen's **Emma** come alive for them. There had been two books in her

childhood home: **Pride and prejudice**, and an abridged **Oliver Twist**: 'I still love both,' she said in a 2017 interview. 'I was transported from the vulgarity of apartheid by books — books opened up different worlds, and brought freedom from an oppressive social order.'

But she was 'panic-stricken', she has said, that her 'bush' education from UWC was 'so poor' that 'I would have to teach myself to read in order to teach A-level students'. She registered for a second undergraduate degree from Reading University, where she fell in with a group of art students and, through them, started hanging out in the budding artists' community of London's East End.

It was there that she met Roger, when he arrived, bad tempered, at the home of a friend to reclaim a pasta pot that he claimed was long overdue being returned to his house. The pot was being used to cook a meal for a guest who had just returned from a visit to her native South Africa. He landed up staying for the meal: 'I've

had enough of this ridiculous country called England,' Zoë pronounced. 'I should go home.'

They fell in love and she stayed in the 'ridiculous country' whose racism she found more insidious than that back home where 'at least you knew where you stood'. The couple moved to Nottingham, where Roger got a job. Hannah was born, and Zoë started writing, conjuring Beeswater from Sherwood Forest, where they lived in a particularly dank cottage.

A few years earlier, in London, she had come across the Heinemann African Writers edition of Bessie Head's *Maru*, and was astonished to see a photograph of herself on the cover.

Unauthorised

'Uncannily, and much as I hated the unauthorised use of the picture, I felt an affinity with her,' Zoë later said. *Maru*, written by a southern African woman of mixed race, 'gave me the

courage or permission to write'.

Head became a lodestar for Zoë, and she often returned to her.

'She felt she had to write,' says Mariangela Palladino. 'It seemed to me to be her way of social justice. There were gaps in history and they had to be filled.' She would, when asked, speak at gatherings of the Nottingham Anti-Apartheid Movement, but she loathed and feared public speaking. Writing was 'her very quiet, very fierce, very cunning way of being a militant, intellectually and socially', says Palladino.

When Roger got a job in Glasgow, they moved there, where Zoë did graduate work in literary linguistics at the University of Strathclyde. But in 1990, with the end of apartheid, she returned to Cape Town to see if she could resettle. She got a job at UWC, bought a little house in Observatory, and enrolled Hannah at Harold Cressy School; Roger would visit during holidays.

It was in this period that Zoë became close to Lynne Brown, then still an underground activist.

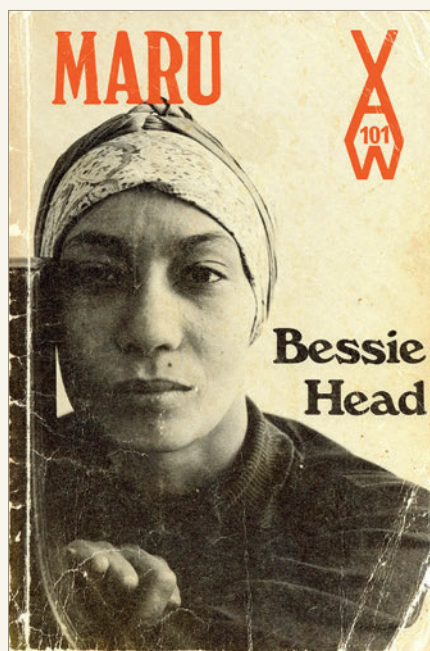


Zoë Wicomb and Roger Palmer met in London in 1976. They were together for 49 years

'Many comrades went to therapy,' Brown recalls. 'I went to Zoë. In a very difficult time, I could trust her. She would never repeat what I told her. And she probed things. She didn't have a set view. That's why we have remained so close over 30 years.'

Zoë could be grand and literary — the word 'regal' is often used by friends — but she also loved to be 'ordinary', says Brown. She spent much time in Mitchells Plain with Brown's family, who adored her, and continued to do so on every visit home, even after she returned to Glasgow in 1993: having Roger so far away wasn't working out, and she decided to put her family first. She got her post at the University of Strathclyde, and taught there until her retirement in 2008. She continued publishing her fiction, despite her complaints.

'For years we have been waiting to see what the literature of post-apartheid South Africa will look like,' wrote JM Coetzee in his endorsement of her first novel, **David's story** (2001).



In London in the early 1970s, Zoë Wicomb discovered the Heinemann African Writers edition of Bessie Head's *Maru* — with a portrait of herself on the cover. 'Much as I hated the unauthorised use of the picture, I felt an affinity with her,' Wicomb has said. 'Head's novel gave me the courage or permission to write.' (Image: Courtesy of Roger Palmer)

'Now Zoe Wicomb delivers the goods. Witty in tone, sophisticated in technique, eclectic in language, beholden to no one in its politics,

David's story is a tremendous achievement and a huge step in the remaking of the South Africa novel.'

In 2013 she would win Yale University's inaugural Windham-Campbell Prize for Fiction. The citation reads that her 'subtle, lively language and beautifully crafted narratives explore the complex entanglements of home, and the continuing challenges of being in the world'.

In one of Zoë's early stories, a child looked at a fearsome mother from under the table, 'and through the iron crossbars... saw in her two great buttocks the opposing worlds she occupied'. She was the kind of writer who could craft such a sentence, freighted an earthy image with conceptual heft, and also begin a bracing 1991 essay with the line: 'We've all been horribly bullied by Father Culture and Mother Nature, that binary pair who define the terms of our production in the old language of the West — race, ethnicity, nation.' In another essay, she would provocatively compare township necklacings to suburban braais, in the way they brought people together around a fire.

Insightful tribute

Although Zoë hated the word 'coloured', she preferred it to 'brown', which she felt served 'conservatism' by celebrating 'in-betweenness'. In an insightful tribute to her just published on *Africa is a country*, her friends Lynne Brown and Desiree Lewis — professor of women's studies at UWC — note how her death 'has prompted an outpouring of tributes from black women writers and scholars across the globe, a reflection of the immense political and literary impact of her work'.

These tributes spoke to Zoë's 'lifelong commitment to unraveling the social fictions that continue to shape South African life', but Zoë herself might raise an eyebrow, from beyond the grave, to being remembered as a black female pioneer. In a 2021 essay, for example, she critiqued a 'woke' politics that could, as Brown and Lewis put it, 'end up hardening complex truths, collapsing the contradictions

of the past into performances of moral clarity that often reflect the psycho-political needs of the present more than the realities of history'.

Brown and Lewis note that, like Bessie Head, 'she chose to ground her expansive, universal vision in the particulars of place: a view of the local that was at once compassionate and sharply critical'. Celebrating their 'inspiring, hilariously funny, outrageously adventurous and incredibly generous' friend, they offer an example of this grounding from *October*, where the author describes in detail the flora of Namaqualand: the *kanniedoods* and the *koekemakankra* and the vivid *vygies* among them, planted by a character named Sylvie: 'If, as AntiMa says, the devil has blown in her blood, then that blood is the screaming purple here at her feet.'

Zoë Wicomb saw the devil in her own blood, in her landscape; this lived beside her *joie de vivre*. Every Wednesday night in Glasgow, she and Roger dined with Hannah and the boys. Ouma would always introduce the same topic: how her grandchildren should do her in before she went gaga. Much dark laughter would ensue: a gun? a cyanide suppository?

'She could no longer stand the physical pain,' says Roger, of the past few months. 'She was, finally, done with writing. She was ready to die.' Her family, her friends and her readers will miss her terribly.

Zoë Wicomb was born on 23 November 1948. She died in Glasgow of a pulmonary embolism on 13 October 2025. She is survived by her partner Roger Palmer; her daughter Hannah Palmer; her grandsons Finn, Theo and Milo McClure; and her brother Neil Wicomb and his family, who live in Gauteng. There will be a public memorial service for her in Cape Town in January 2026.

*Mark Gevisser's recent books include **The pink line: journeys across the world's Queer frontiers: The revolution will not be litigated: people power and legal power in the 21st century** (co-editor); and an updated edition of his biography of former president Mbeki, **Thabo Mbeki: the dream deferred**. He is working on a double biography of the German-Jewish sexual rights pioneer Magnus Hirschfeld and his Chinese partner, Li Shiu Tong. He lives in Kalk Bay.*

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Literary Awards

The 2024/25 update is compiled by Mbali Hadebe, Ayanda Majola, Nomonde Ngqoba, Kwanele Thabede and Stanley Jonck

The following is a list of recent literary awards. If you notice any errors, or if you can add to the information, please contact Ayanda Majola on (021) 483-6982 or Ayanda.Majola@westerncape.gov.za.

SOUTH AFRICA		
Academy Gold Medal for outstanding service to the English language (English Academy of Southern Africa)		
No awards in 2022, 2023 and 2024		
Alan Paton Award (see <i>Sunday Times</i> Literary Awards)		
Andrew Murray-Desmond Tutu Prize for Best Christian or theological book in any official language of South Africa		
2025	Alan Storey	The bell, banners and blasphemy
Andrew Murrayprys vir die Beste Christelike Boek in Afrikaans		
2025	Cas Vos	Geloofsgedigte
ATKV Woordveertjies		
ATKV-Prosaprys		
2025	Ingrid Winterbach	Onrus op Steynshoop
Prys vir Dramateks		
2025	Philip Rademeyer	Stinkhout
Prys vir Liefdesroman		
2025	Geen toekenning	
Prys vir Poësie		
2025	Lynthia Julius	Kinderlê
Prys vir Romanses		
2025	Dina Botha	'n Kersfeeskomplikasie
Prys vir Spanningslektuur		
2025	Irma Venter	Al wat tel

Prys vir Nie-fiksie		
2025	Charmaine Africa	Amma
Woordwystoekening vir woordeboeke en taalgidse		
2025	Gerhard van Wyk (eindredakteur van die WAT); Phillip Louw (hoofredakteur en uitvoerende direkteur van die WAT)	Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal, letter U (2024)
Desmond Tutu-Gerrit Brand Prize for Debut Work in an official language of South Africa		
2025	Ruhan Fourie	Christian nationalism and anticommunism in twentieth century South Africa
Diana Ferrus-prys (Nuut)		
2024	Gaireyah Fredericks	Swaa dra
Dinaane Debut Fiction Award (formerly the European Union Literary Award)		
2025	Not yet awarded	
Elizabeth Eybers Prize for Afrikaans and English Poetry (Media24 Books)		
2025	No award	
Eugène Maraisprys vir Prosa		
2025	Gaireyah Fredericks	Een voet innie kabr
European Union Literary Award for Best First Novel (see Dinaane Debut Fiction Award)		
Gustav Prellerprys		
2025	Nog nie toegeken nie	
Hertzogprys vir Prosa		
2025	Eben Venter	Decima

The Humanities and Social Sciences Book Awards (National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences – NIHSS)		
Novel		
2025 (shared)	Charl-Pierre Naudé	The equality of shadows
	Shubnum Khan	The lost love of Akbar Manzil
Fiction – Emerging author		
2025	Anna Stroud	Who looks inside
Short stories		
2025	Alex Latimer	Love stories for ghosts
Poetry		
2025 (shared)	Lynthia Julius	Kinderlê
	Siphokazi Jonas	Weeping becomes a river
Non-fiction – Emerging author		
2025	Lesedi Molefi	Patient 12A: a memoir
Non-fiction Biography		
2025 (shared)	Kally Forest	Lydia: anthem to the unity of women
	Caster Semenya	The race to be myself
Non-fiction Monograph		
2025	Khumisho Mogerane	Morafe: person, family and nation in colonial Bechuanaland, 1880s-1950s
Non-fiction Edited Volume		
2025	Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie	Gandhi's African legacy: Phoenix settlement 1904-2024, a history through letters
Imbali Award for excellence in romance writing (Romance writers Organisation of Southern Africa – ROSA)		
2025	Sophia Karlson	Hated vows

Imbali Toekenning vir uitmuntendheid in die skryf van romanses (ROSA)		
2025	Elize Davies	Verlief op die hartebreker
Ingrid Jonkerprys vir Poësie		
2025	Jaco Barnard Naudé	om my kastele in Spanje te sloop
Jan H Maraisprys		
2025	Nog nie toegeken nie	
Jan Rabie en Marjorie Wallace-beurs		
Volgende toekenning in 2026		
Jan Rabie/Rapportprys vir Innoverende Afrikaanse Letterkunde		
2025	Nathan Trantraal	Die man wattie kinnes vang
kykNET-Rapportboekpryse		
Fiksie		
2025	Ingrid Winterbach	Onrus op Steynshoop
Nie-fiksie		
2025	Charmaine Africa	Amma
Breyten Breytenbach-prys vir digkuns		
2025	Danie Marais	Ek en jy bestaan nie
Verfilmingprys		
2025	PJO Jonker	Die onsigbare
Boekresensente van die jaar		
2025 Fiksie	Paul Kammies	<i>Nathan Trantraal se graphic novel oo hoe Bruin seuns 'n wound asse gift gegie is (oor Die man wattie kinnes vang deur Nathan Trantraal, in Klyntji, 15 Julie 2024)</i>
2025 Nie-fiksie	Willie Burger	<i>Daar is nie iets soos 'n 'mooi dood' nie (oor Sing, Mamma, sing deur Theresa Papenfus, in Plus 50, Junie/Julie 2024)</i>
Louis Hiemstraprys vir Nie-fiksie (driejaarlik)		
Volgende toekenning in 2026		
Nielsen Booksellers' Choice Award (see SA Book Awards)		
Olive Schreiner Prize for Poetry (English Academy of Southern Africa)		
2024 (shared)	A'Eysha Kassiem	Suitcase of memory
	David Ralph Viviers	Mirage
Philida Literary Award		
2025	Hedley Twidle	
Protea Boekhuistoekenning		
2025	Eunice Visser	Die Kaapse slawe, 1652-1838: 'n kultuurhistoriese perspektief
SA Book Awards		
Overall winner		
2025	Salamina Mosese	Cook-off at Gogo's spaza
Adult fiction category		
2025	John van de Ruit	Spud: the reunion
Adult non-fiction category		
2025	Rorisang Thandekiso and Nkhensani Manabe	Disciple: walking with God

Sol Plaatje Prize for Translation (English Academy of Southern Africa)		
Next award in 2026		
South African Literary Awards (SALAs – shortlist of winners)		
Lifetime Achievement Literary Awards		
2025	John Kani (for body of work)	
	Mavis Smallberg (for body of work)	
Chairperson's Literary Award		
2025	Mzwakhe Mbuli (for body of work)	
Posthumous Literary Awards		
	Magema Magwaza Fuze (for body of work)	
	Molema Mokae (for body of work)	
	Mbongeni Ngema (for body of work)	
	Joan Baker (for body of work)	
	Donald Parenzee (for body of work)	
2025	Juby Mayet (for body of work)	
	Matsemela Manaka (for body of work)	
	Maishe Maponya (for body of work)	
	Breyten Breytenbach (for body of work)	
	Mohlomi Moleleki (for body of work)	
	Colin Smuts (for body of work)	
K Sello Duiker Memorial Literary Award		
2025	Lesedi Molefi	Patient 12A: a memoir
Literary Translator's Awards		
2025	Moses Seletisha	Ke rata Punky
	Sifiso Mzobe	Izinkabi: yasho inganono, laphalala igazi
First-time Published Author Awards		
2025	Lebogang Seale	One hundred years of dispossession: my family's quest to reclaim our land
	Happy Gladness Simelane	Thandeka
Creative Non-fiction Award		
2025	Maria Suriano	A rare gift to the struggle: ma Vesta Smith and the everyday politics of liberation
Poetry Awards		
	Sizakele Nkosi	U grand, malume?
	Molebatsi Bosilong	Mosikaro
2025	Bafana Charles Peter	Umkhumezelo umqulu 3
	Muntomuhle Silindokuhle Mcambi	Amagagasi enjabulo
	Mosima Phakane	Go ribega tsa masa
	Vutshila Mission Magaisa	Vutshila bya vutshokovetseri
Nadine Gordimer Short Story Award		
2025	Raphashe Abram Lesufi	Temošo setšhabeng
	Zaheera Jina Asvat	Tears of the weaver
	Kwandile Hadebe	Ishumi



Ingrid Winterbach



Gaireyah Fredericks



Charmaine Africa



Lesedi Molefi

Novel Awards		
2025	Bulelani Matshoba	Akwaba ndandingambonanga
	Kobate John Sekele	Ditlhoka tša bagaditšong
	Barbara Boswell	The comrade's wife
	Musa Aubrey Baloyi	Xilondza xa le nhompfani

Sunday Times Literary Awards shortlists
Non-fiction Prize

2025	Jonathan Jansen	Breaking bread: a memoir
	Khumisho Moguerane	Morafe: person, family and nation in colonial Bechuanaland
	Margie Orford	Love and fury: a memoir
	Beverley Roos-Muller	Hunting the seven: how Gugulethu Seven assassins were exposed
Lebogang Seale	One hundred years of dispossession: my family's quest to reclaim our land	

Fiction Prize		
2025	Sven Axelrad	God's pocket
	Barbara Boswell	The comrade's wife
	Karen Jennings	Crooked seeds
	Shubnum Khan	The lost love of Akbar Manzil
Siphiwe Gloria Ndlovu	The creation of half-broken people	

Thomas Pringle Awards (English Academy of Southern Africa)

2025	Not yet awarded	
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UCT Book Award (University of Cape Town)

2024	Dr Chantal Stewart	The veil of Maya
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UJ Prys vir Afrikaans

2025	Ingrid Winterbach	Onrus op Steynshoop
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UJ Debuutprys

2025	Gaireyah Fredericks	Een voet in die kabr
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UJ Main Prize (English)

2025	Barbara Boswell	The comrade's wife
	Shubnum Khan	The lost love of Akbar Manzil

UJ Debut Prize (English)

2025	Siphokazi Jonas	Weeping becomes a river
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UJ Prize for Literary Translation

2025	Naömi Morgan	Ons wag vir Godot deur Samuel Beckett
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GREAT BRITAIN

Arthur C Clarke Award

2025	Sierra Greer	Annie Bot
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Authors' Club Best First Novel Award

2025	Ferdia Lennon	Glorious exploits
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Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction (see Women's Prize for Fiction)

2025	Yael van der Wouden	The safekeep
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Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-fiction (formerly the Samuel Johnson Prize)

2025	Helen Garner	How to end a story: collected diaries
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Betty Trask Prize (Society of Authors award for first novels, traditional or romantic, non-experimental, by writers under 35)

2025	Ashani Lewis	Winter animals
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Betty Trask Awards (Society of Authors awards for young authors of 'outstanding literary merit')

2025	Bonnie Burke-Patel	I died at Fallow Hall
	Madeline Docherty	Gender theory
	Genevieve Jagger	Fragile animals
	Elizabeth O'Connor	Whale fall
Nicolas Padamsee	England is mine	

Boardman Tasker Award for Mountain Literature

2025	Iain Peters	The corridor
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Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize for a Comic Novel

2024	Ferdia Lennon	Glorious exploits
2025	Not yet awarded	

Booker Prize (formerly Man Booker Prize)

2025	David Szalay	Flesh
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Bookseller/Diagram Prize for Oddest Book Title of the Year

2025	Matthew Purvis	The pornographic delicatessen: mid-century Montréal's erotic art, media, and spaces
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British Book Industry Awards (see British Book Awards)

British Book Awards (Nibbies)

Book of the Year (overall winner chosen from the six category winners)

2025	Alexei Navalny (author) and Arch Tait and Stephen Dalziel (translators)	Patriot
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Fiction Book of the Year

2025	Percival Everett	James
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Debut Fiction Book of the Year

2025	Asako Yuzuki (author) and Polly Barton (translator)	Butter
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Crime and Thriller Book of the Year

2025	Abir Mukherjee	Hunted
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Non-fiction: Narrative Book of the Year

2025	Alexei Navalny (author) and Arch Tait and Stephen Dalziel (translators)	Patriot
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Non-fiction: Lifestyle Book of the Year

2025	Stanley Tucci	What I ate in one year
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Audiobook of the Year

2025	Patric Gagne (written and narrated)	Sociopath: a memoir
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Children's Fiction Book of the Year

2025	Jeff Kinney	Diary of a wimpy kid: hot mess
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Children's Illustrated and Non-Fiction Book of the Year

2025	Isabella Tree (author) and Angela Harding (illustrator)	Wilding: how to bring wildlife back
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Author of the Year

2025	Percival Everett	James
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Illustrator of the Year

2025	Rob Biddulph	Blown away Gigantic (award for his illustrations overall)
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British Fantasy Awards

Robert Holdstock Award for Best Fantasy Novel

2025	OO Sangoyomi	Masquerade
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Best Novella

2025	Lorraine Wilson	The last to drown
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August Derleth Award for Best Horror Novel

2025	Johanna van Veen	My darling dreadful thing
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Best Non-fiction

2025	Sacha Coward	Queer as folklore: the hidden queer history of myths and monsters
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Best Newcomer of the Year

2025	Teika Frances White	Voyage of the damned
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British SF Association Award for Best Novel

2024	Aliya Whiteley	Three eight one
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Christopher Bland Prize (Royal Society of Literature Prize for debut novelists or popular non-fiction writers over 50)

2025	Kathryn Faulke	Every kind of people
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Crime Writers' Association Awards

CWA Goldsboro Gold Dagger for Best Crime Novel

2025	Anna Mazzola	The book of secrets
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CWA Ian Fleming Steel Dagger for Best Thriller

2025	Lou Berney	Dark ride
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Crime fiction in Translation (formerly CWA International Dagger)

2025	Akira Otani (author) and Sam Bett (translator)	The night of Baba Yaga
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CWA Historical Dagger

2025	AJ West	The betrayal of Thomas True
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CWA John Creasey (New Blood) Dagger for Best First Crime Novel

2025	Katy Massey	All us sinners
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CWA Gold Dagger for Non-fiction

2025	Kate Summerscale	The peepshow: the murders at 10 Rillington Place
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Debut Dagger

2025	Joe Eurell	Ashland
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Dagger in the Library

2025	Richard Osman	
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CWA Diamond Dagger for Lifetime Achievement

2025	Mick Herron	
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Desmond Elliott Prize for New Fiction

2025	Award on hold since 2022	
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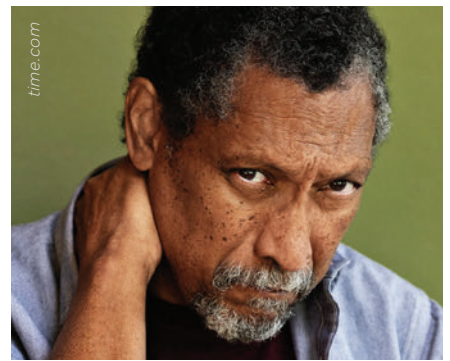
Dylan Thomas Prize for Young Writers (Swansea University, Wales)		
2025	Yasmin Zaher	The coin
Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography (Society of Authors)		
2025	Tim Blanning	Augustus the strong: a study in artistic greatness and political fiasco
Encore Award for Best Second Novel (Royal Society of Literature)		
2025	Manya Wilkinson	Lublin
The Writer's Prize (formerly Folio Prize – see Rathbones Folio Prize)		
2025	Not yet awarded	
Forward Poetry Prizes		
Forward Prize for Best Collection		
2025	Viydan Ravinthiran	Avidya
	Karen Solie	Wellwater
Felix Dennis Prize for Best First Collection		
2025	Isabelle Baafi	Chaotic good
Galaxy National Book Awards (see British Book Awards)		
Goldsmiths Prize (Goldsmiths College)		
2025	CD Rose	We live here now
James Tait Black Memorial Prizes		
Biography		
2025	Iman Lamia Ziadé	My great Arab melancholy
Fiction		
2025	Lucas Rijneveld	My heavenly favourite
Jhalak Prize (a prize for a book published in the UK by a writer of colour – BAME)		
2025	NS Nuseibeh	Namesake: reflections on a warrior woman
McKitterick Prize (Society of Authors award for a first novel by an author over 40)		
2025	Tom Newlands	Only here, only now
Ondaatje Prize (Royal Society of Literature)		
2025	Carys Davies	Clear
Orange Prize for Fiction (see Women's Prize for Fiction)		
Orwell Book Prize for Political Fiction		
2025	Donal Ryan	Heart be at peace
Orwell Book Prize for Political Writing		
2025	Victoria Amelina	Looking at women, looking at war
PEN/Ackerley Prize for Autobiography (English PEN)		
2025	Jeff Young	Wild twin: dream maps of a lost & drifter
PEN/Pinter Literary Prize (English PEN)		
2025	Leila Aboulela	
The People's Book Prize (by public vote – no judges)		
Fiction		
2024/25	RM Brown	Song of the stag
Non-fiction		
2024/25	Kate Bradbury	One garden against the world: in search of hope in a changing climate

Beryl Bainbridge Award for Best First-time Author		
2024/25	Carolyn Mayling	The future is Rosie: a memoir
Best Achievement Award		
2024/25	Edi Bilimoria	Unfolding consciousness: exploring the living universe and intelligent powers in nature and humans
Rathbones Folio Prize (formerly the Folio Prize)		
2025	Not yet awarded	
Romantic Novelists' Association Awards		
Historical romantic novel		
2025	Elena Collins	The wicked lady
	Lulu Taylor	The last song of winter
Contemporary romantic novel		
2025	Rebecca Raisin	A love letter to Paris
Debut romantic novel		
2025	Breea Keenan	Plot twist
Jackie Collins Romantic thriller award		
2025	Joy Wood	Whatever it takes
Fantasy romantic novel		
2025	Julie C Dao	Now comes the mist
Romantic comedy		
2025	Suzanne Lissaman	Love me till Wednesday
Popular romantic fiction award		
2025	Emma Denny	All the painted stars
Royal Society Insight Investment Science Book Prize (formerly Royal Society Winton Prize for Science Book)		
2025	Masud Husain	Our brains, our selves: what a neurologist's patients taught him about the brain
Saltire Society Scottish Book of the Year		
2024	Laura Cumming	Thunderclap
Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-fiction (see Baillie Gifford Prize)		
2025	Helen Garner	How to end a story: collected diaries
Somerset Maugham Awards (Society of Authors)		
2025	Jo Hamya	The hypocrite
	Ashani Lewis	Winter animals
	Jason Okundaye	Revolutionary acts: love & brotherhood in black gay Britain
2025	Charlotte Shevchenko Knight	Food for the dead
Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award		
2024	Harriet Baker	Rural hours: the country lives of Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Townsend Warner and Rosamond Lehmann
The Telegraph Sports Book Awards		
The Telegraph Sports Book of the Year (overall winner)		
2025	Khalida Popal	My beautiful sisters: a story of courage, hope and the Afghan women's football team

Autobiography of the Year		
2025	Sir Chris Hoy	All that matters: the inspirational and uplifting memoir of hope from one of GB's greatest Olympians
Clays Sports Writing Award		
2025	Rebecca Achieng Ajulu-Bushell	These heavy black bones
The Cricket Book of the Year		
2025	David Kynaston and Harry Ricketts	Richie Benaud's blue suede shoes: the story of an ashes classic
The Football Book of the Year		
2025	Miguel Delaney	States of play: how sportswashing took over football
The Rugby Book of the Year		
2025	Johny Sexton	Obsessed: the autobiography
Children's Sports Book of the Year		
2025	Sky Brown	The life changing magic of skateboarding: a beginner's guide with Olympic medalist Sky Brown
Pinsent Masons International Autobiography of the Year		
2025	Not yet awarded	
Illustrated Book of the Year		
2025	Matthew Caldwell and Alan Dein (authors)	Ishilling: the football programme design revolution of 1965-85
Sports Entertainment Book of the Year		
2025	Alex Payne, James Haskell and Mike Tindall	The good, the bad & the rugby: unleashed
Cycling Book of the Year		
2025	Not yet awarded	
Theakston Old Peculier Crime Novel of the Year Award		
2025	Abir Mukherjee	Hunted
TS Eliot Prize for Poetry (The Poetry Book Society)		
2024	Peter Gizzi	Fierce elegy
Wales Book of the Year (English language)		
2025	Carys Davies	Clear
Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction		
2025	Andrew Miller	The land in winter
Waterstones Book of the Year		
2024	Asako Yuzuki	Butter
Waterstones Scottish Book of the Year		
2025	Tom Newlands	Only here, only now
William Hill Sports Book of the Year Award		
2025	Pippa York and David Walsh	The escape: the tour, the cyclist and me
Women's Prize for Fiction (formerly Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction and Orange Prize for Fiction)		
2025	Yael van der Wouden	The safekeep

UNITED STATES		
Agatha Awards (Malice Domestic awards for traditional mysteries)		
Best contemporary novel		
2025	Gigi Pandian	A midnight puzzle
Best first novel		
2025	KT Nguyen	You know what you did
Best historical novel		
2025	Amanda Flower	To slip the bonds of Earth
Best non-fiction		
2025	Phyllis M Betz (author) and Tina deBellegarde (editor)	Writing the cozy mystery: authors' perspectives on their craft
Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction		
2025	Percival Everett	James
Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Non-fiction		
2025	Kevin Fedarko	A walk in the park: the true story of a spectacular misadventure in the Grand Canyon
Astounding Award for Best New Writer (formerly John W Campbell Award for Best New Writer)		
2025	Moniquill Blackgoose	
Bram Stoker Awards for Horror (Horror Writers Association)		
Novel		
2025	Gwendolyn Kiste	The haunting of Velkwood
First novel		
2025	Monika Kim	The eyes are the best part
Graphic novel		
2025	Gou Tanabe	HP lovecraft's the call of Cthulhu
Young adult		
2025	Adam Cesare	Clown in a cornfield 3: the church of Frendo
Non-fiction		
2025	Lisa Wood	Blacks in film and cultivated bias
Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award (Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America)		
2025	NK Jemisin	
Edgar Awards (Mystery Writers of America)		
Best novel		
2025	Charlotte Vassell	The in crowd
Best first novel by an American author		
2025	Henry Wise	Holy City
Best paperback original		
2025	Kimberly Belle	The Paris widow
Hugo Award for Best Science Fiction Novel		
2025	Robert Jackson Bennett	The tainted cup
John W Campbell Award for Best New Writer (see Astounding Award)		

Kirkus Prizes		
Fiction		
2025	Lucas Schaefer	The slip
Non-fiction		
2025	Scott Anderson	King of kings
Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction		
2025	Geraldine Brooks	
Locus Awards		
Science fiction novel		
2025	Alexander Boldizar	The man who saw seconds
Fantasy novel		
2025	T Kingfisher	A sorceress comes to call
Horror novel		
2025	Chuck Tingle	Bury your gays
First novel		
2025	John Wiswell	Someone you can build a nest in
Best YA novel		
2025	Yoon Ha Lee	Moonstorm
Mary Higgins Clark Award (Mystery Writers of America)		
2025	Sulari Gentill	The mystery writer
Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature		
2025	Minsoo Kang	The melancholy of untold history
National Book Awards		
Fiction		
2025	Rabih Alameddine	The true true story of Raja the Gullible
Non-fiction		
2025	Omar El Akkad	One day, everyone will have always been against this
Poetry		
2025	Patricia Smith	The intentions of thunder: new and selected poems
Translated literature		
2025	Gabriela Cabezón Cámara	Las niñas del naranjel
Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters		
2025	George Saunders	
Literarian Award for outstanding service to the American literary community		
2025	Roxane Gay	
Young people's literature		
2025	Daniel Nayeri	The teacher of Nomad land: a World War II story
National Book Critics' Circle Awards		
Fiction		
2025	Hisham Matar	My friends
Non-fiction		
2025	Adam Higginbotham	Challenger: A true story of heroism and disaster on the edge of space
Biography		
2025	Cynthia Carr	Candy darling: dreamer, icon, superstar



Percival Everett



Robert Jackson Bennett



Arthur Sze



NoViolet Bulawayo

John Leonard Prize for an outstanding debut book in any genre		
2025	Tessa Hulls	Feeding ghosts: A graphic memoir
Autobiography		
2025	Alexei Navalny, translation by Arch Tait with Stephen Dalziel	Patriot: a memoir
Criticism		
2025	Hanif Abdurraqib	There's always this year: on basketball and ascension
Poetry		
2025	Anne Carson	Wrong Norma
Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award		
2025	Sandra Cisneros	
Nebula Awards		
Novel		
2025	John Wiswell	Someone you can build a nest in
Novella		
2025	AD Sui	The dragonfly gambit
PEN/Bellwether Prize (for socially engaged fiction)		
2025	Jamila Minnicks Gleason	Hydrangeas of new Jessup
PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction		
2025	Garth Greenwell	Small rain
PEN/Jean Stein Book Award		
2025	Yiyun Li	The book of goose
PEN/Open Book Award (for a book-length work by an author of colour)		
2025	Kali Gros	Vengeance feminism: The power of black women's fury in lawless times
PEN/Robert W Bingham Prize (for a debut short story collection)		
2025	Amy Stuber	Sad grownups
Philip K Dick Award for Best Original Science Fiction Paperback Novel		
2025	Brenda Peynado	Time's agent
Poet Laureate		
2025	Arthur Sze	
Pulitzer Prizes		
Fiction		
2025	Percival Everett	James
General non-fiction		
2025	Benjamin Nathans	To the success of our hopeless cause: the many lives of the Soviet dissident movement
Poetry		
2025	Marie Howe	New and selected poems
Biography		
2025	Jason Roberts	Every living thing: the great and deadly race to know all life

Drama		
2025	Branden Jacobs-Jenkins	Purpose
History		
2025	Edda L Fields-Black	Combee: Harriet Tubman, the Combahee river raid and black freedom during the civil war
RITA Awards (Romance Writers of America – see Vivian Award)		
The Strand Critics' Awards		
Best mystery novel		
2025	Not yet awarded	
Best debut mystery novel		
2025	Not yet awarded	

INTERNATIONAL AWARDS		
BookPeople Awards (formerly the ABA Booksellers' Choice Awards – Australia)		
Booksellers' choice adult non-fiction		
2025	Helen Garner	The Season
Adult fiction book of the year		
2025	Robbie Arnott	Dusk
August Prize for best fiction book of the year (Sweden)		
2024	Tony Samuelsson	Kungen nav Nostratien
Aurealis Awards (Australia)		
Science fiction novel		
2024	JM Voss	Temporal boom
Horror novel		
2024	Ben Pienaar	Carve your soul to pieces
Fantasy novel		
2024	Alexandra Almond	Thoroughly disenchanted
Aurora Award for Best Novel (Canada)		
2025	Premee Mohamed	The siege of burning grass
Bank Windhoek Doek Literary Awards (biennial)		
2025	Not yet awarded	
Caine Prize for African Writing (for a short story)		
2025	NoViolet Bulawayo	Hitting Budapest
Cervantes Prize (for lifetime achievement – Mexico)		
2025	Gonzalo Celorio	
Crime fiction in translation (formerly CWA International Dagger)		
2025	Akira Otani (author) and Sam Bett (translator)	The night of Baba Yaga
CWA International Dagger (see Crime fiction in translation)		
Franz Kafka Prize		
2025	Not yet awarded	
Gerald Kraak Award (The Other Foundation and Jacana Literary Foundation)		
2025	Not yet awarded	
German Book Prize (Germany)		
2025	Dorothee Elmiger	Die hollanderinnen

Governor-General's Literary Award for English Fiction (Canada)		
2025	Kyle Edwards	Small ceremonies
International Dublin Literary Award (formerly International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award)		
2025	Michael Crummey	The adversary
International Prize for Arabic Fiction (Abu Dhabi – winner from Egypt)		
2025	Mohamed Samir Nada	The prayer of anxiety
Irish Book Awards (Ireland)		
Novel of the Year		
2024	Donal Ryan	Heart, be at peace
Best Irish-published Book of the Year		
2024	Hector Ó hEochagáin	The Irish words you should know
Non-fiction Book of the Year		
2024	Clair Wills	Missing persons, or my grandmother's secrets
Lifestyle Book of the Year		
2024	Molly Nic Céile	Gaeilge i Mo Chroí – Irish in My Heart: Your Guide to Loving and Living the Irish Language
Cookbook of the Year		
2024	Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire and Dorothy Cashman	Irish food history: a companion
Sports Book of the Year		
2024	Johnny Sexton with Peter O'Reilly	Obsessed: the autobiography
Biography of the Year		
2024	Seán Ronayne	Nature boy: a journey of birdsong and belonging
Children's Book of the Year: Junior		
2024	Paddy Donnelly	The golden hare
Children's Book of the Year: Senior		
2024	Eilish Fisher (author) and Dermot Flynn (illustrator)	Fia and the Last snow deer
Teen and Young Adult Book of the Year		
2024	Sam Blake	Something's about to blow up
Crime Fiction Book of the Year		
2024	Jane Casey	A stranger in the family
Popular Fiction Book of the Year		
2024	Graham Norton	Frankie
Newcomer of the Year		
2024	Alan Murrin	The coast road
Author of the Year		
2024	Sally Rooney	
ITW Thriller Awards (International Thriller Writers)		
Best hardcover novel		
2025	Not awarded	
Best paperback original novel		
2025	Not awarded	
Best first novel		
2025	Marie Tierney	Deadly animals
Best ebook original		
2025	Not awarded	

The International Booker Prize (formerly the Man Booker International Prize – an annual prize, shared by author and translator, for a translation into English of a single work)		
2025	Banu Mushtaq and Deepa Bhashti (translator)	Heart lamp: selected stories
Miles Franklin Literary Award (Australia)		
2025	Siang Lu	Ghost cities
Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature (an American University in Cairo Press award for the best contemporary novel written in Arabic)		
2024	Mohammed Tarazi	Muted microphone
Ned Kelly Awards (Crime Writers Association of Australia)		
Best crime fiction		
2025	Margaret Hickey	The creeper
Best true crime		
2025	Steve Johnson	A thousand miles from care
Best debut crime fiction		
2025	Lisa Kenway	All you took from me
Best international crime fiction		
2025	Graeme Macrae Burnet	A case of matricide
Neustadt International Prize for Literature (biennial)		
Next award will be announced in 2026		
Nigeria Prize for Literature (Prose fiction)		
2025	Oyin Olugbile	Sanya
Nobel Prize for Literature		
2025	László Krasznahorkai	
Nommo Awards (African Speculative Fiction Society)		
2025	Tlotlo Tsamaase	Womb city
Ockham New Zealand Book Awards		
Acorn Prize for Fiction		
2025	Damien Wilkins	Delirious
Illustrated Non-fiction Award		
2025	Deidre Brown (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahū), Ngarino Ellis (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Porou), and Jonathan Mane-Wheoki (Ngāpuhi, Te Aupōuri, Ngāti Kuri)	Toi Te Mana: an indigenous history of Māori art
General Non-fiction Award		
2025	Ngāhua Te Awekōtuku (Te Arawa, Tūhoe, Ngāpuhi, Waikato)	Hine toa: a story of bravery
Pius Adesanmi Memorial Prize for Excellence in African Writing (biennial award from the African Studies Association of Africa)		
2025	Not yet awarded	
Prime Minister's Literary Award for Fiction (Australia)		
2025	Michelle de Kretser	Theory & practice
Prix Femina (France)		
2025	Nathacha Appanah	La Nuit au cœur
Prix Femina étranger (award for best foreign book translated into French)		
2025	Not yet awarded	
Prix Goncourt (France)		
2025	Laurent Mauvignier	La maison vide
Prix Renaudot (France)		
2025	Adélaïde de Clermont-Tonnerre	Je voulais vivre

Pushkin House Russian Book Prize		
2025	Benjamin Nathans	To the success of our hopeless cause: the many lives of the Soviet dissident movement
Scotiabank Giller Prize (Canada)		
2025	Souvankham Thammavongsa	Pick a colour
Sharjah International Book Fair Awards		
Best International Fiction Book		
2025	Siphiwe Gloria Ndlovu	The creation of half-broken people
Best International Non-Fiction Book		
2025	Sunita Krishnan	I am what I am
Sir Julius Vogel Award for Best Novel (SF & Fantasy Association of New Zealand)		
2025	Mel Harding-Shaw	Echoes of earthshine
Stella Prize (for fiction or non-fiction books by Australian women)		
2025	Michelle de Kretser	Theory & practice
Trillium Book Award - English (Canada)		
2025	Maurice Vellekoop	I'm so glad we had this time together
World Fantasy Award for Best Novel		
2025	Robert Jackson Bennett	The tainted cup

CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARDS		
SOUTH AFRICA		
Alba Bouwerprys vir Kinderliteratuur		
2025	Marissa Badenhorst	Watermeisie: Akwa se reis
ATKV-Kinderboek Toekennings		
Voorleeskategorie Graad RR-1		
2025	Zuléka Smit (skrywer)	Ben en die boelies
2025	Johann Strauss (illustreerder)	Ben en die boelies
Selfleeskategorie Graad 2-3		
2025	Jaco Jacobs (skrywer)	Stink sokkies
2025	Patrick Latimer (illustreerder)	Stink sokkies
Selfleeskategorie Graad 4-5		
2025	Jaco Jacobs (skrywer)	Minki se verjaardag
2025	Emily House (illustreerder)	Jani Jonker gloei in die donker
Selfleeskategorie Graad 6-7		
2025	Eleanor Lombard (skrywer)	Vasbyt Vyf: Die ontvoering
Selfleeskategorie Graad 8-9		
2025	An-Mari do Carmo	Foto's en fairy lights
Elsabe Steenbergprys vir Vertaalde Kinder- en Jeugliteratuur in Afrikaans		
Volgende toekening 2027		
Exclusive Books/IBBY SA Award for Children's Literature (biennial)		
Next awards 2026		

LAPA Jeugromankompisje		
Volgende toekennings 2026		
SA Book Awards		
Children's category		
2025	Salamina Mosese	Cook-off at Gogo's spaza
South African Literary Awards (the SALAs – shortlist of winners)		
Children's Literature Award		
2025	Kabelo Duncan Kgatea	Petleke ya Malemelagotlhe
2025	Phuti Seboni	Rakgolo Masoba
2025	Upile uThixo Bongco	Big shoes to fill
Youth Literature Award		
2025	Kobate John Sekele	Sejamosela se fetetša noka
2025	Seakgwe Phalatshe	Menomasweu
2025	Vusi Makhoba	Mhlawumbe Ngale Kwethuna
2025	Tiah Marie Beautement	A tale of many tangents
Scheepersprys vir Jeugliteratuur		
2025	Louis Pretorius	Kompleks
Tienie Hollowaymedalje vir Kleuterliteratuur (driejaarliks)		
Volgende toekening 2027		

GREAT BRITAIN		
The Bookbug Picture Book Award (Scottish Book Trust)		
2025	Not yet awarded	
The Bookseller YA Book Prize (see YA Book Prize)		
2025	Moira Buffini	Songlight
Branford Boase Award (given annually to the author and editor of an outstanding debut novel for children)		
2025	Margaret McDonald (author) and Alice Swan and Ama Badu (editors)	Glasgow boys
British Book Awards Children's Book of the Year		
Children's Fiction Book of the Year		
2025	Jeff Kinney	Diary of a wimpy kid: hot mess
Children's Illustrated Book of the Year		
2025	Julia Donaldson (author) and Alex Scheffler (illustrator)	Jonty Gentoo: the adventures of a penguin
Children's Non-Fiction Book of the Year		
2025	Isabella Tree (author) and Angela Harding (illustrator)	Wilding: how to bring wildlife back
Carnegie Medal		
2025	Margaret McDonald	Glasgow boys
Children's Book Awards (formerly the Red House Children's Book Awards . These awards from The Federation of Children's Book Groups are voted for entirely by children)		
Overall winner		
2025	Ross Montgomery	I am Rebel



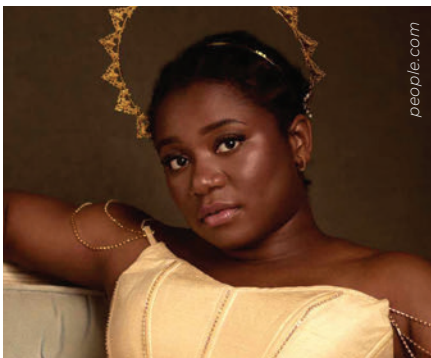
Moira Buffini



Ross Montgomery



Jason Reynolds



Jordan Ifueko

For younger children

2025	Leonie Lord (author and illustrator)	Grotti
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For younger readers

2025	Ross Montgomery	I am Rebel
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For older readers

2025	Malcolm Duffy	Seven million sunflowers
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Kate Greenaway Medal for Illustration

2025	Chris Butterworth (author) and Olivia Lomenech Gill (illustrator)	Clever crow
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Klaus Flugge Prize (a prize for the most promising and exciting newcomer to children's book illustration)

2025	Charlie Castle (author) and Emma Farrarons (illustrator)	My hair is as long as a river
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Laugh Out Loud Awards (the **Lollies** are awards for funny children's books voted for by children)

2025	Alex Willmore	I did see a mammoth!
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The People's Book Prize for a Children's Book (chosen by public vote — no judges)

2025	Lynn Santer	Swan song
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Red House Children's Book Awards (see **Children's Book Awards**)

The Royal Society Young People's Book Prize

2024	Sheila Kanani	Can you get rainbows in space?: a colourful compendium of space and science
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Waterstones Children's Book Prize

Overall winner

2025	Mikey Please (author and illustrator)	The cafe at the edge of the woods
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Best illustrated book

2025	Mikey Please (author and illustrator)	The cafe at the edge of the woods
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Best book for older readers

2025	Nathanael Lessore	King of nothing
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YA Book Prize (*The Bookseller*)

2025	Moira Buffini	Songlight
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UNITED STATES

Andre Norton Award for Young Adult Science Fiction and Fantasy (Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America)

2025	Vanessa Ricci-Thode	The young necromancer's guide to ghosts
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Coretta Scott King (Author) Book Award

2025	Jason Reynolds	Twenty-four seconds from now
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Coretta Scott King (Illustrator) Book Award

2025	CG Esperanza	My daddy is a cowboy
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Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Author Award

2025	Craig Kofi Farmer	Kwame crashes the underworld
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Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Illustrator Award

2025	Craig Kofi Farmer	James Baldwin
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Kirkus Prize for Young Readers' Literature

2025	Thao Lam	Everybelly
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Michael L Printz Award

2025	Samuel Teer (author) and Mar Julia (illustrator)	Brownstone
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Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children's Literature

2024	Frances Hardinge (author) and Emily Gravett (illustrator)	Island of whispers
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National Book Award for Young People's Literature

2024	Shifa Saltagi Safadi	Kareem between
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2025	Daniel Nayeri	The teacher of Nomad land: a World War II story
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Newbery Medal

2025	Erin Entrada Kelly	The first state of being
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Randolph Caldecott Medal (for the artist of a picture book for children)

2025	Andrea L Rogers (author) and Rebecca Lee Kunz (illustrator)	Chooch helped
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Theodor Seuss Geisel Award

2025	Ame Dyckman (author) and Mark Teague (illustrator)	Vacation: three-and-a-half stories
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Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction

2025	Kim Johnson	The color of a lie
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Stonewall Children's Literature Award

2025	Jes and Cin Wibowo	Lunar boy
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Stonewall Young Adult Literature Award

2025	Jonny Garza Villa	Canto Contigo
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INTERNATIONAL

Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award

2025	Marion Brunet	
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Children's Africana Book Awards (annual awards for authors and illustrators of the best children's and young adult books on Africa published or republished in the US)

Best Book: Young Children

2025	Fasika Adefris and Sara Holly Ackerman (authors) and Netsanet Tesfay (illustrator)	The Gabi that girma wore
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Best Book: Older Readers

2025	Jordan Ifueko	The maid and the crocodile
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Hans Christian Anderson Awards

Next award in 2026

NSK Neustadt Prize for Children's Literature (biennial)

2025	Cherie Dimaline (Canada)	
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Mbali Hadebe, Ayanda Majola, Nomonde Ngqoba and Kwanele Thabede are book selectors at the Western Cape Library Service. Stanley Jonck is the Assistant Director. Selection at the Western Cape Library Service

Uphuhliso lweelwimi zomthonyama ngeliso lamanina

Ibhalwe nguGqirhalwazi Mlamli Diko



Xa ubani ezinikela ekufundeni, aphinde afundise, futhi afundise ngobuciko nobuncacholo bolwimi lwesiXhosa, ekudala lwenziwa isicamba sokuxangxathwa, saba lixhoba lobhunyulo nokuchwethelwa ecaleni, wophawula ukuba uFikiswa Phyllis Magqashela akabhaleli konwabisa, koko ubhalela ukutshintsha intlalo nenkcubeko yesizwe sakhe, ingakumbi kwiimeko ezonganyelwe ziingxaki ezifana nokuxhatshazwa kwamanina. Ngaloo ndlela, kusionqibo esichanekileyo ukuthi uMagqashela ube engumbhobho wokulwela isizwe sakhe, igorha empini. Inani leencwadi azibhalileyo asiyonto ekumele sizihluphe ngayo, koko masizihluphe ngendlela asebenzise ngayo ulwimi oluchanekileyo kuncwadi lwesiXhosa, nendlela athe wavela ngayo imixholo nemixholwana ehlupha umzi kaXhosa.

Xa bendisothula intetho yam kwitheko ebelibhiyozela imisebenzi yakhe, langomhla wama22 Agasti 2025, ndiyivelele into ethi, ndandiqala ngqa ukumbona ubuso ngobuso, ndimbambe isandla. Incoko yethu yabaingathi singabantu ekudala sisazana kuba ukwazi iimbalo zakhe kukwazi nendlela acinge ngayo. Ngako oko, kwaba lula kakhulu ukuqhuba incoko naye, sixoxa ngezinto yinto, imicimbi yelizwe lethu neengxaki ezambathe isiXhosa. Kowu! madoda iBhelekazi!

Nalapha ke, andizukuthetha ngaye buqu, koko ndiza kuthetha ngeembalo zakhe, eziquka idrama ethi **Amathaf'Entandabuzo** (2006), **Isangxa Siyawhuza** (2006), **Ubomi**

Ngumzamo (2012), **Umlindi** (2015), nezinye nezinye iimbalo ezininzi athe wazipapasha, kuquka neenguqulelo.

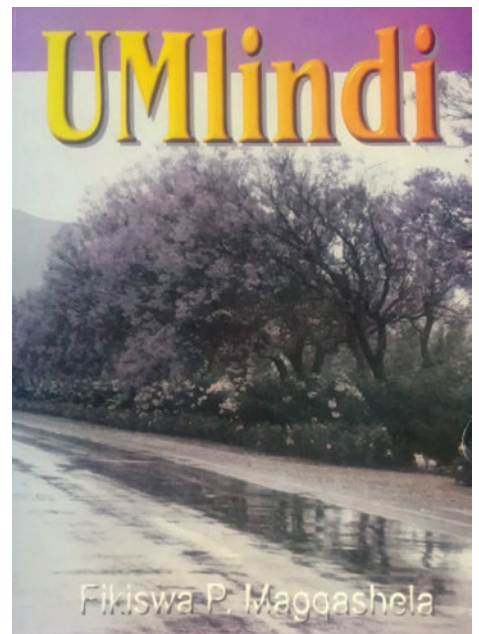
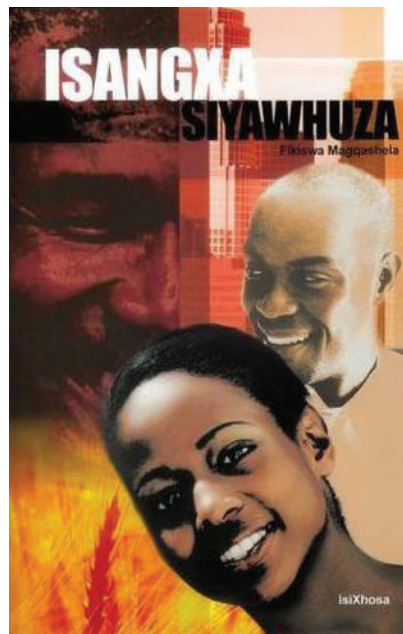
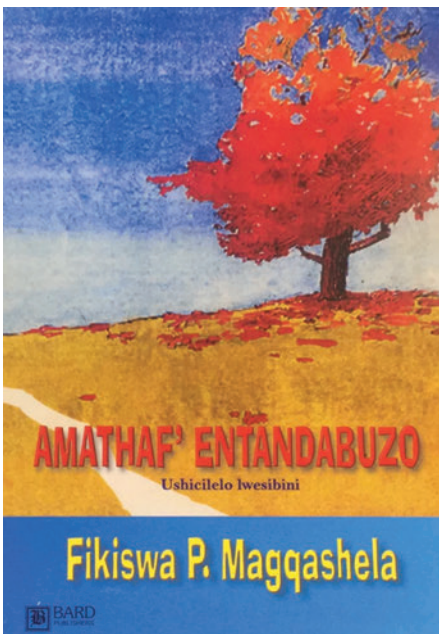
Ubhalo lwakhe lolu lunokubekwa kwinqwanoqwa leengcungela neenjojeli zoncwadi lwesiXhosa ezifana nokaTiyo Soga (1829–1871), John Tengo Jabavu (1859–1921), Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi (1875–1945), William Wellington Gqoba (1840–1888), nabanye abaninzi bolwimi noncwadi lwesiXhosa, abathe bashukuxa imiba yenkcubeko nokuzazi, inkolo kaNtu neendlela zokuziphatha, ukuphikisa nokukhaba ngawo omame iimbono zobukoloniyali ezazijijekile, ezingazange zizihluphe ngokwazi nokuqonda ukuba singoobani na thina bantu baNtsundu. Zakhankanya nobuntu, ubuntu obuthetha ukuzithanda uthande nabanye, ubuntu obuthetha ukwenza le nto onga ingenziwa nakuwe, imiba yesini nokulingana. Ngoko ke, lingaze liyekwe licime ezingqondweni zama-Afrika igalelo lawo onke amanina aqhubeka nokudlala indima etshatshelayo, kuquka uMagqashela ngenkqu. Iya kuba lihlozo lomhlola into yokuba luthi uncwadi lwesiXhosa lulwelwe kangaka ngabo bathe bazinikela, bade banikela ngegazi labo, lube lulityalwa kwelinye icala.

Mandiyivelise kwakhona into ethi, ingumnqa into yokuba aye kanti nakule mihla kuphilwa kuyo, uMagqashela uqhubeka nokushukuxa umba wokucinezelwa kwamanina nabantwana, ngenxa yamakhaya anomthetho oqhwalelayo notenxileyo; amadoda angahloniphi manina nabantwana, kunye nokuzithathela ngokungekho mthethweni. Ewe kunjalo ke kona, uMzantsi Afrika ujamelene nesintsompothi sesishiqi sokuxhatshazwa kwamanina nabantwana, njengoko ekubhentsisa oku kwekati emhlophe ehlungwini kwiincwadi zakhe; **Amathaf'Entandabuzo** (2006) nethi **Ubomi Ngumzamo** (2012). Umbuzo ke ngoku ngulowo othi, yenzeka njani into yokuba kube kusaphathwa kakubi amanina nabantwana? Le, yeminye

'UNandipha washiywa ngabazali bakhe esemncinci wabalixhoba lokungcungcuthekiswa ngesondo ngutatomncinci wakhe. Ebengenamthetheleli, ebebethwa kowabo akuxela. Wayengenamntu wokumthengela mpahla enganikwa nemali yesikolo.' – Magqashela (2006)



Umbhali uFikiswa Magqashela (ekhohlo) efumana ikuduzela kuBeaulla Stofile kuKhuphiswano lokuFunda iSiyazingca ngowe-2013



'Oo! Nguwe kanti lo undisokolisayo, Sathanakazindini? Vukuvukundini legqwirha!'
- Magqashela (2006)

yemibuzo athi ubani ayivelele xa ethe wafunda umsebenzi kaMagqashela ngendlela etolikisisayo, ibhekise ezantsi, iveze into ngobunto bayo.

Mayibethelelwe kwakhona into ethi, ukufunda iimbalo zale ngcali akufuni mntu ofunda ngendlela engqalileyo okanye efuthelwa ziimbono zaseNtshona, koko kufuna umntu ofunda ngendlela ecoselelayo necokisayo, hayi umntu ofunda emi ngeenyawo. Yiyo loo nto singenako ukuthi nanku umxholo ongowona wona kwiimbalo zikaMagqashela, kodwa sinako ukuveza imixholo nemixholwana, ngenxa yobuchule bokuminxisela nokucudaniselwa imiba ngemiba equka ukudlwengulwa kwabantwana, ukuxhatshazwa kwamanina. Lilonke, lo makhwekhwetha woncwadi lwesiXhosa uhlabe ikhwelo lokukhulula abo bakwiimbophelelo nakumakhamandela engcinezelo.

Kwimbalo yakhe ethi **Ubomi Ngumzamo** (2012), ukekelele kweli cala lokuxhatshazwa kwamanina nabantwana. Ngoko ke, kuyafuneka sizibuze imibuzo efana nokuthi:

1. Ingaba inkululeko esililisela ngayo, ihamba ikhonjwa kwiinkalo ngeenkalo, izise inkululeko na emfazini okanye emabhinjeni, emizimbeni yabo, kwizigqibo zabo, okanye yinkululeko nje egcinelwe iqaqobana labantu abathile? Ukuba impendulo ithi ewe inkululeko yiyo le, kutheni uMagqashela exhentsa ngomba wokuxhatshazwa kwamanina nanamhla oku? Impendulo ilele ekubeni sinyaniseke, sibeke indlebe kwizimvo zale njojeli, samkele inyaniso emsulwa, inyaniso yokuba eneneni, amanina nabantwana abakakhululeki ngokupheleleyo.
2. Kutheni le nto emva kwamawaka ngamawaka eminyaka, apho uNontsizi Mgqwetho wayegxeka ubunkokeli bamadoda kwimibongo yakhe, abe uMagqashela esakhala esayizolo sokutshutshiswa kwamabhinqa?

Iimpindulo zale mibuzo zikwalapha kwiimbalo zikaMagqashela, ezibhentsisa umthetho orhuqa iinyawo, nokuqina enyaleni kweenkolelo ezijolise ekujongeleni phantsi amanina.

Lilonke, sihamba kunye xa sisithi uncwadi lwesiXhosa, olubhalwe ngesiXhosa, lusisipili sokubuka intlalo ngeliso elibukhali kuba xa ubhala ngesiXhosa:

1. Ubhentsisa iintsingiselo ezicace ngokuphindaphindeneyo.
2. Uthetha nabantu, baze bakuve futhi bokhele kwiimbono zakho, kuba bakuvile.

Indeed, I celebrate the legacy of Magqashela's literary work, given that it unapologetically restores isiXhosa to its rightful intellectual, literary, and scientific standing. Her artistry puts those who thought, and still do think, that isiXhosa would succumb to their oppressive mentalities. A misguided thinking indeed. Through her writing, she confronts challenges such as gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), injustice, and community struggles, proving that isiXhosa is not a language confined to the margins but a medium of critical thought and philosophy, as well as resistance. Her contribution, as one of the influential authors of contemporary isiXhosa literature, dismantles the long-standing colonial and apartheid structures that sought to silence and belittle indigenous languages, exposing their deliberate erasure as violent and shortsighted. Clearly, by centring isiXhosa women's voices in isiXhosa literature, Magqashela forces these oppressive structures to face the shame of their exclusionary practices. Her legacy is a living indictment of the systems that tried to suppress isiXhosa, and a powerful reminder that no language or people can be permanently erased.

Ewe, uMagqashela usikhumbuzile ukuba: AmaXhosa singawo, iingcambu zethu zimiliselwe emhlabeni, kakade ke sihleli siyimidaka yodaka lomhlaba, kanti ke

imimoya yethu iphaphazela phezulu, idibana neentshatsheli zamandulo.

Ewe, amaXhosa singawo, ubuXhosa bethuna masibukhusele ngobuqaqawuli benkolo kaNtu, sizivikele ngamasiko nezithethe zethu, siphile ngobunye nobuntu; omnye komnye. Sigwencele okwesikhwenene kwiimbalo zikaMagqashela namanye amabhinqa.

As I reach the finality of my reflection on Magqashela's literary artistry, for the youth, especially women and young girls, the responsibility of honouring the legacy of uMam'uMagqashela resides in embracing isiXhosa not only as a language of heritage but also as a language of power, science, and resistance against the vestiges of oppression. Her work calls on young women to use their voices to challenge silences, confront gendered injustices, and continue writing and researching in ways that affirm the profundity and dignity of isiXhosa.

Her literary work stands as an extraordinary intellectual production, whose central intent is the recovery of the African mind from the hidden distortions of coloniality. In interacting with the complexities of lived realities through isiXhosa, Magqashela unequivocally restores a consciousness that has been eroded by layers of borrowed mentality from the West, borrowed lenses, borrowed languages, and borrowed philosophies. In so doing, her work resists the alienation that has turned many young Africans into strangers within their own cultural and linguistic spaces, while affirming that authentic selfhood is inseparable from indigenous epistemologies.

Lala Bhelekazi, uze usikhumbule!

UGqirhalwazi Mlamli Diko ngumhlohli kwiSebe leeLwimi zaseAfrika e-UNISA

reviews | resensies | uphononongo

Book reviews

compiled by book selectors



ADULT FICTION

BONTHUYS, Jan

Vlug van gister.- LAPA, 2024.

'Ná jare se afpersing, agterdogtigheid en alkoholmisbruik, slaan Emma se man, Gert, haar byna in die hospitaal in. By hom kan sy nie verder bly nie, dit sal haar lewe kos. Sy vlug vanuit hulle klein myndorpie in Mpumalanga met nie veel meer as die klere aan haar rug nie. Só kies Emma koers Kaap toe, en bid vir die beste. Die tog suid is angstig en eenzaam, en uiteindelik gee haar motor die gees naby Stilbaai. Nes dit lyk of haar gebede op dowe ore val, kom 'n plaaslike boer, Dewald, tot haar redding. Noodgedwonge nooi hy haar om by hom op die plaas te bly terwyl sy wag vir die kar se herstel. Maar iets skort op Dewald se werf; die plaas boer agteruit, die olyfboorde is oorgroei, en die foto's van hom as gelukkige jonggetroude staan nog die huis vol. Dewald is te jonk om 'n wewenaar te wees, maar dis sy lot in die lewe. Vir hom bring Emma se aankoms nuwe lig, vir haar kan hy die heenkome wees wat sy nog altyd gesoek het. Maar as hulle die liefde wat tussen hulle ontstaan wil kans gee, gaan albei eers moet vrede maak met die verlede. Want Gert het nog nie vir Emma laat gaan nie, en oudvriendin Julia wil vir Dewald hê, en sal doen wat sy moet om hierdie onverwagse inkommer uit die weg te ruim.

Vlug van gister is 'n hartroerende verhaal van tweede kans en oorbegyn wat lesers weer sal laat glo in ware liefde.' (*litnet.co.za*)

BROWN, Gareth

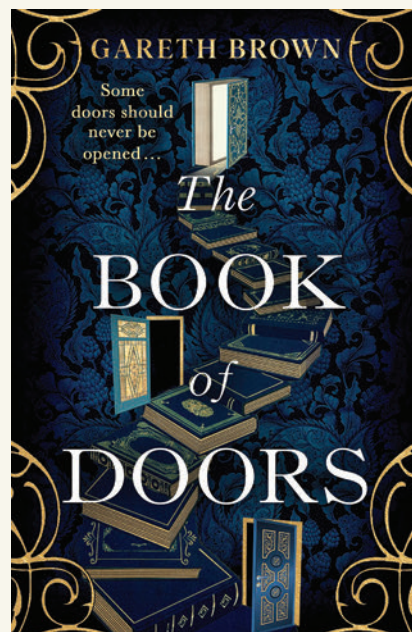
The book of doors.- Bantam, 2024.

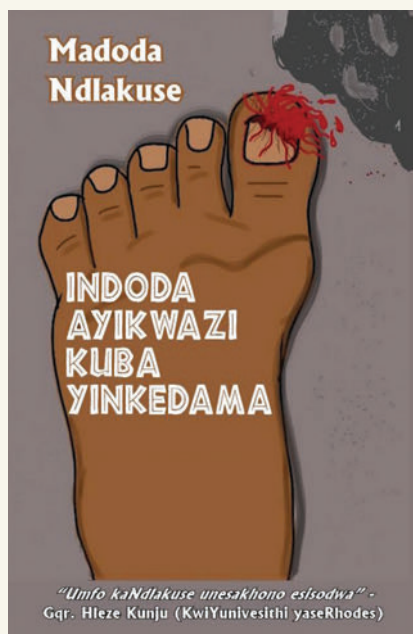
'Books are a uniquely human invention, but the books at the centre of Brown's fantastical debut are a different kind of unique. Each represents a distinct magical talent that can be used for good or ill. No one knows where the books came from or how many there are, but some individuals will pay millions for a single tome. Others are willing to kill to acquire one. And there is a secretive, international community of book dealers and hunters, some quite deadly, eager to add these special items to their own collections to use as they see fit. In present-day New York City, bookstore employee Cassie Andrews discovers she has been gifted an unusual book by a favourite customer. The inscription states, "This is the Book of Doors", and for someone who holds it, any door is every door — if they can figure out how to use it. What Cassie soon discovers is that she possesses the one book that every book hunter has dreamed of owning for more than a century. Those who enjoy paranormal fantasy with a touch of romance will be enraptured.' (*booklistonline.com*, Lucy Lockley)

JIMENEZ, Simon

The spear cuts through water.- Solaris, 2024.

'The dying Moon goddess enlists two young warriors, the ruthless killer Jun and the one-armed Keema, to kill her tyrannical sons — the Three Terrors — and return her bones to the sea. Long ago, a warrior freed the Moon from the sky, gaining a wish for sons, who became emperors and received god gifts. However, this left the world dark, and the imprisoned Moon's lover, the Water, cursed the land with drought. To weaken her sons, the Moon gave the last emperor triplets (the Terrors) and divided their god gifts. Jun and Keema, despite their conflicting loyalties and personalities, must battle the Terrors and avenge the gods. As they fight, they fall in love. The narrative deftly weaves past, present, and future, employing first, second, and third person, casting the reader as a descendant of a key warrior and current keeper of a sacred spear. The reader experiences the story in a dream-like state at the Inverted Theatre, reliving tales your grandmother told, becoming every character — from peasant to goddess — and sharing their pain, love, and humanity. Lyrical and evocative, this is a beautiful tapestry of historical fantasy and folklore.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)





NDLAKUSE, Madoda

Indoda ayikwazi kuba yinkedama.

- Izinwe Concept, 2022.

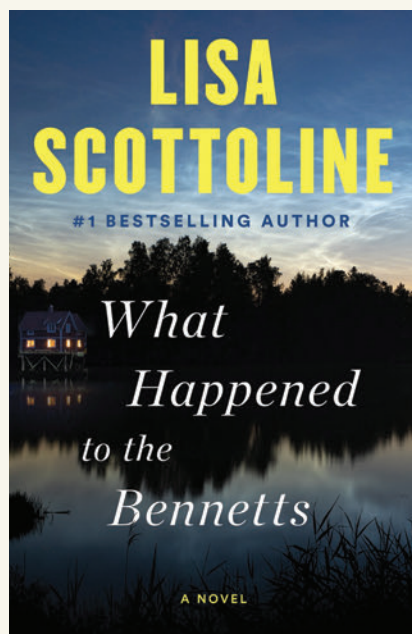
'Tsi Madoda! Lencwadi iqala ngokusing-camlisa kanobom kwindlela akhule ngayo lo mfo kaNdlakuse. Emva kokuyifunda, ndinambitha ubuncwane bayo, ndizive ndidanduluka ndisithi liyinene elithi "abantwanalikhamba lesizwe." Ngokungathandabuzekiyo, Ikamva lesizwe sethu, ingakumbi esi samaXhosa, liqagambe kakhulu ngenxa yalo mbhali, osele ephum' izandla, ewola namawonga ngamawonga ngenxa yokukhalipha kwakhe ekusebenziseni usiba, ubhala isiXhosa. Umfo kaNdlakuse unesakhono esisoda, uthi usandyengezelisa iinyembezi ngenxa yokuvelana naye kule ntlulu ayizobayo, suka ngequbuliso, akunyumbaze kanobom kodwa engayekanga ukukuvula ingqondo. Ndiyamngqinela ke xa esithi, "Ukubeka intlungu yam ephapheni, ayikokushiya ityuwa enxebeni, Nto nje komeleza okwemvula emhlabeni." Thatha ke iitshedu zibe mbini phambi kokuba uhlale phantsi, ufunde. Enye yeyokosula iinyembezi zolonwabo, ngenxa yoburharha balo Mbali. (Gqirha Hleze Kunju)

SCOTTOLINE, Lisa

What happened to the Bennetts.

- No Exit Press, 2024.

'The Bennett family is caught in a carjacking, and as Jason Bennett tries to



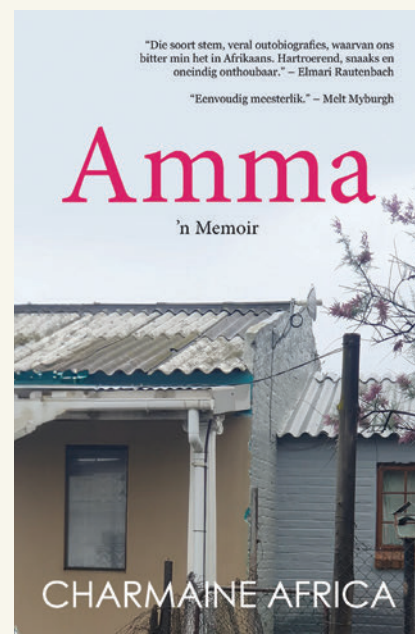
calm the situation, one of the gunmen coldly shoots his partner, and Jason's daughter, Allison, is killed in the ensuing chaos. FBI agents quickly appear in the Bennetts' suburban enclave, insisting that they enter the Witness Protection Program. Unfortunately for the family, the murdered carjacker was the son of George Veria, Philadelphia's most powerful kingpin, and the other, John Milo, has ignited Veria's vengeance by fingering Jason as the killer. Jason's fear morphs to rage when he discovers that the feds are also working with Milo, and he ducks his minders, determined to redirect Veria's revenge. Unfortunately, the heartfelt father-to-father chat Jason envisioned doesn't take into account that the whole murderous shebang was meant to bury a secret he doesn't know he holds. Scottoline's gift for crafting human connections is displayed here in the evocative grief of Veria and the Bennetts, setting this thriller apart from other suburban-hero stories...' (booklistonline.com, Christine Tran)

ADULT NON-FICTION

AFRICA, Charmaine

Amma: 'n memoir.- Tafelberg, 2024.

'In haar verrykende memoir skryf Charmaine Africa op narratiewe wyse, en in Kaaps, oor haar grootwordjare



in Bishop Lavis. Haar lewensverhaal, wat verras met humoristiese oomblikke, sentreer op die alledaagse bestaan van haar familie vanaf die 1960's: haar ma, Amma, wat spartel om haar werk en gesin bymekaar te hou; haar alkoholista; haar susters wat ook 'n verbete stryd in hul eie huwelike voer; haar broers wat uiteindelik voor die drankduiwel swig; en haar eie ontwikkeling as kind tot 'n jong vrou wat 'n onvermydelike siklus probeer veg. **Amma** gee 'n stem aan die oorlewingstryd op die Kaapse Vlakte en 'n eerlike blik op die kringloop van kru armoede.' Africa het die 2025 ATKV-prys vir nie-fiksie vir **Amma** ontvang, asook die 2025 *Netwerk24 kykNET Rapport* nie-fiksieprys. (booklounge.co.za)

SIGMAN, Mariano

The power of words: how to speak, listen and think better.- Macmillan

Business, 2024.

'Despite being devalued in recent years and warped on social media platforms, conversation is humanity's most vital tool for self-improvement,' posits neuroscientist Sigman in this energetic study. According to the author, small, in-person dialogues illuminate mental processes that would otherwise go unnoticed and can open new avenues of self-understanding. Alternatively, conversations that are chaotic or have

too many participants, especially those on social media, can devolve into informational bidding wars in which participants aim to sway one another via social pressure. In surprisingly accessible chapters, he discusses how conversations can help interlocutors distinguish truth from fake news, make better decisions by drawing out biases, errors, and priorities which would otherwise be impossible for us to see, and even manage emotions (studies suggest that loneliness degrades the brain's systems of control and cognitive regulation). Turning the focus to internal dialogues, Sigman teases out how language shapes emotional perception, showing that not verbalising an idea or feeling can impact one's ability to fully experience it. Gracefully translating complex science for lay readers, the author shares illuminating insights into how social interaction affects the formation of the self and makes a convincing case for the value of conversation and collaborative thinking in an increasingly individualistic culture.' (*publishersweekly.com*)

THANDEKISO, Rorisang
Disciple: walking with God.- Lux Verbi, 2024.
 Rorisang Thandekiso, one of South Africa's most beloved media personalities, steps away from the

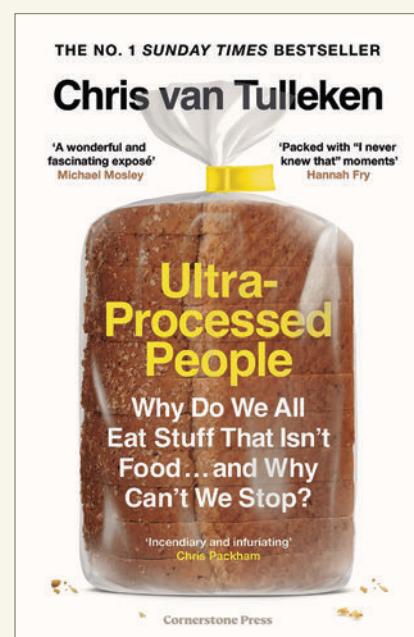
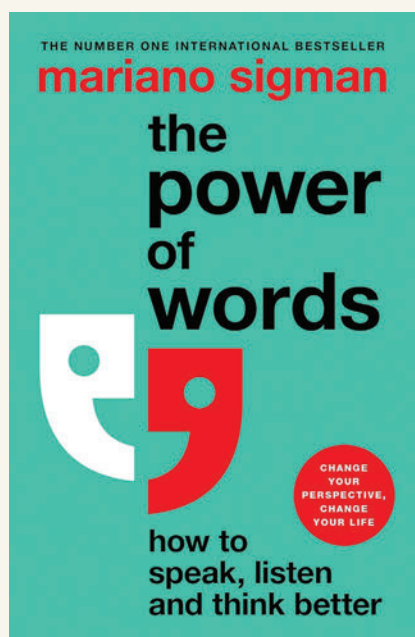
spotlight to share her spiritual journey in her debut book, **Disciple**. Known for her vibrant presence on TV and radio, she offers an honest, humorous, and heartfelt look at how faith has shaped her life and career. Inspired by her 'blueprint scripture', 1 Timothy 4:12-15, Rorisang provides practical wisdom on living a Christ-centered life through speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. From her early days as a YoTV presenter to her current role on Metro FM, where she hosts *Command your day* (weekdays, 05:00-06:00), her story is rooted in grace and purpose. More than a memoir, **Disciple** is a guide for anyone seeking to align ambition with spiritual integrity. Authentic and inspiring, it's a must-read for those who believe success and faith can coexist and for anyone ready to live boldly with purpose. **APM**

This title is available on Overdrive as an ebook on the Libby application and the Western Cape Library Service's Overdrive website.

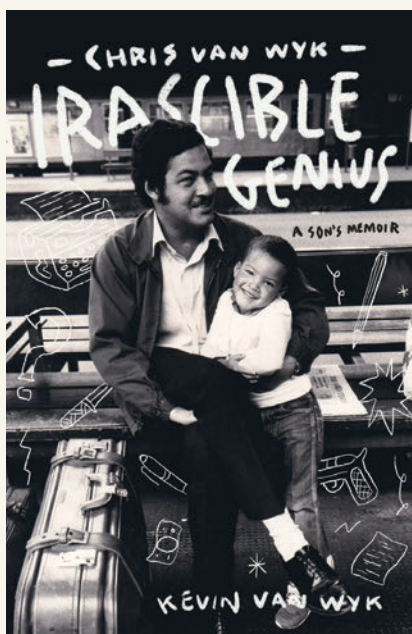
VAN TULLEKEN, Chris
Ultra-processed people: why do we eat stuff that isn't food... and why can't we stop?- Penguin Books, 2024.
 'A fact-filled, discouraging attack on the modern diet. Van Tulleken, an infectious disease doctor and TV and

radio commentator, rocks no boats by agreeing that our convenient, highly refined, additive-rich, chemically enhanced food is making us unhealthy. He has no kind words for "junk food", but he also reveals the distressing details behind many of the organic, ultra-processed foods (UPFs) that tout their relative healthiness. "Almost every food that comes with a health claim on the packet is a UPF", he writes. Unfortunately, as van Tulleken shows, denouncing unhealthy food (containing too much sugar, salt, fat, and calories and too little fiber) hasn't worked. People in nations where calorie consumption has dropped, including in the US, continue to get fatter. The author also devotes generous space to obesity, the world's leading dietary disorder. Most writers of this genre give advice on dieting, but van Tulleken, sticking to the science, admits that diets' success rates are close to zero. The author defines unhealthy food not by its ingredients, but by how it's processed. A painfully eye-opening study of food and health.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

VAN WYK, Kevin
Chris van Wyk - Irascible Genius: a son's memoir.- Macmillan, 2024.
 'Entertaining and fitting tribute to irascible Chris van Wyk. Kevin van Wyk brings his father to life in this portrait of







a writer, a loyal husband and wise parent. When Chris van Wyk died of cancer in 2014 at the age of 57, it sent sad shock waves through the literary community. His premature death left a literary void, as well as a personal one for the family he left behind. The memoir takes an affectionate look at the life of his father, and details Kevin's own childhood. Born in 1981, Kevin lived under the dying breaths of apartheid and was a teenager when the Rainbow Nation came into being, and his thoughts about this transitional time make for illuminating reading...' (*businessday.co.za*)

This title is available on Overdrive as an ebook on the Libby application and the Western Cape Library Service's Overdrive website.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

BERWAH, Tanvi

Somewhere in the deep.- Sourcebooks Fire, 2024.

'Monsters abound on 17-year-old Kress' Dune's island home, Kar Atish. They're also what keeps Kress afloat financially as she pays down her dead parents' debts by participating in underground, gladiator-style fights against the deadly creatures — a grotesque form of entertainment. When Kress throws



a fight at the behest of her pit boss, Badger, she is rewarded with the opportunity to have her debt erased and her freedom restored. It's what she's dreamed of, but she must first join a dangerous rescue mission into the island's mines, where she'll be responsible for fighting any monsters the group encounters in addition to bringing one back for Badger to use in the fighting pits. Berwah's riveting world building will draw in readers who will readily become invested in Kress' fight for survival. Her emotions and psyche are as keenly drawn as her surroundings, showing that the monsters one faces in life aren't only physical entities — they can also live within oneself.' (*booklistonline.com*)

VILJOEN, Fanie

Ons laaste legendariese somer.- LAPA, 2024.

'Jeug van álle ouderdomme kan gerus hierdie roman met die oulike titel nadertrek, sou jy lus voel vir 'n heerlike storie wat lekker lees en jou soms sommer hardop laat lag. Met **Ons laaste legendariese somer** is Fanie Viljoen weereens in die kol en dit besorg aan hom die gesogte wenprys in die Lapa Jeugroman kompetisie van 2023. "Besef julle hierdie Desember is *legit* ons laaste ordentlike somer-vakansie?" Wanneer hierdie realiteit tot Tobi deurdring, kos dit nie veel



oorreding om sy twee vriende, Dean en Rowan, oor te haal vir 'n *epic* seevakansie nie, net hulle drie ouens. Reëls word neergelê: geen bakleiery, almal doen alles saam en geen meisies. Ongelukkig was daar ook geen ordentlike beplanning nie, want hulle bestemming in Vleesbaai blyk toe nie te wees wat Tobi verwag het nie. Daar loop genoeg dinge skeef om al die reëls in die stof te laat byt, en hulle spring tronkselle rakelings vry. Proppies, die hond, veroorsaak minder moeilikheid as wat ek gevrees het, maar dan is daar Mistral, die perd, wat geen ontsag het vir 'n romantiese pieknik nie. Legendaries was dit beslis. Sommer vroeg het dit gelyk na 'n "laaste legendariese, verlore droom", nog later dreig "'n legendariese dood" en natuurlik was daar die legendariese soen. En planne vir die toekoms.' (*goodreads.com*, Amanda)

JUVENILE FICTION

BAKER-SMITH, Grahame

The ever-changing earth.- Templar Books, 2023.

'A brief meditation on our planet's long and generally violent history over geologic epochs with suitably big, dramatic illustrations. Following a distant glimpse of a small Asian child named Kûn pedaling through a modern

landscape past outside ghostly images of turbulent waters and immense prehistoric creatures, Baker-Smith rewinds to a view of the dinosaurs' cataclysmic demise. He then goes further back to depict the massive interplanetary collision that produced our moon and, after millions of years of raging storms, led to the appearance of teeming life in unusual forms that evolved over eons into those of today. Meanwhile, through ages of ice and volcanic fire, fractured bits of crust float over Earth's roiling, fiery insides to create recognisable continents. One continent links dinosaur lover Kūn, feeding the birds that are their descendants in a stylised Chinese garden, with another, white-presenting child named Solveig, who, thousands of miles away, gazes up in wonder at a majestically sculptured mountain of ice and a spectacular sky show of northern lights. Though the children are far apart, the author cogently writes, everywhere on Earth is connected to everywhere else. A grand spectacle...' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

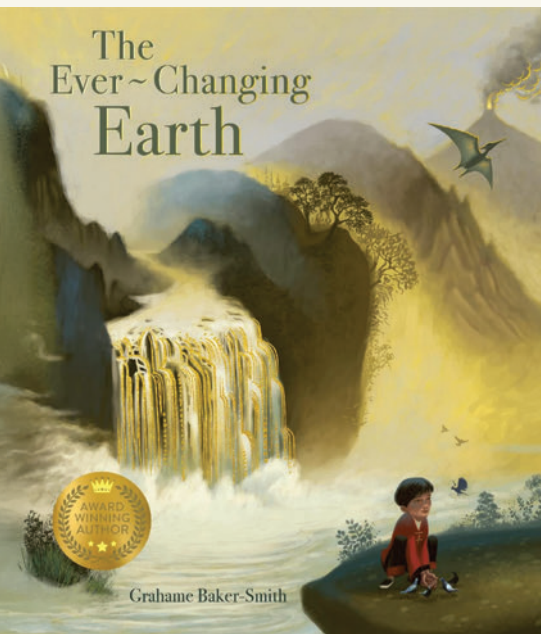
BROMAGE, Fran and VEITCH, Catherine
Dinosaur stories. - Miles Kelly, 2023.
 'Dinosaur Stories for pre-readers is a delightful collection of three beautifully illustrated tales featuring friendly dinosaurs. Written by Fran Bromage, the book is designed for

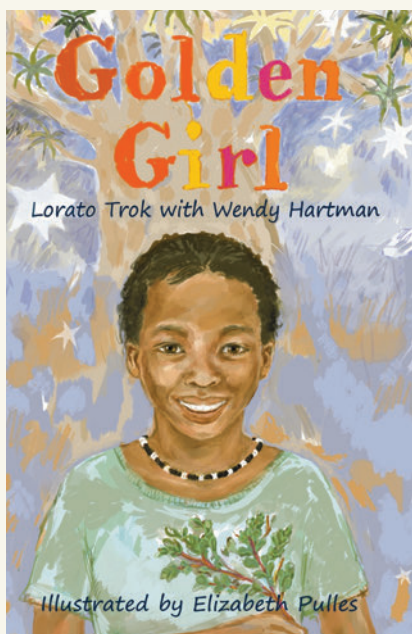
young children with thick, easy-to-handle pages and engaging pictures that spark conversation. The stories follow three dinosaurs: Rex the T. Rex, who learns that it's okay to be scared sometimes; Sonny the Stegosaurus, who finds comfort in a new home decorated with memories of his old one; and Vicky the Velociraptor, who discovers the importance of slowing down and paying attention. Together, these gentle stories teach valuable life lessons about emotions, change, and self-awareness.' (*readerswarehouse.co.za*)

MCCARTHY, Steve
The wilderness. - Walker Books, 2023.
 'The entire enormous Vasylenko family loves exploring the outdoors and seeking out adventure — well, nearly the entire family. Young Oktober much prefers to get his outdoor education indoors, via a pile of books. Besides wanting to avoid some generally unpleasant aspects of alfresco outings—slime, grime, damp, and chill—he's convinced that the Wilderness is a specific monster, not just a location. With some final familial encouragement, Oktober reluctantly joins the family outdoors, and his worst fears come true when he gets lost and comes face-to-face with the Wilderness itself. A courageous Oktober quickly comprehends that the equally frightened Wilderness is

nothing to fear, and he happily returns home with a new perspective on the world. The friendly, funny story is perfect for young readers struggling with fears and anxiety, and the lively autumnal illustrations brim with glowing tones and delightful details, from snug bunk beds for each of the 12 children to tiny bits of flora and fauna. An empathetic entreaty to face fears and embrace life's adventures.' (*booklistonline.com*)

TROK, Lorato and HARTMANN, Wendy
Golden girl/illustrated by Elizabeth Pulles. - Jacana Children's Book, 2024.
 'N|uu is more than words; it's also our heartbeat. It connects us to the spirits of our ancestors. It's a language that sings songs of the land.' Born in 1933 on Farm Klapien in Olifantshoek, near Upington in the Northern Cape, Katrina Esau has an extraordinary story. As the last fluent N|uu speaker, it's crucial that children know just how valuable and fragile languages can be. **Golden Girl** by Lorato Trok and Wendy Hartmann, illustrated by Elizabeth Pulles, does precisely this in a richly textured children's book, which embraces Ouma Katrina's voice beautifully. On Farm Klapien, the family is forbidden from speaking N|uu. Despite this, Katrina speaks the language with her parents in secret. Katrina also longs to go to school, but her parents know that the





farmer's strict rules and the apartheid laws would not allow this. Ouma Katrina and her family walk over 170 kilometres to Upington, a small town in the Northern Cape, to make a new life. Here, the family is forced to speak Afrikaans and take on a coloured identity, and Katrina's N|uu language is almost forgotten. But many years later, Ouma Katrina, determined to save her language, decides to start a school in her home, teaching young children how to speak N|uu. **Golden Girl** celebrates Ouma Katrina's life as a leader and teacher. She is a respected Saa elder in the Khoe and San communities of South Africa. N|uu is an ancient San language from the Tuu family. This book is her legacy and our children's heritage.' (*fullview.co.za*, Kelly-Ann Mawa)

Title available in Afrikaans as: **Kosbare Katrina** and IsiXhosa as: **UNogolide**

JUVENILE NON-FICTION

BRAAI, Jan
Jan Braai Junior: recipes, techniques and advice a braai guide for the next generation.- Penguin Books, 2023.
 A locally published cookbook for young South Africans who want to learn how to braai, **Jan Braai Junior** is written by Jan Braai, one of the most

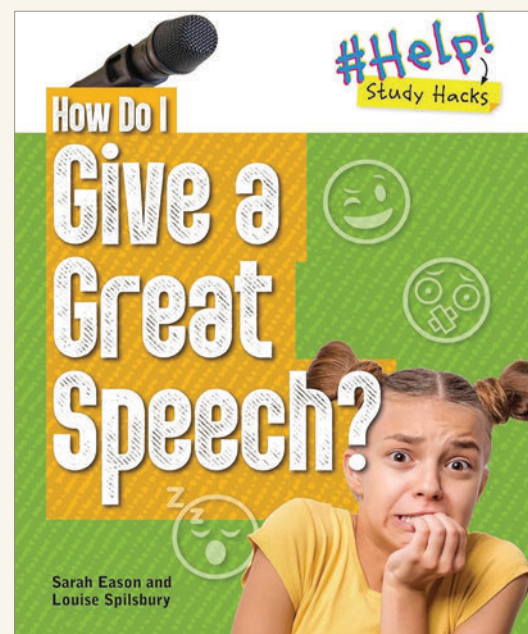


well-known experts on braai. He has hosted TV shows, led the National Braai Day initiative, and traveled widely, cooking with many people in different places. The book features Jan Braai's best recipes, presented in easy steps so kids and families can enjoy cooking together. It teaches all the basics you need to braai like a pro, using simple tools and affordable ingredients. With Jan Braai's tips and advice, readers will learn skills that will make them a great braaier for life. **NMH**

Title available in Afrikaans: **Jan Braai Junior: resepte, tegnieke en raad: 'n braaigids vir die volgende geslag**

EASON, Sarah and SPILSBURY, Louise
How do I give a great speech?
 - Cheriton Children's Books, 2022.

How do I give a great speech? is an engaging and practical guide designed to help young readers develop confidence in public speaking, a skill that often feels daunting to many. Written in a friendly and accessible tone, the book transforms the often-intimidating process of speech-giving into a manageable and enjoyable learning experience. Through clear explanations and easy-to-follow advice, Spilsbury and Eason provide readers with the tools to plan, write, and deliver effective speeches. The book is part of a broader series that emphasises



essential study and life skills, addressing areas such as listening, researching, and managing social interactions. What sets it apart is its ability to break complex tasks into simple, digestible tips that promote independent learning without overwhelming the reader. Both authors bring notable expertise to the subject. Louise Spilsbury, an award-winning writer known for her engaging non-fiction works, and Sarah Eason, a prolific author of educational books, combine their strengths to create an informative and entertaining resource. Their approachable writing style and humor ensure that even reluctant learners feel supported. Ideal for students aiming to boost their academic and personal development. **KLT**

Note: At the time of going to press some of these titles are not yet available at the libraries.

APM Ayanda Majola
KLT Kwanele Thabede
NMH Mbali Hadebe

AI for everyday use in the library: a practical guide for library staff

by Ronel Mouton



Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer the future — it's part of our everyday work environment. As information professionals, library staff must grow increasingly aware and skilled in using AI tools that can improve service delivery, enhance workflows, and empower our patrons in innovative ways.

This article introduces some AI tools relevant to libraries and demonstrates how AI can be used in reader services, research support, digital literacy, administration, and community engagement. It also includes some practical prompts and ideas that staff can test and apply.

What is artificial intelligence?

AI refers to the ability of machines to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence — such as learning, problem-solving, and decision-making. These systems can interpret information, learn from it, and make informed decisions, often operating independently.

AI mimics human cognitive functions to assist with tasks such as language processing, decision-making, and problem-solving. In the library, this means AI tools can support customer service, research, and content generation.

AI tools every librarian could use

AI tools can automate routine tasks, enhance content creation, and support digital services. Familiarity with these categories allows librarians to effectively choose solutions for specific needs.

Below are some of the best AI tools by category, many of which can be incorporated into daily library functions:

- **AI assistants:** ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Grok
- **Video-editing and generation:** Synthesia, Runway, Filmora
- **Image creation:** GPT-4o, Midjourney
- **Meeting helpers:** Fathom, NyotaAutomation: n8n
- **Research and learning:** Deep Research, NotebookLM
- **Writing and editing:** Rytr, Sudowrite, Grammarly, Wordtune

- **Social media and design:** Canva, Magic Studio, FeedHive, Looka
- **Project and time management:** ClickUp, Asana, Clockwise
- **Customer services:** Tidio AI, Hiver
- **Knowledge management:** Notion AI, Guru
- **Presentation tools:** Gamma, Presentations.ai
- **Marketing and recruitment:** AdCreative, Textio, Kickresume

Training tip: Have staff explore one tool per week and present their findings in team meetings.

Reader and reference services

AI can greatly enhance how we assist patrons with reading choices and information searches. AI can help patrons find books, understand complex topics, and generate reading suggestions based on individual preferences or trends.

- **Book recommendations and literary help:**
 - 'Who else writes like James Patterson?'
 - 'Suggest dystopian books similar to **The Hunger Games**.'
 - 'List all the book prizewinners in South Africa for the last 5 years.'
- **Series and author information:**
 - 'In what order should I read the *Percy Jackson* books?'
- **Homework and study support:**
 - Summarise books like **Upstream** by Dan Heath.
 - Explain math problems or complex scientific concepts in plain language.
 - Provide quiz material for exam preparation or vocabulary practice.
- **Dewey assistance:**
 - 'Where can I find books about whales in the Dewey Decimal system?'

Training exercise: Let staff ask ChatGPT five different reference-type questions and compare the responses with traditional sources.



Programming for children and teens

AI helps enrich youth services through interactive, personalised, and engaging content and can support educational and literacy programmes by generating creative content, supporting coding instruction, and customising activities for different age groups.

- **Generate poems, stories, or riddles:**
 - 'Write a story about a robot, a monkey and a teddy bear going on a road trip.'
- **Assist with coding clubs:**
 - 'Create beginner Python-coding activities for kids aged 10-13.'
- **Design quizzes and comprehension activities:**
 - 'Provide fun reading activities for six-year-olds to improve comprehension.'
- **Book reviews:**
 - 'Write a book review of *King of scars* by Leigh Bardugo.'

Training challenge: Have staff try to generate a reading activity using AI and test it with young patrons.

Career and job search assistance

Many patrons seek help with career development. Librarians can use AI tools to help job seekers with resumé creation, interview practice, and career path exploration based on their interests and qualifications.

- Creating polished CVs, cover letters, and resumé.
- Mock interview questions and practice answers.
- Exploring career paths:
 - 'Which jobs suit someone who enjoys working with people and solving problems?'
 - 'How do I become a graphic designer without a university degree?'

Tip: Include a career help station where patrons can use AI with librarian assistance where staff is comfortable to do so.

Information and research desk

AI can enhance traditional reference services by simplifying complex queries, summarising content, and guiding users through the research process.

- Simplify complex texts, government documents, or policies.
- Generate bibliographies in APA, Harvard, or IEEE, et cetera, referencing style.
- Refine research questions or develop reading lists.
- Locate restaurants, service providers, or other local resources.

Training suggestion: Role-play research consultations using AI and evaluate accuracy and usefulness.

Digital literacy and technical help

AI supports digital literacy by offering step-by-step instructions for basic tech tasks and promoting safer internet use, especially for beginners.



Use AI to create beginner Python-coding activities for kids aged 10-13



AI improves operational efficiency by generating documentation, planning programmes, organising meetings, and writing reports

- Explain how to use e-readers, email, or digital forms.
- Help with cybersecurity basics:
 - ‘What to do if WhatsApp is hacked?’
 - ‘How do I sign a PDF digitally?’

Workshop suggestion: Run a session on digital confidence for the public with live AI demos.

Management and administration

AI improves operational efficiency by generating documentation, planning programmes, organising meetings, and writing reports. AI can also support internal operations and outreach:

- **Programme planning:** get STEAM activity ideas or themed reading programmes
- **Communication:** draft flyers, proposals, newsletters, or social media posts.
- **Policy writing:** edit or translate internal policy into plain language.

- **Meetings:** summarise notes, prepare agendas, or write reports.
- **Project management:** break down large tasks into achievable deadlines.

Exercise: Ask staff to generate a basic newsletter or event summary using an AI tool such as ChatGPT.

AI is here to stay — train to stay relevant

Continuous training and experimentation with AI are essential. Libraries should create a culture of exploration while staying informed about ethical and practical implications. To stay future-ready, libraries must empower staff and patrons to use AI responsibly and creatively.

Practical ideas for staff training:

- **Weekly AI tool demos:** Let one staff member demonstrate a new AI tool each week.

- **Prompt crafting 101:** Teach how to ask the right questions (prompts) to get useful answers.
- **AI literacy for patrons:** Offer basic workshops on using AI for writing, learning, or job hunting.
- **Discuss AI ethics:** explore privacy, bias, and copyright concerns.

Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence isn't replacing libraries — it's becoming one of our most powerful allies. By embracing AI, we enrich our services, streamline our processes, and meet patrons where they are: in a rapidly changing, tech-driven world.

Let's learn, adapt, and lead — one smart tool at a time.

Ronel Mouton is the Deputy Director: Regional Organisation at the Western Cape Library Service



The data-lite library: serving a data-poor public in the digital age

by Lonwabo Joseph Mabele



Public libraries, long celebrated as engines of equitable access to information, are navigating a profound digital transformation. The rapid expansion of ebooks, streaming media, online databases, and digital learning platforms is intended to broaden their reach and reinforce their relevance in the 21st century. However, this very transformation risks creating an insidious new form of exclusion. It fosters a 'digital paradox': the promotion of rich, data-intensive resources to a patron base that is increasingly unable to afford the mobile data required to access them outside the library's walls. This creates a 'data-lite' library service for a 'data-poor' public.

The core of this paradox is a fundamental shift in the mode of access. The traditional library model's primary barrier was physical: the user's ability to travel to a branch. The new digital model, while removing this geographic constraint, introduces a persistent and often prohibitive second barrier: the cost of data connectivity. While libraries offer digital resources for free, the underlying access cost is transferred to the patron should they not have access to the internet elsewhere.

This creates a de facto two-tiered system. Affluent patrons with unlimited home broadband enjoy a library-at-home experience, while low-income patrons find themselves tethered to the physical library's free Wi-Fi. This reality directly undermines the library's core mission of providing free and equitable access for all. The digital divide is no longer a simple binary of having a connection; it is a complex spectrum of under-connectedness, where data poverty is a primary form of digital exclusion.

The anatomy of data poverty: a South African case study

To comprehend this challenge, it is essential to dissect the anatomy of data poverty. South Africa serves as a powerful and illuminating case study, representing a microcosm of the socio-economic pressures present in many unequal nations.

A nation of extremes

South Africa remains a dual economy profoundly shaped by its history, resulting in some of the world's highest levels of inequality. This is not abstract; it is a measurable reality. The Gini coefficient, a measure of income inequality, stands at a staggering 0.67. The top 20% of the population holds over 68% of the nation's income, while the bottom 40% possesses a mere 7%.

For this majority, poverty is a precarious lived experience. In 2025, the poverty rate is estimated at 68.1%. Furthermore, approximately 80% of South Africans experienced poverty at least once in the decade from 2008 to 2017. This high rate means the ability to afford recurring, non-essential costs like mobile data can evaporate from one month to the next.

This precarity is compounded by mass unemployment. In the second quarter of 2025, overall unemployment reached 33.2%. The situation is particularly dire for the youth (ages 15-24), a key library demographic, where unemployment is a catastrophic 62.2%. This confluence of high inequality, pervasive poverty, and mass unemployment creates the fertile ground in which data poverty thrives.

The high cost of connectivity

Against this backdrop, the direct financial cost of mobile data acts as a powerful gatekeeper. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, a basic 2GB monthly data plan takes up an average of 3.9% of the average monthly income, nearly double the 2% affordability benchmark set by the UN Broadband Commission.

While network operators point to falling 'effective data rates' (in some cases as low as R8.49/GB), these figures are skewed by massive data bundles consumed by corporations and affluent individuals. The 'street price'

for a low-income user making small, ad-hoc purchases are vastly different. The average price for a standalone 1GB prepaid bundle is cited at R33 (approximately \$1.81). Low-income users are forced to buy data in the most expensive, least efficient increments, further penalising them for their poverty.

This economic reality establishes a powerful policy precedent. The South African government's Free Basic Services (FBS) policy acknowledges that the poorest households cannot afford essential utilities and provides for free basic water and electricity. A compelling argument can be made that in the 21st century, access to essential digital information, like public health and library educational resources, should be treated as a similar digital utility.

A dual-pronged strategic response

To address data poverty, libraries must adopt a dual-pronged strategic response: immediate, internal patron empowerment and long-term, external systemic advocacy.

Solution 1: the preload model

The most immediate solution is to reframe the library's free Wi-Fi. Instead

of just a point of passive access, it must be strategically repositioned as a digital filling station, a place where patrons come not just to consume content, but to actively preload it for offline use. This requires a fundamental shift in the library's digital literacy curriculum, moving beyond teaching how to use online tools to teaching how to *manage and conserve* the data required to access them.

This preloaded curriculum will fill a critical gap, making all other digital skills training more relevant for data-poor patrons. It must be modular, adaptable, and practical. Delivery can range from scheduled workshops to one-on-one appointments with digital navigators, a personalised approach proven effective for patrons with low digital confidence. This transforms the librarian's role into that of a digital coach who helps patrons plan their data consumption.

The technical core of this model is a series of clear, step-by-step instructions for downloading content from key platforms. A sample curriculum would include:

- **Ebooks/audiobooks (Libby App)**
Teaching patrons to navigate their phone settings and enable *Download*

only over Wi-Fi to automatically download all borrowed titles when connected to Wi-Fi. This saves 300–600 MB per audiobook, making it accessible on a commute without data.

- **Educational videos (YouTube)**
While the official download feature requires a paid Premium subscription, a practical curriculum must acknowledge real-world workarounds. For vital educational tutorials, this means demonstrating how to use free, third-party browser tools to download videos as standard MP4 files.
- **Online courses (e.g. Khan Academy App)**
Walking users through the simple two-step process: first, to bookmark a desired video; then navigate to the Bookmarks section and tap the *Download* icon.
- **Podcasts and music**
Teaching patrons to identify the universal download icon (a downward-facing arrow) next to an episode and how to find it later in their *Downloads* or *Library* section.

Through empowering patrons with these skills, the library empowers them to curate a personal, offline digital library on their own devices, all at zero data cost.





Solution 2: the zero-rating imperative

While the preload model supports individuals, a more structural solution is required: advocacy. Libraries must campaign to have their essential digital services zero-rated by mobile network operators (MNOs). Zero-rating exempts specific apps or websites from a user’s data allowance, making them free to access.

This strategy immediately enters the contentious global debate over net neutrality, the principle that all internet data be treated equally. Critics argue that zero-rating creates anti-competitive and so-called ‘walled gardens’, allowing ISPs to pick winners and losers while stifling innovation. Conversely, proponents argue that in low-income communities, the choice is not between a limited internet and the full internet; it is between a zero-rated service and *no internet access at all*.

The argument for zero-rating public library services, however, fundamentally reframes this debate. A public library is not a commercial competitor like Netflix or Spotify. It is a non-profit, state-funded institution

with a mission of universal access. Zero-rating a library’s catalogue is not an anti-competitive act; it is about ensuring equitable access to a fundamental public good, analogous to a toll-free number for emergency services. Data costs are, in effect, the new overdue fines of the digital age, a form of social inequity.

This strategy is not merely theoretical; it is a proven practice in South Africa. The FunDza Literacy Trust, a non-profit, partnered with a data-free mobile platform to make its library of stories available at no data cost, effectively doubling its audience.

More importantly, advocacy led by civil society, particularly the DG Murray Trust, established a critical legal and operational precedent. This work culminated in a systemic regulatory change. In 2022, as a condition of its multi-billion-rand spectrum auction, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa made the zero-rating of all approved government and Public Benefit Organisation websites a key social obligation legally binding license condition

for all major MNOs. This landmark decision transforms zero-rating for public benefit from a corporate social responsibility initiative into a regulatory obligation, providing a clear roadmap for public institutions worldwide.

The integrated approach: a resilient future

The preload model and the zero-rating imperative are not mutually exclusive; they are deeply complementary approaches that create a resilient framework for digital equity.

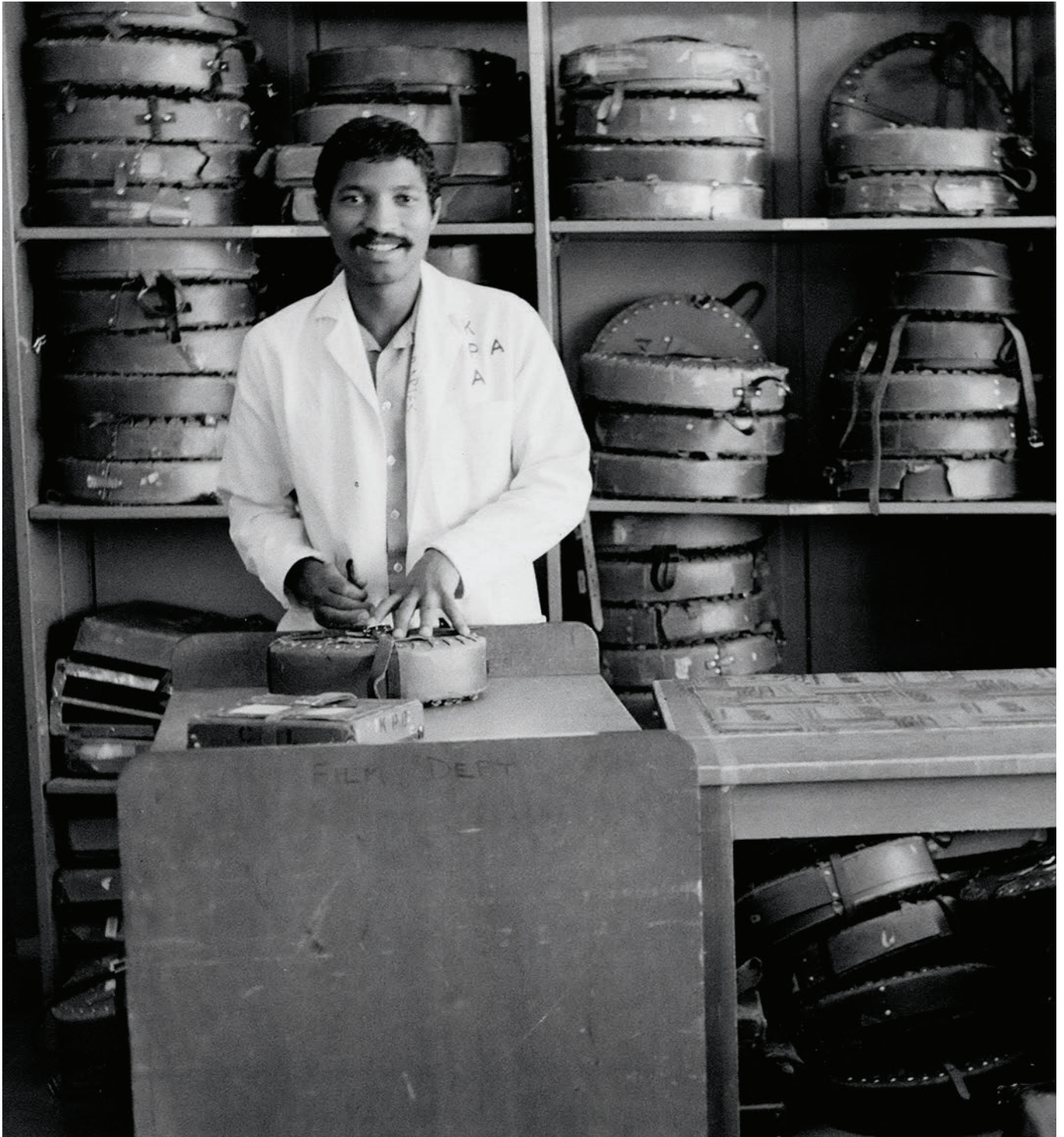
Zero-rating provides a foundational layer of free access. It ensures that every community member, regardless of their data balance, can browse the library’s catalogue, check branch hours, and access core e-resource apps without fear of cost.

The preload model builds upon this foundation. An MNO might agree to zero-rate the library’s website and the Libby app, but they may be unwilling to zero-rate data-intensive streaming video or large educational files from third-party sites. The data-saving skills taught in the preload workshops equip patrons to use the library’s free Wi-Fi to download this high-bandwidth content, giving them the best of both worlds.

A truly data-lite library is one that attacks the problem of data poverty from both ends. It systematically removes the cost barrier for its own essential services through persistent, strategic advocacy. Simultaneously, it empowers its patrons with the practical skills needed to manage their data costs and navigate the wider digital world affordably. This dual strategy ensures that as society becomes ever more reliant on digital connectivity, the public library will not only maintain but strengthen its historic role as the most powerful and equitable force for universal access to information and opportunity.

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