

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH FOR UNISA CHANCELLOR'S CALABASH OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARD 2021

Good evening, His Excellency, Dr. Thabo Mbeki, Prof. Puleng LenkaBula, Prof. Mohale, Ambassadors of the Diplomatic Corp, Unisa Council Members, Award Winners, special guests, family and friends, ladies and gentlemen – all protocols observed.

I am honoured, humbled and very happy to be the recipient of the Calabash Outstanding Educator Award this year. It is indeed an honour for me to be here tonight, and to join the distinguished Giants who have received this award before me.

I want to express my gratitude to His Excellency, Dr. Thabo Mbeki, the UNISA Selection Committee, Programme Director, and organisers, who have made this special event possible.

I would like to say a big thank you to Stephen Wyber from the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions for nominating me, and to Victoria Owen from the University of Toronto, who kindly provided a testimonial in support of his nomination.

I also want to express my gratitude to Wits University, UNISA and other institutions, the Library and Information Association of South Africa, and the various international, regional and local organisations and committees that I have worked with over many years.

A special thanks also goes to my dear family and friends for all their support and encouragement. They have all helped me enjoy a very interesting and rewarding career.

My passion has always been to improve access to knowledge for all. Through conferences, lectures, workshops, webinars, publications and my online newsletter which I started in 1998, I have shared information about access to knowledge, copyright and related matters, open access, scholarly communication and research integrity with thousands of people in South Africa and around the globe.

I have proactively worked for fair and more balanced copyright laws since 1998. In 1998 and again in 2000, I was leader of copyright teams, mandated by SAUVCA and the CTP, predecessors of Universities South Africa, that challenged

more restrictive copyright laws. As a result, they were withdrawn by the Department of Trade and Industry.

We now have a progressive Copyright Amendment Bill, but it is currently under review in Parliament. It will increase access to knowledge, and enhance research, education and creativity in the digital world. It will allow accessible formats for people with disabilities, who have been deprived of such rights in the current copyright law. It will also enable libraries, archives and museums to carry out their statutory mandates, to provide access to information to all, especially for teaching, learning and research, and to preserve our documentary record and cultural heritage. We all need this Bill urgently.

In conclusion, I am very grateful for your attendance here tonight. I will treasure this experience and award for many years to come.

Thank you so much

Denise R. Nicholson

26 November 2021