

**VICE-CHANCELLOR'S DISTINGUISHED SENIOR
RESEARCH MEDAL**

Mr Chancellor, I have the honour of presenting to you
Russell Harold Kaschula,
Professor of African Languages Studies & SARChI Chair
in the School of Languages & Literatures

for the award of the Vice-Chancellor's Distinguished Senior Research Medal.

Professor Kaschula is widely regarded as one of Africa's foremost scholars on African languages, focusing on literature, second language teaching/learning, and sociolinguistics. During a 30 year career, he has edited, authored and co-authored a remarkable volume of work published in accredited scholarly journals which cover largely two research areas, namely (i) linguistic and applied linguistic matters in African Language Studies, and (ii) African Language literary studies. This work casts an intellectual spotlight on the languages and language communities of South Africa and neighbouring countries.

His research accomplishments have contributed significantly to the growth of African languages scholarship and the promotion of isiXhosa at Rhodes University. Arguably, this began with the award to the School of Languages of a South Africa-Norway Tertiary Education (SANTED) partnership grant in 2007, followed by Department of Arts and Culture bursary funding for postgraduate students in 2009, which saw a significant escalation in the size of the postgraduate school in African Languages at Rhodes University, graduating 100 postgraduate students over a four year period. Since then, the performance of this area of the university, led by Professor Kaschula, has been stellar. He and his colleagues have supervised an exceptional number of masters and doctoral graduates, with 23 doctorates currently registered in 2018. At the April 2017 graduation ceremonies, Professor Kaschula graduated 6 PhD students, one of only two supervisors in the history of this university to have achieved such a record. This year you will have seen four of his doctoral graduates and two masters students (awarded with distinction) cross the stage. He has also worked with 7 post-doctoral fellows. Professor Kaschula's graduates are making a significant contribution in the discipline, with some of them becoming colleagues in the School of Languages & Literatures, other areas of the university, and other higher education institutions.

In 2013, Professor Kaschula was awarded an NRF (National Research Foundation) Chair in the Intellectualisation of African Languages, Multilingualism and Education, under the prestigious South African Research Chair Initiative (SARChI), one of a selected few such chairs in the Humanities in South Africa, and the only such Chair in languages on the African continent. His international profile has continued to grow, and has impacted positively on the reputation of African Language Studies at Rhodes University. The School now has collaborative projects with colleagues across the globe.

The work of Prof Kaschula and his students has been acknowledged as representing a practical challenge to the dominance of English in African language speaking communities where many are limited in their life chances and excluded from participation in public affairs due to the marginalization and underestimation of their mother tongue. On the other hand, Prof Kaschula's scholarly reflections in English on writing and publishing in and about African languages, language practices in African language speaking communities, and multilingualism, have contributed immensely to opening African language studies to a national and international audience. His most recent books, edited together with Professors Pamela Maseko and Ekkehard Wolff from Leipzig include *Multilingual Education for Africa: Concepts and Practices* published by Routledge in London and New York, and *Multilingualism and Intercultural Communication: A South African Perspective* published by Wits Press. A book entitled *The Transformative Power of Language: From Postcolonial to Knowledge Society in Africa* is due to be published by Cambridge University Press in 2018.

In addition to formal academic publications, Professor Kaschula has taken his work into public spaces where it is able to make a wide impact through popular media publications, radio and television interviews, guest lectures and community interactions.

Prof Kaschula's talents are not limited to formal research. He is a noted teacher, and was a recipient of the 2008 Vice-Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award. He is also an award winning author of novels and short stories. He is a previous recipient of the Nulton International Teaching/Research Scholarship to the USA (twice), the Oppenheimer Fellowship to the University of London, and the Nasou-Via Afrika Prize for Studies in African Literature. His short stories were published as part of the prestigious Caine Prize for African Writing as well as the Pen-Studzinski Literary Awards. He was recently awarded life-long and Honorary Membership of the International Society for Oral Literature in Africa at a conference held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. He is also a registered Advocate of the High Court of South Africa.

One of his referees for this award describes him as an "excellent ambassador both for his academic specialism and for his country, who ... inspires with his intellectual calibre, sensitivity, and accomplishments". Another refers to him as "without any doubt, a nominee of exceptional quality and proven achievement with sustained records of scholarship." While a third puts it bluntly as "Professor Kaschula's academic record is stunning ... (he has done) tremendous research work as an established researcher, and his work feeds neatly and nicely into agency and activism in society."

Mr Chancellor, I request you to award the **2017 Vice-Chancellor's Distinguished Senior Research Medal** to **Professor Russell Kaschula**.