



Nicholas Allen Festschrift



Authors:

Pierre J. Jordaan¹ 
Johan Steenkamp¹ 

Affiliations:

¹Faculty of Theology,
North-West University,
Potchefstroom, South Africa

Corresponding author:

Pierre Jordaan,
pierre.jordaan@nwu.ac.za

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This collection of research articles, published in *In Luce Verbi*, is dedicated to our colleague and friend professor Nicholas Peter Legh Allen who retired from the Faculty of Theology at the North-West University in 2020.

To do justice to the great influence he had on us and our colleagues is as difficult as it is to list his interests and fields of expertise. Professor Allen is a teacher and mentor of great wisdom and researcher of astonishing range. The variety of scholars that contributed to this collection and the array of disciplines attest to this.

Professor Allen joined us at the NWU in an administrative position. He has been actively involved in higher education as a lecturer, researcher and administrator since 1981. First at Port Elizabeth Technikon, lecturing fine arts, then Dean of Faculty (Art and Design) (1996–2007) and ultimately as Deputy Dean (Arts) at the NMMU (2005–2007) during the merger period. His second life in academia, so to speak, started as the Director for Global Engagement at the North-West University (2011–2018), but this life only came to full fruition when he joined the School of Ancient Languages and Text Studies at the Faculty of Theology at the North-West University.

We came to realise that effective as Professor Allen was as an administrator and as useful as his knowledge and experience in higher education turned out to be for us, we would benefit more from his knowledge and experience in a staggering number of fields. At the risk of being tedious, we would like to offer a chronological list of selected qualifications as a testament to his eagerness for lifelong learning and capacity for industry.

Professor Allen completed a Master of Fine Art degree in Art History and Sculpture (Rhodes University, 1984), a Laureatus in Technology (i.e. Doctor Technologiae) in Aesthetics (Port Elizabeth Technikon, 1990), a Doctor Philosophiae in Art History (University of Durban Westville 1994), a Magister Artium in Philosophy (Nelson Mandela University, 2007), and a Philosophiae Doctor in Greek (North-West University, 2015) for his work on Christian interpolation in the work of Josephus Flavius.

As a confirmed trans-disciplinarian, in his own words, professor Allen has authored and co-authored books, academic articles, and numerous digital publications on topics including African Elephant Conservation, Sindonology, Film Studies, History of Optical Technology, Judaica and Early Christian Church History. Arguably he achieved his fame for work on medieval technology. He is the originator of the photographic hypothesis for the manufacturing technique employed on the Shroud of Lirey-Chambery-Turin. This has resulted in, inter alia, appearances on numerous TV documentaries including B.B.C.

Tomorrow's World: *Shroud of Turin*, (1995), B.B.C. Everyman: *Double Exposure: Shroud of Turin*, (1995), National Geographic Channel: *Leonardo: The Man Behind the Shroud?* (2002), B.B.C. Channel Four: *Shroud of Christ?* (2004), Discovery Channel: *Leonardo's Shroud?* (2009), Smithsonian Channel: *Shroud of Turin* (2013) and CNN's *Finding Jesus: Faith, Fact, Forgery* series (2015).

We would commit a serious sin of omission if this introduction did not contain reference to Professor Allen's artistic endeavours. Although the modern university emphasises academic production with measurable outcomes, Professor Allen is from an older persuasion and also enjoyed purely creative projects. Trained as a sculptor he naturally excels in the plastic arts, especially portraiture. Important commissions include the design and manufacture of the *Toyobo Dia Champion Trophy* in bronze for the South African Mohair Board and the Toyobo Company, Osaka, Japan (1987); the design and manufacture of the *Prix d'Excellence Trophy* in bronze, for the SABC (1990); a bronze portrait of the late Minister P.K. Le Roux for the University of Port Elizabeth (1990); a bronze portrait of the late Mr Sid Fourie, J.P. for the Jansenville community (1991); the

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design and manufacture of the Foucault pendulum in bronze, for the Albany Museum in Grahamstown (1992); a bronze portrait of Prof Hennie Snyman for the PE Technikon (2004); a portrait in oil of Dr Denzil David Levy (2007) and a portrait in oil of Prof Annette Combrink, for the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) (2012). In 2013 he was one of 40 finalists for the Sanlam Property Investments Portrait Award in South Africa.

In Ancient Languages we remember Professor Allen for the instrumental role he played in organizing conferences for the Septuagint Society of South Africa (LXXSA) and the Hungarian South African Study Group (HSASG), the creation

of courses, and the mentorship of colleagues. His contributions to the field are matched by his contributions to the careers of others and the product of his influence may be seen in the articles in this collection.

Like professor Allen's academic career, the articles in this collection do not reveal a readily obvious central theme. Many articles discuss historical questions from the ancient or early modern worlds, some are literary critical, others theological, and there is even one on papyrology. The methodologies, likewise, are as varied as the disciplines. We believe that the disparate nature of the collection will be a true celebration of professor Allen's career.