



## A Christmas gift for the Institute



**I**t is the end of the year and Christmas is in sight. We have all had a busy year and thus look forward to a restful break, which we will fill with new memories with our families and friends. Above all, we all look forward to receiving that well-chosen wonderful gift from loved ones. A gift is always treasured. It might be something that we did not ask for but somehow our loved ones always manage to surprise us by recognizing our need or yearning for that particular item. The fact that they understand us, love and care enough to go out of their way to give us that special something is a gift in itself. They make a sacrifice for a greater return; our happiness.

A gift does not have to be expensive, it does not have to be wrapped up in an expensive wrapping paper and tied with a costly ribbon. For most of us there is one gift that is more valuable than anything bought in a shop; more appreciated by its recipient than anything wrapped in pretty colourful paper; and sure to be remembered for years to come. This is the gift of time. Time is the most valuable gift because it is a portion of your life that you can never get back. Time freely given is truly priceless to those who receive it.

As you tick your Christmas gift list, I ask that as a SAIMM member, you also think of the gift you could give to the Institute that you love this coming year. The SAIMM is a voluntary organization and as such, it depends mostly on volunteers who freely give of their time in order to advance the Institute's missions and goals. There are quite a number of ways in which you could give your time. One way is by actively participating in your local branch activities. Branches usually organize different events aimed at benefiting all members. These include technical presentations on topics of interest, technical visits to mining operations, or even non-technical events such as wine tasting, hiking, or birdwatching. Lack of time is always the reason given by members for their absence from such events. Think about giving your time to branch events this coming year as your gift to the Institute.

You could also become involved in organizing conferences through the Technical Programme Committees (TPCs). TPCs play a significant role in providing platforms for the dissemination of information in technological developments in the mining and metallurgical industries. They are also a platform for members in these sectors to meet and share experiences. The SAIMM has two TPCs, TPC Metallurgy and TPC Mining, which focus on organizing metallurgical- and mining-related events respectively. These committees are always in need of dedicated and committed members to identify relevant topics of interest in the industry and actively participate in translating these ideas into a conference, a school, a workshop, seminar or any other means of disseminating value. Alternatively, you could offer your services as a reviewer for the numerous papers submitted for conference proceedings and the SAIMM Journal. The SAIMM member database boasts members who have varied technical, operational, and academic expertise which ensures the high quality of SAIMM publications. And to top it all, your gift of time spent reading and reviewing these articles is acknowledged through the publication of your name as a reviewer in the special AGM issue every year.

As a SAIMM member, you can also participate in the SAIMM mentoring programme. This programme is particularly valuable to the young professionals of the Institute. Give back by helping younger SAIMM members to set important life-goals and develop the skills they need to guide them to a successful career.

You could also go big and run for the SAIMM Council. The Council serves as the heart of the SAIMM and as a Council member you have the opportunity to become actively involved in the management and administration of the Institute's affairs. This is a major commitment which requires dedication and would be a commendable gift for the Institute. For the younger members of SAIMM, *i.e.* younger than 35 years, you could run for the Young Professionals Council and add value on issues that are pertinent to the younger members of the Institute.

If, however, you still feel that you are time-constrained, that the gift of time is something you truly cannot provide this coming year, and you need a bit more time to think about it or to reorganize yourself, you could still give an alternative gift. A donation to the SAIMM Scholarship Trust fund is a precious and important gift. The Scholarship Trust fund was established in 2003 with the goal of ensuring that no deserving student registered for a Mining or Metallurgical Engineering degree programme at a South African tertiary institute is denied the opportunity of having a career in the minerals and metals industry as a technically qualified graduate because of financial challenges. The Fund provides assistance to a huge number of needy students who depend on personal or family funds for their educational needs. Your gift can be a donation to this worthy cause.

As we enjoy the festive season celebrating Christmas and preparing for the New 2018 Year, let us remember that the greatest gift we can ever give is our time and our presence. It is a gift that leads to the most magnificent and truly priceless memories. A very merry and restful Christmas and a joyful New Year to you all!

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