Naming of the Peter King Minerals Processing Laboratory

The School of Chemical & Metallurgical Engineering at Wits held a ceremony on 7 November 2017 to mark the naming of the Peter King Minerals Processing Laboratory in recognition of Peter King's contribution to the field of minerals processing.

A Wits alumnus, Peter King was an accomplished metallurgist who served as the head of the Department of Metallurgy and Materials Engineering for over a decade from 1976 to 1990 before accepting an appointment at the University of Utah.

The ceremony was attended by industry, King's former students, and guests of honour, his wife, Ellen and son, Andrew.

Wits Professor of Hydrometallurgy and Sustainable Development, Prof. Sehliselo Ndlovu, also the current President of the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy said the laboratory would ensure the continuation of King's vision, who was passionate about capacity building and world-renowned for developing useful techniques to quantify mineral liberation.



Mrs Ellen King and Andrew King, respectively widow and son of the late Prof. King unveiling the R. Peter King Minerals Processing Laboratory name plate in the School of Chemical and Metallurgical Engineering at Wits

Metallurgy is key to our economy. For more than 100 years, metallurgy at Wits has been inextricably linked to that of the mining industry, said Ndlovu. 'Extractive metallurgy plays a critical role in maximising returns from the processing of mineral resources such as gold, platinum, and coal.'

A well-equipped laboratory for teaching and research is essential to continue producing experts in minerals processing. Former students described Prof. King as a great teacher who instilled confidence and a desire for continual progress. Some Wits graduates, who hold key positions in industry, reflected on Peter King's flair with technology. Prof. King was among the first to incorporate technology in his teaching methods and provide online courses in response to the demands of the modern world. An all-rounder, professional staff also praised Peter King for his hands-on approach and open door policy.

Bruce Mothibedi, a senior technician at Wits, recalls many moments when King would don an overall to lend a hand in some of the messy pilot plant projects. 'Rarely do you find a man of Prof. King's calibre sacrificing his time to lend a hand in plant processes, but he gladly did it. Staff development across different grades was also important to him and he would arrange appropriate training for his team, be it at industry, the mines or related fields, so that one could gain more understanding and passion for their work,' says Mothibedi.

King, who was born in Springs in 1938, left Wits and South Africa in 1990 to take up the post in Utah. His involvement with Wits continued across the seas. 'Peter was very proud of the accomplishments of the department and took great interest in the progress of the students once they graduated,' said Mrs King, who continued to give guests a glimpse into personal joys and loves of her husband. Ballroom dancing, which he took up in the 1960s during a sabbatical, and book-binding were his other passions.

Head of School Professor Herman Potgieter said the lab was a fitting tribute to a 'world-renowned member of our family'.

The laboratory will be dedicated to technology-intensive extractive metallurgy that serves to meet the needs of industry locally and internationally, through training of undergraduate and postgraduate students by providing the tools necessary for high-level, applied research.

The King family has donated R500 000 towards the fitting out of the laboratory. Alumni of the School and industry are encouraged to follow this sterling example. To make a donation, please contact the Wits Development and Fundraising Office.



Prof. Peter King published more than 150 scholarly papers on fundamental aspects of mineral processing during his long and distinguished career. He authored or co-authored five books, the most recent of which are *Introduction to Practical Fluid Flow (Elsevier, 2002) and Modeling and Simulation of Mineral Process Systems* (Butterworth-Heinemann, 2001). Peter King sadly died at the age of 68 on 11 September 2006. At the time of his death, he was a professor of metallurgical engineering at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. His accomplishments over his lifetime were truly remarkable.

Peter King

DECEMBER 2017

(Extracts from a memorial tribute published in Vol 11: National Academy of Engineering, National Academies (2007).