

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

Mr Chancellor, I have the honour of presenting to you  
**Dr Sally Matthews,**  
Senior Lecturer  
in the Department of Political and International Studies,

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

A “talented, up-and-coming scholar, hard-working and conscientious”, a researcher who exudes “tact and exceptional analytical research skills”, and one whose work exhibits “outstanding quality in relation to peers”. These are the phrases that peer reviewers have chosen to describe Dr Matthews.

Her research over the past ten years has been focussed on development, identity, and race issues in Africa, and more particularly South Africa. She has earned a respected reputation for publishing on complex issues of development and privilege in ways that are both empirically solid and theoretically sophisticated. While her subject matter has covered a relatively wide disciplinary scope, her common thread is a concern for social justice in South Africa and Africa more widely.

She has in recent years extended her work on privilege into the domain of education, through papers, and a co-edited book on education and transformation in South African higher education, *Being at Home: Race, Institutional Culture and Transformation at South African Higher Education Institutions*, (UKZN Press, 2015). The book has been influential across disciplines in the national debate on transformation in higher education.

Last year Dr Matthews published an edited book on *NGOs and Social Justice in South Africa and Beyond* (UKZN Press, 2017), which invites reflection and critical discussion on the role played by NGOs.

She has published in leading journals nationally, such as *Politikon*, *Transformation*, *Africanus*, and *Theoria*, and in international journals including the *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *Politics*, *African Identities*, *Africa Development*, and *Third World Quarterly*. She has also contributed numerous chapters to books.

Dr Matthews serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* (JCAS) and of *Studies in Social Justice*, and has served as the reviewer of articles and manuscripts for a wide range of noted journals as well as for UKZN Press and SUN Press.

Known as a dedicated teacher and a noted mentor of postgraduate students, she has supervised or co-supervised 11 Masters to successful graduation, and is currently supervising 3 PhD students. She mentored and provided publishing opportunities to

several of her research students and emerging scholars through the books she has edited or co-edited.

Dr Matthews has acted as the Head of the Department of Political and International Studies on numerous occasions, and has contributed widely in the university as an active academic citizen.

A referee describes the personal influence of Dr Matthews' writing as "Her incisive and searching mind never allows me ... to get away with any wishful thinking, cant or bias, and I trust her excellent sense and insight to bring me back to earth." Another writes that "she distinguishes herself by writing exceptionally well researched and interesting articles on sensitive if not 'taboo' subjects or topics such as privilege, racism and identity politics." And a third notes that "Such bravery and brevity to address the elephant in the room must be duly recognised in light of the racial contestations and divisions that continue to haunt post 1994 South Africa."

Our Vice-Chancellor has often written and said that, for Rhodes University, research, teaching and community engagement seek to be alive to the social and economic challenges of the local, national, African and international contexts, and that the university's research "seeks to extend the frontiers of knowledge and to also inform initiatives that promote equity, justice and economic and social development." Dr Matthews is a scholar-teacher who gives real life to this vision.

Mr Chancellor, I request you to award the **2017 Vice-Chancellor's Distinguished Research Medal** to Dr Sally Matthews.