Stellenbosch
UNIVERSITY
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SPL
School of Public Leadership
iSokolo sobuNkokheli boLuntu
Skool van Publieke Leierskap

FROM SILENCE TO JUSTICE

CELEBRATING THE COURAGE AND TRIUMPH OF WHISTLEBLOWERS

Babita Deokaran Annual Lecture

Venue: Yellowwood Room (Belville Park Campus)
Date: 9 December 2025
Time: 10h00 – 16h00 (SAST)

For enquiries:
Ms Sharon Sheldon • Tel + 27 (021) 918 4391 • sharoncs@spl.sun.ac.za
Registration by 30 November 2025

CONCEPT NOTE

The Anti-Corruption Centre for Education and Research (ACCERUS) at Stellenbosch University's School of Public Leadership is launching the Babita Deokaran Annual Lecture. This initiative marks four years since Babita's assassination on 23 August 2021, outside her Johannesburg home. At the time, she was Acting CFO of the Gauteng Department of Health and a key witness in PPE procurement investigations. Her fearless exposure of corruption, including halting over R850 million in suspicious payments at Tembisa Hospital, made her a beacon of integrity. Despite her critical role, she received no protection, and her murder remains a chilling reminder of whistleblower vulnerability. Her courage earned national and international recognition, including many awards. The Zondo Commission underscored systemic failures in whistleblower protection, making this lecture both timely and necessary. It will honour Babita's legacy, amplify her message, and call for stronger safeguards for truth-tellers. Supported by the Deokaran family, the lecture will unite public, private, civil society, and anti-corruption partners. Through this platform, we affirm that South Africa must never silence voices committed to ethical governance.

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Link to the event - Online Connection:
https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/4416633a-6a54-412f-9412-0028bae4178e@a6fa3b03-0a3c-4258-8433-a120dffcd348

Link to the event - In-person Attendance:
https://forms.office.com/r/urgpZdFWV6

TIME	ITEM	SPEAKER
10:00 - 11:00	TEA/COFFEE AND REGISTRATION	
OPENING SEGMENT		
11:00 - 11:05	Welcome	Programme Director **Ms Pulane Kole –** *SA Presidency, Acting Head - Deputy Director General of Policy and Research Services and ACCERUS Board Member*
11:05 - 11:10	Moment of Silence and Prayer	**Prof Chris Jones**
11:10 - 11:25	Opening Remarks from Stellenbosch University Officials	**Prof Sibusiso Moyo** *Deputy Vice Chancellor online* **Prof Reza Daniels** *Dean EMS* **Prof Zweli Ndevu** *Director of SPL*
11:25 -11:35	Family Representative: In honour of Babita Deokaran	**Mr Rakesh Deokaran**
11:35 - 11:40	Partner - Stellenbosch Business School	**Prof Armand Bam**
11:40 - 11:45	Partner – Institute of Commercial Forensic Practitioners	**Dr Jerry Chetty**
11:45 - 11:50	Partner - Institute of Municipal People Practitioners	**Mr Trevor Francis**
11:50 - 11:55	Partner - Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse	**Mr Wayne Duvenage**
11:55 - 12:00	Partner- Inclusive Society Institute	**Mr Daryl Swanepoel**
12:00 - 12:05	Partner -Africa Centre for Inclusive Health Management	**Dr Munyaradzi Saruchera**
12:05 - 12:10	Partner - Capital Legacy	**Mr Justin Pakes**
12:10 - 12:15	MUSIC INTERLUDE	

12:15 - 12.20	Introduction to the Honourable Minister	**Ms Pulane Kole**
12.20 - 12:50	Honourable Minister of Cooperative Governance	**Mr Velenkosini Hlabisa**
12:50 - 13:05	Chairperson of the African Union Advisory Board against Corruption	**Mr Kwami Edem Senanu**
13:05 - 13:20	Secretary General of the African Association of Public Administration and Management	**Prof George Kojo Scott**
13:20 - 13:25	MUSIC INTERLUDE	
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch	
14:30 - 14:45	Public Protector	**Advocate Kholeka Gcaleka**
14:45 - 15:00	Chair of Public Service Commission and ACCERUS Board Member	**Prof Somadoda Fikeni**
15:00 - 15:15	SAA Whistleblower and Co-Founder of Citizens of Conscience Foundation	**Ms Cynthia Stimpel**
15:15 - 15:30	Western Cape Head of Special Investigating Unit	**Mr Mike Leaser**
15:30 - 15:35	MUSIC INTERLUDE	
CLOSING SEGMENT		
15:35 - 15:40	Presentation of Book Titled: Whistleblowing and Whistleblowers in Africa: Promoting Accountable and Ethical Societies.	Authors: Prof P.S. Reddy (UKZN), Prof C. Jones (SU), Prof P. Pillay (SU) and Dr. S. Zondi (UKZN)
	Dedication to Babita Deokaran	**Prof Chris Jones**
15:40 - 15:45	Vote of Thanks	**Mr Koogan Pillay**
	ACCERUS Board Member and Co Chair of Values 20	
15:45	Group photos	All
16:00	Tea/Coffee	

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

CONVENOR AND HOSTESS

Professor Pregala Solosh Pillay

Prof. Pregala Solosh Pillay is a Professor in the School of Public Leadership at Stellenbosch University and Director of the Anti-Corruption Centre for Education and Research (ACCERUS). With over 30 years of teaching, publishing, and advancing leadership in public administration, she is recognised as a C2-rated researcher for her consistent scholarly contributions. She was the inaugural Vice Dean for Social Impact and Transformation in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at Stellenbosch University. Prof. Pillay has pioneered initiatives in gender enrichment and forged impactful partnerships locally and internationally. In 2025, she was honoured with the prestigious Donald Stone Award and the AAPAM Gold Medal Award for her contributions to public administration, anti-corruption efforts, and leadership. She continues to be a thought leader, mentor, and influential voice in shaping governance and institutional integrity across South Africa and beyond.

Ms Pulane Kole

Ms. Pulane Kole is the Acting Head (DDG) in The Presidency's Policy and Research Services, where she oversees policy coordination and formulation, research, and the implementation of the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment System (SEIAS). With 19 years of senior-level public service experience across all three spheres of government, she has specialised in development planning, macro policy, research, monitoring, and evaluation. She holds qualifications in Water Care, Business Administration, and a Master's in Town and Regional Planning, and is currently pursuing a PhD in the same field at the University of Pretoria. In addition, she contributes to academia as a guest lecturer on Monitoring and Evaluation and Public Policy to postgraduate students at three South African universities.

Professor Chris Jones

Chris Jones served as a church minister in Ceres for almost twenty years before moving to Stellenbosch in 2008 to establish the Unit for Moral Leadership in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University. He retired at the end of 2024 and was awarded the status of Emeritus Associate Professor in Systematic Theology and Ecclesiology.

Professor Sibusiso Moyo

Prof. Sibusiso Moyo is Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies at Stellenbosch University, a role she has held since September 2022. She holds a PhD in Mathematics from UKZN and a Master's in Tertiary Education Management (with distinction) from the University of Melbourne. Her research focuses on differential equations and their applications, with extensive publications in the field. With over 15 years of executive leadership at Durban University of Technology, she has driven national and international thought leadership, notably in undergraduate research excellence. Prof. Moyo has served as guest editor for leading journals, sits on editorial boards for Higher Education Policy and Management and Agenda, and has received DHET leadership awards in 2019 and 2021. She helped establish DUT's "innobiz" Centre for Entrepreneurship, served as Honorary Dean in Tianjin, China (2021–2023), and currently serves on boards including SU Enterprises, Innovate Durban, AIMS South Africa, CASME, and Warwick University's Advisory Council (2025–2026).

Professor Reza Daniels

Prof. Reza Daniels is Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at Stellenbosch University. Previously, he was Professor of Economics at the University of Cape Town and Director of the Southern Africa Labour & Development Research Unit (SALDRU). He studied at the University of Auckland, the University of Michigan, and the University of Cape Town, where he obtained his PhD in Economics. Prof. Daniels has published widely in peer-reviewed journals and serves as editor for local and international journals. He is a member of the Economic Society of South Africa, the American Economic Association, the Econometric Society, and the International Statistical Institute. In 2024, he was appointed to the Standing Committee on Science for Reduction of Poverty & Inequality by the Academy of Science of South Africa. Beyond academia, he has consulted to public and private sectors and international development banks, and holds executive and non-executive positions across industries. He is also a fellow of the African Leadership Initiative and the Aspen Global Leadership Network.

Professor Z Ndevu

Zwelinzima Ndevu is the current director of the School of Public Leadership (SPL) in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at Stellenbosch University (SU). He is also the academic head of the BComHons in Public and Development Management. As part of the latter degree programme as well as the Diploma in Public Accountability and the MBA, he teaches modules on the management of institutional collaboration, leadership and change, as well as institutional conduct. Zwelinzima's expertise spans the fields of public leadership, human resource management with specialisation in performance management, as well as ethics, public participation, and local government. This has resulted in several published peer-reviewed book chapters, journal articles and national and international conference proceedings, as well as his appointment as an external examiner for master's and doctoral dissertations at various universities in South Africa and abroad.

Mr Rakesh Deokaran

Rakesh Deokaran is a dedicated professional in the banking sector, known for his unwavering commitment to ethical conduct and integrity. As the brother of the late Babita Deokaran, Rakesh carries forward her legacy with courage and conviction, ensuring that her voice continues to resonate through his actions. Inspired by Babita's fearless pursuit of justice, he strives to uphold transparency and accountability in every aspect of his work. Rakesh remains a steadfast guardian of her memory, keeping her spirit alive by championing the values she stood for, truth, integrity, and the courage to speak out.

Professor Armand Bam

Professor Armand Bam is Associate Professor and Head of Social Impact at the Stellenbosch Business School. His work focuses on inclusive leadership, social justice, and ethical management in business and society. As a scholar and practitioner, he explores how organisations can foster belonging, accountability, and integrity in leadership. His public engagement and research centre on building institutions grounded in compassion, fairness, and shared responsibility.

Dr Jerry Chetty

Dr. Jerry Chetty is Head of the Business Integrity Unit at Santam, where he leads forensics, ethics, intelligence, and integrity risk management. An internationally recognised authority on insurance crime, he brings expertise in prevention, detection, investigation, remediation, and prosecution. With prior law enforcement experience, he has testified as an expert witness in insurance cases and holds multiple qualifications in law and investigation, including a pioneering PhD in Criminology on tolerance for insurance crime—the first study of its kind in Africa. Dr. Chetty is Chairperson of the Institute for Commercial Forensic Practitioners (ICFP), an admitted Advocate of the High Court of South Africa, and holds professional designations with ICFP, The Ethics Institute, and ACFE. He also serves as Honorary Professor at Unisa's College of Law, where he contributes thought leadership in forensics, ethics, and higher education.

Mr Trevor Francis

Trevor Francis is the Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Municipal People Practitioners of South Africa (IMPSA). He has over 33 years' experience in both Public and Private sectors having served as an Executive in Local Government, as a Director in a GIS technology company (Immovable Asset Management) and as Group HR manager for two multi-national companies. He holds a BA degree , a Chief Executives Certificate (CEO) in Local Government and a Lead Auditor Certificate in ISO 22000 . A well versed and rounded individual with the ability to actively engage audiences of both young and old.

Mr Wayne Duvenage

Having spent spend three decades in the tourism and transport industry, in 2012 Wayne left the corporate world and co-founded the formation of OUTA, a civil action organisation that initially set out to challenge Government's irrational eToll decision in Gauteng. OUTA's efforts were largely instrumental in Government's eventual termination of the eToll scheme in April 2024. OUTA expanded its mandate in 2016, to tackle corruption, maladministration and irrational policies in the public sector. To date the organisation has taken on over 340 projects and is regarded as a formidable civil activist organisation, employing a professional team around 40 passionate people who have saved the country several billions of rands from the hands of corrupt networks. Wayne schooled in KZN and is a BSc graduate of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Mr Daryl Swanepoel

Daryl Swanepoel is the Chief Executive Officer of the Inclusive Society Institute and a leading voice on public policy, democracy, human rights and reform of South African and global governance. With a career spanning politics, business, and academia, he has served as a parliamentarian, strategist, and educator. His current focus includes reimagining entrenched power dynamics and driving inclusive solutions. He is a research fellow at Stellenbosch University's School of Public Leadership and a Visiting Professor at Zhejiang Normal University in Jinhua, China. And he is the Vice President of the Institute of Accounting and Commerce, a statutory-recognised professional body that licences accountants and tax practitioners.

Dr Munyaradzi Saruchera

Dr Munya Saruchera is Director of the Africa Centre for Inclusive Health Management at Stellenbosch University. He teaches and supervises postgraduate students and research fellows. He is a Fellow of FAIPH, Ashoka, SUNRISE, and a Professional Associate with ACCERUS. He holds a PhD in Sociology, a Master's in Policy Studies, and an Honours in Political Science & Public Administration. He has over 30 years' experience in project management, research, M&E, leadership development, and social change. He managed his consultancy, LabyrinthConsult, for 10 years across Africa and internationally. His research interests include health sociology, corruption in health, indigenous knowledge, climate change, and HR for health. He is passionate about social change, community development, emotional literacy, mentorship, and coaching. He has published widely and contributed to knowledge on socio-economic and cultural determinants of health.

Mr Justin Pakes

Justin Pakes is Executive Manager of Agency Sales at Capital Legacy, where he has built a career spanning over 12 years. Starting as the company's first sales consultant, he rose through the ranks to his current leadership role. Born in Durban, he immigrated to the UK at 13, completing a Sport Science degree with Honours in Sports Coaching and Psychology before returning to South Africa in 2012. He joined Capital Legacy in 2013 and has since specialised in estate planning, empowering individuals to secure their legacies and protect their families. Skilled in structuring estate plans, drafting wills, and ensuring seamless estate distributions, he led the launch of KeyPlan in 2020, a milestone in the company's growth. Justin is known for building strong relationships with municipalities, government entities, and stakeholders, delivering tailored financial solutions.

Mr Velenkosini Hlabisa

President of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), he has served as Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs in the Government of National Unity since June 2024. Under his leadership, the priority that "Every Municipality Must Work" is being pursued through a review of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, the professionalisation of municipalities, and a review of the local government funding model. He is also driving the overhaul of the national disaster management system to refocus on risk reduction, early warnings and resilience. His long-standing respect for institutions of traditional leadership find expression in his commitment to protect the role, powers and functions of traditional and KhoiSan leaders. As a former principal and born political activist, he believes in creating change through a rational, inclusive and honest approach, that places integrity at the heart of leadership. Minister Hlabisa is committed to building a more stable, prosperous and just South Africa, hand in hand with every citizen.

Mr Kwami Edem Senanu

Hon. Edem Senanu is Chairperson of the African Union Advisory Board Against Corruption (AUABC). He also serves as Co-Chair of the Citizens Movement Against Corruption and Executive Director of Africa 2000 Network Ghana. Previously, he held roles including National Project Coordinator for the UNDP/Africa 2000 Network Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Project, Consultant at MEL Consulting Ltd, Production Manager at Divine Seafoods Ltd, Production Supervisor at Ghana Agro-Food Company, and Senior Research Assistant at the University of Ghana. His expertise spans good governance, anti-corruption, decentralisation, citizen engagement, social accountability, public policy advocacy, strategic planning, entrepreneurship, microfinance, monitoring and evaluation, and sustainable livelihoods. Hon. Senanu holds a Master's in Development Management from the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration and is widely recognised for his leadership in advancing integrity and accountability across Africa.

Professor Somadoda Fikeni

Prof. Somadoda Fikeni is Chairperson of the Public Service Commission of South Africa and the Indlulamithi SA Scenarios Board. A distinguished scholar and public intellectual, he holds BA and BA Honours degrees from the University of Transkei, an MA from Queen's University in Canada, and a PhD from Michigan State University. His expertise spans political science, public policy, history, political economy, and heritage, and he has lectured at universities in South Africa and abroad while also serving in management roles within academia and think tanks. Prof. Fikeni's professional focus includes public policy development, higher education, and the heritage sector, and he has chaired numerous boards and councils, contributing to institutional repositioning. He is a visiting professor at Nelson Mandela University and is widely recognised as a leading commentator on politics, policy, economy, and heritage. His contributions have earned him multiple awards, including honorary chieftaincy in Ghana. A committed community activist, he founded development and charity organisations and was active in the anti-apartheid struggle, during which he faced multiple detentions.

Ms Cynthia Stimpel

Cynthia Stimpel is a Motivational Speaker, speaking on her story as a Whistle Blower, and "making a difference where you are". She is a yoga instructor for Adults and Children. She is currently a Board Member on the National Committee – Defend our Democracy. Former Board member of Amnesty International, JHB Children's HOme, and Health-E. She volunteers at Accountability Now, Radio Veritas, and does community work. She is the Author of "Hijackers on Board", about her experience at South African Airways (SAA). Highest qualification is an MBA from Milpark Business School. Her career has been primarily in Banking, Treasury and Risk Management environment. The last ten years was at SAA of which 8 years as Head of Financial Risk, and the last 2 years was in the role of Group Treasurer. She was awarded the Citation on Integrity Award by the Air Pilots Association of South Africa (APLA-SA) in 2021. Awarded the BluePrint for Free Speech in 2022- Special Recognition Award. Congress of Business Economics awarded her the "Ahmed Kathrada Excellence in Leadership Award" in 2023. Also in 2023, The Public Interest of South Africa (PISA) awarded her the Whistleblower Excellence Award and the Sherpa Award for support of whistleblowers in 2023. The last three years she worked at The Whistleblower House - supporting whistleblowers.

Mr Mike Leaser

Michael Leaser is the current Provincial Head of the Special Investigating Unit in the Western Cape Province. He has over 30 years' extensive experience in the financial and forensic investigation environments and has gained specialised expertise in complex tax evasion and tax fraud matters involving individuals and business entities during his tenure at SARS and other regulatory institutions. His qualifications include a B.Com in Business Finance Economics, a Management Development Programme, an Advanced Management Course, a Financial Investigation Certificate, and a Project Management Certificate.

Advocate Kholeka Gcaleka

Advocate Kholeka Gcaleka is the Public Protector of South Africa, appointed in November 2023 after serving as Deputy and Acting Public Protector. A seasoned legal professional with over two decades of experience in the criminal justice system and government, she rose to Senior Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions at the NPA, specialising in corruption, organised crime, gender-based violence, and human trafficking. She later served as Special Advisor to Ministers in Public Service and Administration, Home Affairs, and Finance, contributing to governance reforms and oversight initiatives. Internationally, she is President of the African Region of the International Ombudsman Institute, Chairperson of the African Ombudsman Research Centre, and a member of the UN Working Group of the IOI. She is also the first black female National Chairperson of the Society of State Advocates. Academically, she holds an LLB from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and an LLM in Commercial Law from the University of Johannesburg, with research focused on illicit financial flows. Today, she leads the Public Protector's office in advancing accountability, ethical governance, and citizen empowerment against corruption and maladministration.

Professor George Kojo Scott

Prof. George Kojo Scott is Secretary General of the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) and Extraordinary Professor at Stellenbosch University's School of Public Leadership.
A former senior public servant in Ghana, he has held roles including Chief Director in various Ministries, Municipal Coordinating Director, and Director of Finance and Administration at the Office of the President.
He has lectured at GIMPA, contributed to the work of the African Union, UNDESA, UNPAN, and the African Peer Review Mechanism, and authored four books, numerous chapters, and co edited five AAPAM volumes. Widely published in accredited journals, Prof. Scott continues to shape governance scholarship as a curriculum reviewer, contributor, and External Examiner for doctoral studies.

Mr. Koogan Pillay

Mr. Koogan Pillay is an Independent Project Management Consultant with a B.Sc. and MBA in strategy and entrepreneurship, currently pursuing a PhD in governance and sustainability. He has held diverse private sector roles and served on the advisory board of former Public Protector Thuli Madonsela. As Project Manager, he contributed to the National Anti-Corruption Strategy within the Presidency, DPME, and SIU. He is the founder of Leaders for Integrity, an NGO inspired by the Gandhi-King-Mandela model of ethical leadership. Pillay conceptualised the inaugural Kgalema Motlanthe conference on building an inclusive economy. He also initiated the Illicit Financial Flows expert panel with the Thabo Mbeki Foundation and the European Union. Previously, he led the Tambo Debates on implementing the National Development Plan with Wits, UNDP, and the Presidency. He designed the Development & Rights dialogue series under the patronage of Ahmed Kathrada, George Bizos, and Max Sisulu. At Wits University, he conducted evaluation research across select African countries. He later served as Head of Stakeholder Relations at Corruption Watch. Currently, he sits on the management board of ACCERUS at Stellenbosch University and co-chairs the Africa sub-committee of the IACCourt campaign. He also leads the advocacy stream for Values 20 (V20), advancing transparency, integrity, accountability, and inclusive economic development.

Steering Committee Members

Prof Armand Bam
Mr Rakesh Deokaran
Mr Bongo Hlobo
Ms Deyana Isaacs
Mr Levert Louw
Ms Seshnee Moodley
Prof Zweli Ndevu
Ms Browyn Pieterse
Mr Koogan Pillay
Prof Pregala Solosh Pillay
Mr Enos Selepe
Mrs Sharon Sheldon
Ms Nicole Taute
Mr Ray Clemence Tondoi

Are we watchers?
Are we dreamers?
We watch as laws are used to silence us whistleblowers with the moral and ethical duty to report wrongdoing and dream of whistleblowers being glorified.
We watch as unethical lawyers, law firms and organisations siphon state coffers in attacks on whistleblowers and dream of one day shielding whistleblowers with our own bodies if need be!

Ms Devoshum Moodley-Veera (Whistleblower and Phd Student at SU)