

Academic, Archivist & Activist

A Tribute to
Professor
Karen Leigh Harris

Edited by Robyn Schnell



ESI Press

University of Pretoria, Lynnwood Avenue, Hatfield, Pretoria, South Africa

<https://esipress.up.ac.za/>

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Publication © ESI Press 2024

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Cover design: Stephen Symons

Typography and design: Stephen Symons

Printed and bound in 2024

First published by ESI Press 2024

ISBN: 978-1-0370-2790-1 (Print)

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List of Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
ATLAS	Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research
BA	Bachelor of Arts
B-BBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CASA	Chinese Association of South Africa
DHHS	Department of Historical and Heritage Studies
DoD	Department of Defence
DTRM	Domestic Tourism Remodelling Model
EFK Tourism	Code for the University of Pretoria's Heritage and Cultural modules
ESI	Emerging Scholars Initiative
GES	Code for the University of Pretoria's History modules
GLAM	Gardens, galleries, libraries, archives and museums
HASA	Historical Association of South Africa
HoD	Head of Department
ICA	International Council on Archives
ISSCO	International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas
KHC	Kaisa Heritage Centre
MD Club	Master's and Doctoral Students' Club
MoU	Memorandum of Agreement
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NMF	Nelson Mandela Foundation
PACS	Philippine Association for Chinese Studies
PBHS	Pretoria Boys High School
PGHS	Pretoria Girls High School
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SOMAFCO	Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College

TCA	The Chinese Association of Gauteng, formerly the Transvaal Chinese Association
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
Tuks	University of Pretoria, formerly the Transvaal University College (TUC)
UFS	University of the Free State
UNISA	University of South Africa
UP	University of Pretoria
UPA	University of Pretoria Archives
UPCT	University of Pretoria Campus Tours
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand

Acknowledgements

It took a village to create this publication and there are many to thank. First, my thanks to each of the contributors who took the time to write tributes and submit them. This project would not have been possible without your insight and your ability to keep a secret!

To colleagues at the UP Archives, thank you for helping us scan images and documents. To the ESI Press team who had to keep this project under wraps for over a year, especially in the face of Professor Harris' surprise visits in the middle of planning meetings, thank you and well done! We managed to keep it from her legendary sixth sense! To Amy Ashworth who conducted a super stealthy information gathering mission and to Yanga Malotana who helped manage this process after I left for the UK, my sincere gratitude.

A very special thank you to Zimkhitha Tsotso, the Department's devoted administrator who offered her assistance and expertise.

Thank you to Professor Harris' family, Hennie and Kaylee, for your steadfast support and all your help behind the scenes.

Thank you to Heather Thuynsma, ESI's Executive Director, a colleague and friend of Professor Harris as well as my 'boss'. It was Heather who conceived the idea of this volume and was the driving force behind its actualisation. Thank you, Heather, for your trust and affording me the opportunity to edit this volume.

Lastly, thank you to Professor Harris, without whom this book would not exist. You have changed the trajectory of countless lives, mine included. It has been one of the greatest honours to edit this volume in honour of you and your remarkable career. It has been an unparalleled privilege to have been mentored by you and I am beyond proud to be part of your legacy – I am where I am today because of you.

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Foreword

Vasu Reddy

History is and has always been considered a contested space. Its practitioners in academia have continually had to reposition and reaffirm its status and relevance in the face of new trends,

ideologies and contexts

– Karen Harris

Questioning existing knowledge through a critical inquiry into evidence and its reading

– Romila Thapar

Archives exist because there's something that can't necessarily be articulated. Something is said in the gaps between all the information

– Taryn Simon

I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept

– Angela Davis

A*cademic, Archivist & Activist: A Tribute to Professor Karen Leigh Harris* is an apt title that cogently frames the subject and object of this festschrift. Derived from the German *fest* meaning, 'feast' or 'celebration' and *schrift* meaning 'writing', the festschrift typically commemorates a scholar upon retirement or other significant career milestones. Importantly, as we note with this edition, it is both a scholarly compilation and a ceremonial recognition of a scholar-leader's career and achievement. The ideas, meanings and messages mobilise with charm, insight and erudition so many aspects of the honouree of this volume.

The signposting of 'academic', 'archivist' and 'activist' in the title is an excellent juxtaposition and conjoining of concepts that describe and analyse Professor Harris in interrelated ways: contributions represent her practice, her identities, and her performance in these domains. Harris is at heart a storyteller who is able to connect many strands of thought as a professional historian,

to students as well to wider publics. She is a leader, dedicated teacher/mentor, passionate archivist and a colleague who is deeply caring and empathetic, but also someone who is activist in spirit – someone who speaks truth to power. This is not to reduce Prof Harris to these identity markers, but it is to also recognise that the many facets of her identity are interwoven in her multiple roles as colleague, friend, parent, wife, daughter, sister (and others) to her broader family and community.

This festschrift presents a small slice of the wide range of interests represented by Professor Harris, comprising approximately twenty-six contributions. The volume assembles writings by colleagues, friends and former/current students and in direct or tangential ways, recognise and acknowledge the contribution that she has made to the field of historical and heritage studies in an academic career that has spanned twenty-five years and counting. Her leadership, her wide-ranging intellect, administrative efficiency, her personality and dedication, and her lifetime commitment to our sphere of endeavours has undoubtedly left a lasting impression – notable imprints on most of us who encountered her.

12 I first met Professor Harris when I joined the University of Pretoria as Dean of the Faculty of Humanities in August 2015. She was at this point an active senior member in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies (DHHS) and the Director of the University of Pretoria Archives (UPA). She warmly embraced me as a newcomer to the University. Her creative and intellectual pursuits as well as her collegiality was infectious. A few months later (in 2016) she became the new Head of Department, following the retirement of another luminary, Professor Alois Mlambo. There was little contest or debate about her appointment as Departmental Chair. Her outstanding vision, drive and intellectual acumen impressed the selection committee. More than this, she was adamant that she would remain as Director of the UP Archives while simultaneously heading the department. I tried to dissuade her from continuing her role with the archives but she was vociferous in her opposition that this was not going to happen. I was concerned that her archives role would burden her but she persuaded me that she was more than capable of leading and managing these dual responsibilities, namely as HoD of an academic department and Director of a support division. I relented and have no regrets. Under her leadership the DHHS and the UPA have thrived, and grown in leaps and bounds. The Archives remain one of the best university resources, and I dare say in the country. The department's intellectual trajectory also soared in impactful ways during her tenure.

Professor Harris will be remembered for her many accomplishments that contributors in this volume

express. Biography (a domain of history) whether about an individual or event is always punctuated by events, moments, episodes that stand out. As an example, beyond her formidable leadership as one of the most outstanding Heads of Departments in Humanities, Harris also worked beyond the call of duty in several Faculty related initiatives. Her foundational “What’s in the Box?” Honours module is legendary, which I had the privilege of attending and opening on several occasions during my tenure. Central to the Honours coursework module on theory and methodology, this is a course which she initiated in 2019 where history students could study primary documentation from the archives of the Museum of the Transvaal Education Department. This has proven to be a successful course providing students with the ‘inner workings’ for budding historians.

She has been also instrumental in providing dedicated leadership to the Faculty Ethics Committee. We all know that committee work can be debilitating, but she drove this Committee with incredible energy. Ethics Committee work is also often a thankless job, especially the many hours members spent on evaluating proposals. She undertook this task with immense rigour, responsibility and leadership. More importantly, she provided dedicated leadership that oversaw the Faculty’s centennial publication in 2019 (drawing much from our UP Archives). And perhaps most importantly, she must be acknowledged for her formidable work in visibilising the deep histories of the UP Campus through her other legendary initiative, the UP Campus Tours. This was not just any ordinary Campus Tours: it was thoroughly researched and provided a wonderful opportunity for students to blend theory, practice and work-integrated learning to promote real and meaningful engaged scholarship.

In all of this Professor Harris, dare I say (in the present tense), is a significant presence at the University of Pretoria, not just in the Faculty of Humanities but in the larger body of the University. Her impact on the world of engaged scholarship, teaching and learning, and archival leadership is profound. Her influence on a large number of graduate students is equally impactful, which was recognised with her Academic Achiever Award for her outstanding teaching and supervision.

The launch of this festschrift is not an occasion where we say, “So long, farewell, *auf wiederzahn*, good-bye”. During my tenure as Dean, especially at retirement functions, I have always mentioned that we should view retirement in linguistic terms. It is a semicolon and not a full-stop. Beyond her professorial accomplishments, Professor Harris is a strong and solid person, imbued with superior qualities that are attractive to many of us who have crossed her path. She will, I believe, remain a

loyal friend of the university and will continue to inspire and be example-setting into the future.

When I think about retirement and the fact that faculty retirements take great teachers from our midst, I am reminded and always recall the words of Louis Armstrong when he talked about the possibility of retiring. “Musicians don’t retire,” he said. “They stop when there’s no more music in them.” In the case of Professor Harris, I think the same is true for those who have spent their lives in the classroom. Teachers such as Professor Harris do not retire. They stop when there’s no more love of education in them.

I invite readers to engage this thoughtfully curated text, which is a solid tribute to a courageous historian, teacher, mentor, administrator. Professor Harris, we are immensely grateful for your service to our community. Your diligence and determination, especially under the extraordinary circumstances of the last twenty-five years (since your appointment in 1999), have strengthened the foundation upon which we will continue to build, and I can’t thank you enough for all you have done, and will continue to do.

Introduction

Robyn Schnell

Writing this introduction was a daunting task – especially given the calibre of the tributes that this volume comprises. How does one describe the career and character of such a multi-faceted and dynamic force? Professor Harris' career has been nothing short of exceptional to which the contributions within this volume attest. Edwin Smith, a colleague and fellow PhD student, once eloquently explained that the void Professor Harris will leave when she retires will be manifold. As he lamented, there is no single individual capable of managing all the various demands that Professor Harris has juggled as Head of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies (DHHS) and Director of UP Archives (UPA). To understand his statement, you must first understand Karen Harris the trailblazer. A person who is a passionate academic and teacher, the consummate archivist, and an ever-compassionate activist.

The academic¹

Karen Harris completed a Bachelor of Arts in English and History, graduating cum laude, at the University of Stellenbosch in 1979. Thereafter she completed a Bachelor of Arts with Honours majoring in History at the same institution, also graduating cum laude. In 1981, she completed a Higher Education Diploma (HED) at the University of Stellenbosch and then worked as a Research Assistant at the university.

Professor Harris began her teaching career in the History department at Pretoria Girls High School (PGHS) in 1984 but two years later she left for the Cape to pursue a Master's degree in History at her alma mater. After graduating, again cum laude, Professor Harris returned to Pretoria to start her teaching career in tertiary education at the University of South Africa (UNISA). She began as a Junior Lecturer in History in 1987 and was quickly promoted to Lecturer and then Senior Lecturer. During her tenure at UNISA, she enrolled for a Doctorate of Literature and Philosophy (D Litt et Phil) in History which she completed in 1998.

In 1999, when she arrived at the University of Pretoria as a Senior Lecturer and University Archivist, she was an English-speaking woman, an outsider surrounded by Afrikaans men. This did not deter her! Within a few months she improved her fluency in Afrikaans, and often fooled native Afrikaans-speaking colleagues. What Professor Harris didn't know at the time is that eighteen years later she would be inaugurated as the first female Head of the Department of History.

In addition to her teaching and administrative responsibilities, Professor Harris has also been a prolific researcher. She has authored well over forty publications in academic journals and presented well over sixty academic papers at both national and international conferences. Her prowess earned her a promotion to Associate Professor in 2000, but she has lamented the fact that she was unable to keep the title of 'Dr' for longer – she was promoted a mere two years after she completed her PhD.

Academics must often choose between pursuing their own research interests or that of their students and it is very rare that the students win that tug of war! Whenever Professor Harris has had to decide, she has never hesitated. Indeed, throughout her career, Professor Harris has prioritised her students, their interests, ambitions and research ahead of her own. Not many academics would submit a paper to national and international conferences so that they can attend and support their students!

This support extends to her willingness to supervise studies on a wide range of topics within the broader disciplines of History and Heritage and Cultural Tourism. From the history of the milk tart and the scrumptious koeksister² to genetic genealogy to Fred Brownell's vexillology study that traced the legacy of the South African flag from the early colonial period to the current version adopted in 1994³. For Professor Karen Harris, no study is too unconventional, and the more challenging the task the more interested she becomes.

At the time of writing this introduction, Professor Harris was supervising sixteen PhD and nine Master's students from both History and Heritage and Cultural Tourism, which excludes the growing number of Honours students that she also supervises.

But undertaking a Master's or a PhD can be an incredibly isolating and desolate endeavour. To mitigate this problem, Professor Harris and some colleagues, including Edwin Smith, devised a

monthly group meeting for Master's students and PhD candidates, nicknamed the "MD Club". Not only has the MD Club provided a platform for collaboration between postgraduate students in the department, it has also instilled a deep sense of community in the DHHS postgraduate cohort and has created a safe space for students to share ideas, resources and their own academic progress. This is also reflected in how she managed, with incredible compassion for both students and colleagues, the Faculty of Humanities' Research Ethics Committee.

The teacher

Although Professor Harris is a highly respected historian and academic, her greatest passion has always been teaching. She has developed and lectured numerous undergraduate and postgraduate modules at both the University of South Africa and University of Pretoria. And, under her leadership, the first-year student cohort within the DHHS has steadily increased each year, with many students citing her passion as a teacher as a key reason for taking the subject.

Professor Harris has never been one for grand philosophical theories and verbose concepts, which is a trait that we have in common. Rather, she teaches her students how to 'do' History in a tangible way, by bringing the discipline down from its 'ivory towers' and making it available for everyone to appreciate. Her approach is also reflected in the numerous academic articles about History and Education, including her seminal piece, 'History through the looking glass' which delves into the debate about whether History should be a compulsory subject at high school. She has also pioneered several ground-breaking initiatives at the University of Pretoria including the 'What's in the Box?' initiative,⁴ which is a core component of the Honours Theory and Methodology course.⁵

In 2022, Professor Harris' dedication towards education was acknowledged when she was awarded the Chancellor's Award in the Teaching and Learning category at the University of Pretoria's 22nd Annual Academic Achievers Awards.

Aside from the discipline of History, Professor Harris has been an innovator in another field: Heritage and Cultural Tourism. At UP, she was crucial to establishing Heritage and Cultural Tourism as a discipline based in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies (DHHS). And under this discipline and through her stewardship, the award-winning UP Campus Tours (UPCT) was established. UPCT is an applied component of the Heritage and Cultural Tourism Honours degree

and provides Honours students with practical work experience as tourist guides.

Professor Harris' penchant for the practical extends to her being accredited as a cultural tourist guide, a position that has led her to be both a Coordinator and a Chief Researcher for projects conducted for the National Department of Tourism (NDT). She has also presented her findings at a number of local and international Tourism conferences and serves as a regional coordinator (for Africa) of the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS).

The archivist

A principal attribute of Professor Harris's multi-faceted career involves her outstanding work as an archivist. Although archival science typically goes hand in hand with the discipline of History, few historians go beyond utilising archives for their research. Professor Harris is both an historian as well as an archivist. She was largely responsible for the establishment of the University of Pretoria Archives (UPA), which she has managed and grown since 1999 and served on the National Archives Advisory Council between 2005–2008.

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Professor Harris has held a number of other managerial and administrative positions for various institutions and organisations throughout her career. The tributes compiled within this book outline the various facets of these, but they also highlight what an indispensable asset to the University of Pretoria she has been.

Lastly, Professor Harris has found time to fulfil various editorials roles for the *South African Historical Journal* and acted as an International Editorial Adviser for the *Southern University Journal*. She has also served on the editorial board of several academic journals, including *Kleio*, *Historia* and *New Contree*.

The activist

Professor Harris' specific area of expertise and interest is the history of the Chinese people in South Africa, a subject for which she is the leading expert. Xin Xiao lamented that she cited Professor Harris' doctoral thesis, titled *A history of the Chinese in South Africa to 1912*,⁶ more than any other source.⁷ But Professor Harris has also presented a multitude of papers, written and published an

array of academic articles and book chapters on this subject. And on the rare occasion that she has the opportunity to discuss her study of the Chinese in South Africa, one is blown away by both her passion and expertise.

Her students, myself included, have often wished she would indulge us more; perhaps she will now have the time to do so! Fingers crossed!

Besides contributing to the study of South Africa's Chinese community, Professor Harris has also established the study of the Chinese beyond the country's borders. In 1992, She became one of the founding members of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO), after its first conference was held at the Miyako Hotel in San Francisco, California. As the name suggests, ISSCO has sought to promote research about the study of the Chinese beyond China's borders. Professor Harris has been an Executive Board member for the last thirty years and currently serves as the Director for Africa. Professor Harris is also on the editorial board for ISSCO's journal, the *Journal of Chinese Overseas* and was a Guest Editor for a special issue that focused on the Chinese in South Africa.⁸ Her expertise has also led her to being appointed to the editorial board of the journal *African East-Asian Affairs* (AEAA).

Aside from being the leading expert on the history of the Chinese in South Africa, Professor Harris has also been a champion and activist for the Chinese community in South Africa and was a key witness in two foundational court cases. The first was the 2008 case that sought to prove that South African-born Chinese should be classified as 'Black' instead of 'White' due to the discrimination the community faced during the apartheid regime. In this case, Professor Harris provided expert testimony to demonstrate how the South African Chinese community had been racially discriminated against under apartheid, and advocated for the community to benefit from government assistance and preferential job promotion.⁹ The South African High Court in Pretoria subsequently ruled that the South African Chinese community were 'Black' in terms of Employment Equity and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment, thereby allowing them to benefit as a previously disadvantaged group.¹⁰

The second legal battle saw Professor Harris testify in a hate speech case that The Chinese Association (TCA) brought before the Equality Court in 2019. Here, Professor Harris testified about the history of the Chinese in South Africa and the racial discrimination the community faced prior to, as well as

during, apartheid.¹¹ Five years later, in 2022, the Equity Court ruled in favour of the TCA.¹² This case and its outcome set an historic precedent in South Africa – that communities are able to take a stand against discrimination and hate speech, even if the community is a minority group.

Aside from the various positions Professor Harris has held in her career, she has also played significant roles in her personal life. She is also a loving wife to her husband, Hennie, and dedicated mother to their daughter, Kaylee. Additionally, Hennie and Kaylee have also been two pillars of strength and support for Professor Harris. The Chinese proverb, 獨木不成林單弦不成音, translates to “a single tree cannot make a forest, a single string cannot make music”. This proverb perfectly reflects the steadfast support Hennie and Kaylee have provided, and continue to provide, to help Professor Harris thrive.

This volume

20 Returning to this volume, it is important to note that this is not an academic publication but rather a celebratory tribute to a remarkable teacher, a formidable scholar and an extraordinary human being. Contributor requests were sent to various individuals from the breadth of Professor Harris’ extraordinary career. These approaches were met with much enthusiasm and received an overwhelmingly positive response, and this volume represents a range of contributions from former students who became colleagues, mentors who became academic peers and coworkers who became friends.

The title of this volume was specifically chosen to illustrate some of the various roles Professor Harris has played.¹³ Not only is she an outstanding academic and an exceptional archivist, but she is also an activist in her own right. Additionally, those who have had the privilege of falling under Professor Harris’ supervision are well aware of her fondness for alliteration, which is another reason why this title is so fitting.

Alongside aspects of her career, a common thread which pulls the contributions within this book together is how the contributors have depicted Professor Harris’s definitive character. Specific characteristics such as her dedication, integrity, strong moral compass, creativity and limitless energy emerge in a number of the tributes. And the enormous amount of gratitude that those who

contributed feel towards Karen Harris is also unquestionably evident in these homages.

Conclusion

Professor Karen Harris has both enriched and indubitably changed the trajectory of countless lives, mine included, which is effectively demonstrated throughout this compilation. Although managing and editing this volume has been one of the most challenging tasks I have ever undertaken, it has also been one of the most rewarding. I have had the privilege of being able to call Professor Harris my mentor, my supervisor and my hero and it has been one of the greatest honours to be granted the opportunity to edit this volume.

Throughout the past twenty-five years, Professor Harris has made waves at the University of Pretoria as well as abroad. While her retirement will be a significant loss for both the DHHS and the University of Pretoria, this institution has been greatly enriched by her presence. If every academic followed Professor Harris' footsteps, academia would be a much more fruitful, practical and optimistic environment that embraces (instead of fears) the innovative.

Here's to you, Prof – may the next chapter of your career and life be as valuable and advantageous to you and your ambitions as you have been to so many.

Endnotes

- 1 A word of thanks must be given to Dr Dawid Mouton who provided an extensive outline of Professor Harris' career thus far. Thank you, Dawid, for your assistance which was incredibly helpful and greatly appreciated.
- 2 For more information about this specific Honours project, watch the interview Professor Harris' student, Rudolph Boraine gave on Die GROOT Ontbyt daytime television programme: Die GROOT Ontbyt. 2024. *Die geskiedenis van koeksisters*. 17 May 2022. YouTube video. [Online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjxUWKOSZlg> (Accessed on 20 November 2024)
- 3 Brownell, F.G. 2015. *Convergence and unification: The national flag of South Africa (1994) in historical perspective*. PhD thesis (History). Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
- 4 Professor Harris appeared on the High School History Recap podcast: Palk, W.H. and du Plessis, C. 2020. #4 What's in the box with Prof Karen Harris. *High School History Recap Podcast*, Podcast. [Online] Available at: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/944875/episodes/5705341-4-what-s-in-the-box-with-prof-karen-harris?t=0> (Accessed on 20 November 2024)
- 5 Harris, K.L. and van der Merwe, R. 2020. 'What's in the Box?' – Archives, history skills and honours students. *Yesterday & Today*, (23): 34. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2223-0386/2020/n23a2>.
- 6 Harris, K.L. 1998. *A history of the Chinese in South Africa to 1912*. PhD thesis (Literature and Philosophy). History Department, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- 7 Xiao, X. 2016. *Comparing free Chinese immigration to South Africa in the 20th century: Survival and opportunity*. MA dissertation (Economic History). Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, p. 17.
- 8 Anon. 2008. Editor's note. *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 4(1): v. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jco.0.0005>.
- 9 Diabetle, M. 2008. 'Ching Chong' like the K-word. *Mail & Guardian*. 4 July 2008. [Online] Available at: <https://mg.co.za/article/2008-07-04-ching-chong-like-the-kword/> (Accessed on 20 November 2024)
- 10 Ho, U. 2019. Anti-Chinese sentiment: Hate speech case a message about racism, discrimination. *Daily Maverick*. 14 March 2019. [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-03-14-hate-speech-case-a-message-about-racism-discrimination/> [(Accessed on 20 November 2024)
- 11 Ho, U. 2022. Equality Court: SA Chinese communities elated after winning hate speech case. *Daily Maverick*. 29 July 2022. [Online] Available at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-07-29-sa-chinese-communities-elated-after-winning-hate-speech-case/> (Accessed on 20 November 2024)

12 Chabalala, J. 2022. SA Chinese community wins hate speech case. *News24*. 29 July 2022. [Online] Available at: https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/sa-chinese-community-wins-hate-speech-case-20220729#google_vignette (Accessed on 20 November 2024)

13 Unfortunately, it was not possible to list all of the different hats worn by Professor Harris as the volume's title would have become particularly extensive



The Virtue of Belonging: Karen Harris and the MD Club

Edwin T. Smith

It is an unfortunate truism that postgraduate studies are not merely challenging but can also be a rather lonely journey for the student undertaking such an endeavour. Universities are not deaf to this strain plaguing postgraduate students. As a result, they have engaged in elaborate efforts to assist students in successfully navigating their academic journey in the university.¹ Upon joining the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies (DHHS) as a postgraduate student, I found an old and established MD Club that Professor Karen Harris created when ‘the Pope was an altar boy [and] ... the Dead Sea was only critical’.² The MD Club loosely translates to the Master’s and Doctoral Students’ Club. As indicated earlier, the challenges facing postgraduate students are not peculiar to the University of Pretoria and generally reflect the experience of postgraduate students across the sector and internationally as well.³ Consequently, for me the MD Club was a meaningful, practical and effective intervention for building community and creating a sense of belonging for postgraduate students in our department, which helped me to ease into my postgraduate experience and make the journey enjoyable, fun and supportive.

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I am not, by any stretch of the imagination, a traditional student. With over three decades’ experience locally and internationally, I am a professional in the higher education sector who is now continuing my studies to obtain a terminal qualification in History. Consequently, I accept that I might not be the best person to speak on behalf of our current students at my university, which includes the cohort of postgraduate students in our department where I also serve as an extraordinary lecturer, beyond being a PhD candidate as well. This particular confluence of circumstances makes me a non-traditional student in a rather unique way. Not only am I older than what the usual PhD student is expected to be under normal circumstances, given I have already crossed the half-a-century age milestone, I also have a long and diverse experience in the higher education sector that I bring with me to my experience as a postgraduate student. This affects and influences much of my views, insights and concerns as a student in my programme at our university.

Nonetheless and notwithstanding this peculiarity or even distinction, being part of the MD Club that Professor Harris created and has run with the support and assistance of Dr Abraham Mlombo,

a lecturer in our department, has enabled me to be part of an academic community and scholarly cohort that I have come to consider my 'tribe', which I can comfortably identify with and confidently represent, I think.

Given the remarkable success of the MD Club, as indicated by, among other things, its longevity and its surviving the COVID-19 pandemic that saw us commune online when it was impossible to physically be together, it is reasonable to expect that there are a number of other students grateful for Professor Harris' concern for their successful navigation of their academic journey at our university. Regardless of her established accomplishments as a remarkable and inspiring teacher, world-renowned researcher and distinguished scholar in History, Tourism and Archival Sciences, creating the MD Club is doubtlessly another of her ingenious and selfless efforts to support postgraduate students in our programme. Hence this note of appreciation for the remarkable opening of minds, sustaining of curiosity, nurturing of talent and the introduction to an academic community being part of the MD Club has enabled for me as a postgraduate student in her department.

26 From the onset, one of the defining experiences for me when joining the MD Club was that I had the distinct feeling that I had found my 'tribe' in the academic world. All my fears of not knowing enough of the technical stuff, including the historical and contemporary discourses in my discipline, or not being better read than I should be which developing one's research report at Honours level or research proposal at Master's or PhD levels quickly registers in any prospective candidate, or suffering in silence regarding the challenges of mastering our discipline sufficiently enough to write an academic treatise like a dissertation or a thesis, all became less daunting, less intimidating, more manageable and even achievable in the presence of a supportive, understanding, encouraging, sympathetic and empathetic cohort of postgraduate students the MD Club instantly made available to me.

With the practical sessions about the academic roadmap for both Master's and PhD students, which are the hallmark introductory sessions of the MD Club at the beginning of each academic year, to the particular sessions offered by other students about their individual journeys in their studies, to expert presentations by other scholars and professional staff from the library to us as students, my academic journey did not seem as daunting, strange and lonely as I had imagined given my peculiar or even esoteric interests and focus of my study. Through the MD Club, I too was able to share my interest, discoveries and further learning, including the tricks I discovered and applied to my study,

and other useful experiences and insights with a community of scholars facing similar challenges with the hope of encouraging and strengthening both myself and my colleagues in our individual journeys.

Through the MD Club, I was also able to learn what other fellow postgraduate students in my department were investigating and studying. This became yet another significant level of learning that both stimulated and encouraged my own quest, albeit some of the areas of interest were lifetimes and realities away from my area and subject of focus. This sharing broadened my understanding of my discipline beyond my own particular focus and interest, enriching and expanding my knowledge base while strengthening my own pursuits. As a result, I was also able to share sources with my colleagues I would stumble on as I read for my own work, discovering resources that could be of use to them and their studies with the hope that they would also find them useful and encouraging. I also learned that sharing the scholarly journey creates community in a more powerful way than anything I know, making real the African adage, 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together', in a number of tangible and meaningful ways for me.

Furthermore, the MD Club translated the scholarly journey into the cohort identity I think we now have, where we recognise and acknowledge one another on campus and even in the broader community and talk about our work formally and informally with greater meaning and depth than mere passing platitudes of politeness and civility as postgraduate students. In addition, we now also approach academic conferences and workshops as a team, providing each other with the support and encouragement that allows us to comfortably and confidently share our work with larger communities of scholars in our field, which is no minor achievement for young and emerging scholars. Through the MD Club we learn to celebrate each other's achievements and encourage one another along the way, which is indispensable in enabling us the wherewithal to navigate those lonely hours when we slog alone through journal articles and other secondary sources on our own in the privacy and solitude of our homes.

Our MD Club activities extend beyond merely meeting on campus. We now also organise excursions to cardinal destinations for historians. Our visit to the Department of Defence (DoD) Archives, which was organised through a member of our MD Club who had worked at the DoD archives in her previous life, was a rather special experience that again reminded me that we are a community of scholars busy with the business of making meaning from these archives for ourselves

and posterity. During this excursion, I learned what a remarkable experience it is to find that you belong because you are there with 'your people' and though strange and new, the places we now visit somehow are familiar, inviting and comfortable for all of us. It was even more exhilarating to witness a colleague find the records of their grandfather who served in World War II in the vast collections in the DoD archives, which is as satisfying as me recently discovering a picture of myself with one of my instructors at SOMAFCO, the ANC school in exile in Tanzania, in the archives at the University of Fort Hare. These personal finds make the archive and our academic journey meaningful, personally as well as professionally.

28 In the end, all I can really hope for is that I too have been as encouraging and supportive of my colleagues as I have found their participation and contribution in the MD Club was to me. The sense of community and communion the Club has made possible for me has turned a daunting and reportedly lonesome voyage into an exciting, laughter-filled and meaningful experience for me as a young academic and historian. Traversing this journey with our lecturers like Dr Mlombo and Dr Ian Macqueen recently was remarkable, further demonstrating their care, concern and interest in our learning and growth. While it is customary for a number of the academic staff like Dr Nisa Paleker to be present in some of our activities, I thank Professor Harris for the community of scholarship she created for the postgraduate students in our department. It means a lot to us, and I do not think we can ever say it enough. It also embeds in us the importance of community, collaboration and supporting one another in our academic journeys as new and aspirant scholars.

Professor Harris' MD Club provides emerging scholars in our department a remarkable vehicle for inculcating a culture of scholarship, research and community building which is indispensable for a successful academic experience for postgraduate students. Given the well-documented challenges of postgraduate education for many South African students at universities across the country, the DHHS' MD Club is a welcome intervention and innovation of a homegrown solution to a vexing challenge facing postgraduate programmes across disciplines. Consequently, the impact and success of the MD Club still needs to be considered and interrogated with the view to distilling its impact and the difference it makes to the success of postgraduate students in our department. Such insights could then be shared with other disciplines in our university to assist with the successful navigation of the postgraduate landscape for all emerging

Endnotes

- 1 The University of Pretoria's Vice Principal: Academic, Professor Loretta Feris, reported in a Tshebi Teaching and Learning Data Analytics meeting on 16 October 2023, which was attended by, among others, Deputy Deans: Teaching and Learning and colleagues from Education Innovation (EI), that she learned with great concern about the reportedly challenging and lonely journey postgraduate students suffer at the University of Pretoria. Feris wanted the efforts exerted on ensuring the success of undergraduate students at the University to be extended to the postgraduate cohort as well.
- 2 Dube, L. 1995. Feel irie [Song]. On *Trinity* [Album]. Tabu Records.
- 3 Anon. n.d. Engineering a holistic support system for PhD students. *Inside Higher Ed*. [Online] Available at: [https://narratives.insidehighered.com/nyu-tandon-engineering-support-phd-students/index.html?utm_n.d.\)_campaign=IHESocialEditorial&utm_content=because_the_path_to_a_doc&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=facebook&fbclid=IwAR2sH4y42DFqDTs7dVjC4CPyT_8owe_v43hloOuoKz6Pyd_5PARPL8r6zkc](https://narratives.insidehighered.com/nyu-tandon-engineering-support-phd-students/index.html?utm_n.d.)_campaign=IHESocialEditorial&utm_content=because_the_path_to_a_doc&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=facebook&fbclid=IwAR2sH4y42DFqDTs7dVjC4CPyT_8owe_v43hloOuoKz6Pyd_5PARPL8r6zkc) [Accessed on 08 November 2024].



Professor Karen Harris, a *'Mensch'* for all Seasons¹

Caroline Nicholson

Professor Karen Harris is a full Professor, a Head of Department in the Faculty of Humanities, the Director of the University of Pretoria Archives (UPA) and a brilliant, prolific, innovative and exciting academic, with a profound passion for her discipline, her students, her colleagues, her university and her country. She is also a dedicated mother, a wife and a unique human being who has contributed meaningfully to the lives she has touched.

I have had the pleasure and privilege to work alongside and forge a relationship with Professor Karen Harris since 2018. When I met her, she was already the HoD of the DHHS and the Head of the UPA and it was in this latter capacity that our work lives converged. The passion, boundless energy and enthusiasm that Karen brings to her various roles is as contagious as it is remarkable. Her constant drive for innovation, improvement and excellence has left in her wake a vast cohort of students, researchers and colleagues who have been vastly enriched by her selfless investment in them and their wellbeing.

None who has encountered Karen remains indifferent to her. Indifference in the face of such incandescent innovation and dedication is simply not possible. She has a unique ability to meaningfully touch the lives of those around her and, in the Archives space, I have watched her nurture her staff, taking painstaking care of their wellbeing and their development. I have watched as she has supported her staff through periods of personal loss and tragedy and as she provided academic support and motivation to her younger colleagues. I have watched her unbridled delight in their academic achievements and their personal successes.

Karen takes a deep personal interest in all her students, and her supervisory support to her postgraduate students in Honours, Master's and PhD study is legendary. She was the innovator behind the 'What's in the Box?' Honours project and the founder of the MD Club, a platform for postgraduate students to interact in their research and writing. Her students are inspired by her and admire her enormously.

But Karen has not lost sight of the undergraduate students. Throughout her career, she has taken a special interest in the undergraduate student cohort in History and later also in Heritage Studies and Tourism with a view to ignite in them the same passion for her subject matter as she herself feels. Her passion for teaching, even in the face of huge student numbers, remains deeply entrenched. In fact, I know that one of Karen's deepest concerns over the last year or two has been to ensure that they and the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies and the UPA remain in safe hands after her retirement.

Karen is widely published and, despite a gruelling workload with postgraduate and undergraduate teaching and research, she finds time to attend and present papers at prestigious national and international conferences. In recognition of her academic excellence, Karen was the 2019 recipient of a Faculty teaching award for developing the award-winning UP Campus Tours (UPCT) in the postgraduate Honours degree as part of Work Integrated Learning. She was also awarded the Chancellor's Award for Teaching and Learning in 2022. These prestigious awards are only two amongst a host of awards Karen has received over the years.

32 Despite awards and the status of full Professor, Karen exudes remarkable humility. One former student described her as 'a broad-leaved coral tree. Her broad and profound learning as well as her dedication to education, becomes the most beautiful scenery at UP'.²

As if her academic contribution is not enough, Karen has given generously of her time, energy and intellect to secure and maintain the UPA as a national asset. She has poured herself into the role, moving boxes, sorting documents, driving Facilities Management mad with demands for more and better space, and all of this for no reward, other than her satisfaction in a job well done.

Under her leadership, the UPA has burgeoned. She fiercely demands that institutional history be appropriately conserved and preserved for future generations. She is often to be seen industriously darting around with her team, gathering documents, rescuing them from paper recycling or worse, shredding.

Not willing to simply wait and see what documentation, images and other archival material find their way to the UPA in the fullness of time, Karen has used incentives such as photography, poetry and other competitions to ensure an institutional archive of major events in UP's history. She has

used 'What's in the Box?', cultural tourism tours of the campus and treasure hunts, amongst others, to ignite an interest in archiving, in the history of UP, in research and in preserving the present for future generations. The 'What's in the Box?' Honours project has been described as an 'exciting, empirical and deeply critical exercise in one of the most important modules of a budding historian's university career'.

Karen is proud of the Microfiche machine, held together with 'elastic bands and paper clips', that allows researchers to continue to access information on microfilm that would otherwise be lost to us forever. Who knows what we will do when the elastic bands and paperclips stop doing the trick and the machine gives up the ghost?

Karen too is part of UP's history and she has played a central role in preserving its legacy for the future. Karen, in doing this incredibly valuable work, you have secured your legacy at UP. Have no fear, your team has learnt at the foot of the master and the UPA will be in safe hands going forward.

I trust now that as Karen turns the page to the next chapter in her life, she will at least slow down enough to stop and smell the roses from time to time, enjoy a cup of tea and enjoy some uninterrupted family time.

Endnotes

- 1 The key to being 'a real mensch' is nothing less than character, rectitude, dignity, a sense of what is right, responsible, decorous. The term is used as a high compliment, implying the rarity and value of that individual's qualities.
 - 2 Ying (Jane) Li recounts the dedication of her supervisor at the University of Pretoria.
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Archive Tales

Verne Harris

My path in the archive first crossed that of Karen Harris in the latter part of the 1990s. The context was an early democratic-era public programming project of the newly constituted National Archives. The post-apartheid legislation had been passed in 1996, and we were exploring the heady possibilities of transformation and the creation of a liberatory new national archival system. Karen produced for us our very first edukit, a resource designed to make archival content more accessible and intelligible to young people. We were coming out of an era in which the apartheid State Archives Service, as it was appropriately called, prioritised servicing the needs of state structures and a small research elite. Karen was helping us understand the transformation imperative to create access to the public, especially in communities previously deliberately excluded from the mandate.

I was a bit distracted at that time, having been seconded to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1997–1998) as well as beginning to develop a postgraduate course for the Wits Graduate School for the Humanities. But I followed what Karen was doing, enough to have her tag me into running a training course for her at the University of Pretoria in this period. At that time, the transformation units in government encouraged public-private partnerships, and by 1999 it was common for government officials to work together with academics and civil society activists on projects. Heady days. In addition, the long years of South Africa's isolation had ended and the 1990s were characterised by a range of international exchanges, including with structures of the International Council on Archives (ICA). From 1999, Karen became an active member of the ICA's Eastern and Southern African regional branch.

But then came the great post-Mandela 'closing down'. Whereas in the first democratic administration we had been encouraged to question, explore and learn from mistakes and to push authority on matters of policy and strategy, it became clear very quickly that the role of officials was to keep quiet and do what they were told. Instead of becoming a vital public resource, the archive of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was 'buried'. Suddenly archivists required security clearances to work with their own collections. Instead of being a freedom of information tool, the Promotion of

Access to Information Act (passed in 2000) became, ironically, a weapon for gatekeepers. Archival legislation was changed to juniorise the National Archivist within the Department of Arts and Culture and the National Archives Commission, designed in 1996 as a watchdog over the national archival system and having certain key executive powers, was turned into a toothless advisory structure. Projects with partners outside the state were regarded with suspicion. At first, they were discouraged. Soon they were made almost impossible. Dedicated, hardworking professionals became paranoid, watching their backs and doing anything to stay out of trouble ...

It was only a matter of time before I ran foul of this new reality and its apparatchiks. When I spoke publicly in 2000 about Truth Commission records being illegally removed by the National Intelligence Agency, my days were numbered. It wasn't long – halfway through 2001 – before I was at Wits, teaching part-time and retooling the South African History Archive into a freedom of information NGO. I was disillusioned, exhausted and wounded. In my view, the National Archives had given up on the transformation project and was rapidly turning into a reactionary institution which reminded me of nothing so much as the old apartheid State Archives Service. I was done with it.

36

But Karen wasn't. In her own inimitable way, she continued to work with the institution and look for ways of opening it up again. For four years she served on the National Archives Advisory Council (2005–2008), trying by all means to turn it into a meaningful structure for accountability in the archives sector. In 2007 the Nelson Mandela Foundation and Wits managed to persuade the National Archives to co-host a conference geared to assessing the challenges facing the national archival system. What emerged was not pretty. The system was in deep trouble. Karen played a key role in ensuring that the conference report (*Archives at the Crossroads*) was tabled at the Advisory Council and at least given some attention. But, no surprise, it was never responded to formally and it never had any impact.

The importance, and the value, of civil society and private sector archives increases enormously in contexts where systems of the state are struggling or are dysfunctional. During the years of struggle against apartheid, university archives played a critical role in anchoring societal memory and heritage. And in the post-Mandela era we are again seeing how important university archives are to a national system being let down by structures of the state. In this context, I cannot speak highly enough of the work Karen has done at the University of Pretoria. She and her 'A team' have created

a site of excellence of which our country can be proud. It is sites like this which demonstrate what needs to be done to rescue our ailing national system.

Professional expertise and experience, of course, are critical to any archival project. But it is a certain energy and commitment which turns good quality into excellence. And in this respect Karen is a dynamo. She makes things happen by combining skill at navigating institutional politics with a determination to get on and make things work. 'Indefatigable' is a word which springs to mind. She is passionate about the work of archive and about the importance of institution-building. And she cares about people. That's how you assemble and grow a good team. And that's how you develop an effective succession plan.

It's been a privilege working with Karen on projects over the years. Her legacy is an important one.



The Experience of Working with Karen Harris

Alida Green and Ria van der Merwe

Working with Karen Harris is akin to the story of Aladdin. Imagine encountering a seemingly ordinary, dusty lamp, only to discover it holds a magical genie. Meeting Karen for the first time, you see a slender person with an ordinary name, involved in the seemingly mundane (and dusty) professions of historian and archivist. However, with the slightest touch, she transforms into an extraordinary, larger-than-life figure who whisks you away on a magic carpet ride.¹ Over the past 25 years, we have had the privilege of working with Karen, and it has truly been a thrilling journey.

Establishing and transforming the UPA

The UP Archives (UPA) was established in 1994, largely thanks to the efforts of Professor Cobus Ferreira. Initially, it was an underutilised and obscure service, hidden away on the fifth floor of the Humanities Building, accessible only via a maze of stairs. After Professor Ferreira's retirement, the Archives were almost forgotten, with no permanent staff and limited facilities.

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Then, in January 1999, Karen Harris arrived. Her goal was to make the Archives indispensable. Over 25 years as University Archivist, she became the greatest advocate for the vital role Archives play in an institution.

Enhancing facilities

Karen immediately set out to create a visual presence for the UPA by designing a logo: a bee within a honey cell, paying homage to the University's coat of arms. When the Humanities Building's facilities became inadequate, Karen's fervour and perseverance won the day. She secured additional storage in Old Merensky's basement and a reading room in Old Arts. The latter was meticulously restored under her watchful eye, becoming a haven for scholars and seekers alike.

The crowning achievement was the Letlotlo Building, where Karen secured a secure, temperature-controlled storage area. This enabled the Archive to save two nationally important collections from destruction: the Transvaal Education Department records and the South African Art Archive.

Innovative projects

Karen's projects have brought the Archives to life in unique ways. For the University's Centenary celebrations in 2008, she restored a space in the Old Arts Building to its turn-of-the-twentieth-century classroom glory and involved Information Design students in creating animated videos of the University's history. This project impressed three former Vice Chancellors so much that they made generous donations for the UPA's facilities.

Over the years due to our involvement in these projects, we have found ourselves in interesting situations: laying spread-eagle on the back of the removal van to safe-guard the personnel files that had to be moved, climbing into a skip to retrieve important documents that were dumped by an unwitting staff member, dragging a warehouse stepladder across the Hatfield campus to remove an exhibition that was mounted with the help of a cherry picker.

40 Karen's vision also extended to recording the University's history in unique ways. When outsourcing put pay to the post of university photographer, Karen came up with a plan which killed more than two birds² with one stone. The Kodak photographic competition in 2000, and then the Q-Photo FujiFilm Vega photographic workshops and competition, which ran for 12 years, were her brainchildren. While students and staff could gain valuable photographic skills, these workshops were a great marketing opportunity for the UPA. Most importantly was that the UPA acquired photographs that recorded the University's history from a uniquely student-focused perspective. The quality of these photographs is such that they are still used in publications and exhibitions.

Adapting to the pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Karen realised the importance of documenting student and staff experiences under lockdown. Rather than the archivist determining which memories to capture for future generations, students and staff were encouraged to reflect on their own lockdown experiences through written, audio or visual submissions. The response to the initial competition, #StaySafe UP Archives COVID-19 Photographic Competition, prompted the UPA to launch two additional competitions, namely 'Recollecting COVID – 365 days in lockdown' in 2021 and in 2022, as life slowly started to return to normal, 'Loss, pause and hope'. The submissions provide a unique window into the experiences of individuals that depict both the fears and frustrations, but also

the hope and humanity during a time when everyone had to uphold social distancing measures in order to stay safe. ESI Press published a selection of the submissions entitled *Archives of Covid-recollections*, which was launched exactly three years to the day of South Africa entering its first lockdown.

Teaching and engagement

But, as the internationally recognised archivist Verne Harris (no relation)³ emphasises, without active use, all the other archival activities come to nought. This is an aspect very close to Karen's heart and in terms of its teaching, the UPA is the only tertiary institution in the country that involves its students in research activities in the UPA holdings.

Since the inception of Campus Tours, the practical component of the Honours course in Heritage and Cultural Tourism over two decades ago, Karen in her capacity as the responsible lecturer ensured that the students are exposed to doing archival research on the University's history and specifically its architectural heritage in the UPA. The research not only exposes the students to archives, but also enables them to apply their newly acquired knowledge in developing their own tours.

Another success project was the Tuks Campus Board game. Professor Yolande Jordaan (formerly acting Director of Corporate Communication and Marketing) asked the EFK Honours students to create a board game to promote the new 'Campus Fitness Trail' and to familiarise staff, students, alumni and prospective students with historical, cultural, academic, sporting and social aspects of the University in an interactive way.

From the outset, the UPA staff were involved in not only assisting with the research for the questions, but also vetting them and checking them for accuracy, language and typos as well as devising additional questions that would reflect a broad spectrum of UP campus life. Ultimately the UPA was also involved in assisting with the research and compilation of over 1 500 multiple choice questions,⁴ sourcing pictures for the graphic designer, proof-reading, trial-running the game and seeing the project through to its final production phase. The incredible success of this board game was evident in the comment made by the former Rector, Professor Cheryl de la Rey, at the launch of the 'Fitness Trail', when she referred to the 'Tuks Campus Board Game' as 'the most innovative project currently on campus'.

In 2018, Karen developed the 'What's in the Box?' project for the History Honours students. The students are introduced to the work of an archivist and the function of an archive, as well as doing archival research. They receive an unsorted box of documents to which they have to apply archival principals. Another example of killing more than one cockroach with a heavy archival box: whilst the students gain invaluable archival and research skills, the collection, which comprises of over 400 boxes, is inventorised.

Due to Karen's dual responsibility in the UPA and the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies (DHHS), and both of us being graduates of the DHHS, we inevitably are roped into departmental projects. We drew the battle lines of the South African War, be it as trestle tables on either side of the dance floor, with each side decorated accordingly with hessian bags or red roses. We rang in the millennium with a glittering ball, even though all a bit out of breath after having to blow up dozens of golden balloons ourselves due to a failed gas canister.

Conclusion

42 In the opening passage of her inaugural address, the University of Pretoria's Chancellor, Justice Sisi Khampepe noted that thanks to the efficiency of the UPA, she was easily able to revisit events in the University's past. High praise indeed and a fitting tribute to Karen's visionary leadership which has transformed the UPA from an obscure entity into a jewel in the University's crown. Her tireless efforts have made the archives a vibrant hub of activity and a beacon of knowledge and understanding. Her legacy is one of transformation and enlightenment, a testament to the power of passion and perseverance in the pursuit of knowledge.

Endnotes

- 1 Anyone familiar with the portrayal of Robin Williams and Will Smith as the genie would agree that she talks just as fast.
 - 2 As archivists, we would rather kill critters that lurk in archival storage areas.
 - 3 In 2023, thanks to Karen's efforts, he received an Honorary Doctorate from UP.
 - 4 After a few days of proof-reading the MCQ, we were dreaming of everyone and everything related to UP in multiple-choice options.
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Historical Realities, State Policies, Identity Formation and the Chinese in the Philippines and South Africa¹

Teresita Ang See

I: General overview

I am most honoured to offer a summary of an article originally presented at the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO) regional conference in South Africa 2006, held at the University of Pretoria and convened by Professor Karen Harris. It has been a distinct privilege to get to know Professor Harris. Both of us were privileged to be among the co-founders of ISSCO. We journeyed through the ups and down of the organisation from the very first ISSCO conference in 1992 held in Berkeley, California. Her dedication and commitment to research, her passion for teaching and her solid academic work on the Chinese in Africa are worth emulating by young aspiring scholars.

The 2006 ISSCO conference Professor Harris convened was themed 'Emphasized Diversity in the Diaspora'. Just as Professor Wang Gungwu stated in his opening keynote address at the Manila ISSCO conference in 1998 titled, 'What is in the past of the ethnic Chinese minority that affects their present and shapes their future?':² 'What our ancestors did and what happened to them in the past have unexpected consequences in our present. We are indeed diverse but even in the richness of diversities we find common realities'.

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Indeed, we come from different parts of the world and the ethnic Chinese communities in our respective countries come in different colours, languages, traditions, historical experiences and backgrounds. However, while we understand that we are all different in many ways, we have also to remember that there are many events and historical experiences in the past that link us together.

I marvelled at the many parallelisms in the historical experiences of the Chinese in South Africa and the Chinese in the Philippines. It struck me also how the emancipation of slaves in faraway Africa affected events that had far-reaching consequences among the Chinese in the Philippines and elsewhere. The bitter experiences of the 'piglets (豬仔)' or 'coolie' labour in many parts of the world are an important part of the history of the Chinese overseas but not very many people have studied how this era was influenced by, and largely started with, the emancipation of African slaves.³

In Europe and in America, because of the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of the Black Africans, huge numbers of Chinese labourers had to be contracted to work in the mines and goldfields of Africa, in the European sugar plantations in the West Indies, in the fields, forest, farms and railroads of America, and many other destinations, to gather raw materials and produce that fuelled the industrial revolution. In the United States, because they competed with local labour, they had to be curtailed through the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, which was also applied to the Philippines as an American colony in 1902.⁴ The same legislation was also imposed on the Chinese and Asians in Africa in 1904.⁵ Elsewhere in South America, the first Chinese who set foot there actually came from Manila – boat rowers, workers and traders who plied the Manila-Acapulco trade which brought goods from China to Mexico to the Americas and all the way to Europe.⁶ Thus, these historical realities – the Black African slaves, the Chinese contract labourers in South Africa and the Chinese in the Philippines – became interconnected due to global forces that spanned across continents.

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The dynamic interplay of historical experiences shaped the national position of the Chinese-Filipino minority group and influenced the formation of a national identity in the Philippines. In contrast, due to the exigencies of apartheid and state policies, the Chinese minority had to perpetuate a distinct cultural identity isolated from a national identity linked to their future in South Africa.

II: From the Cape of Good Hope to Manila, to Acapulco and Europe

A brief review of history will point to the interconnected and intertwined history that started from the European discovery of the route around the Cape of Good Hope, which connected China to Manila, to Acapulco, to the Latin Americas and to Europe.

Because of sharp religious differences with the predominantly Muslim Middle East through which world commerce had to pass, European explorers sought to challenge their position by finding alternate routes to the East. In 1497, a Portuguese expedition under the command of Vasco de Gama travelled not only around the Cape of Good Hope but also up to the East African coast, then across the Indian Ocean to Goa in India, thus enabling Europeans to circumvent Middle Eastern middlemen and undermine their crucial position in world trade.⁷

Spain immediately followed in the footsteps of the Portuguese to explore an alternate route to the Spice Islands in the Moluccas. King Ferdinand of Spain financed Portuguese explorer Ferdinand

Magellan who sailed East with five ships, one of which succeeded in the first circumnavigation of the world. Instead of reaching the Moluccas, Magellan accidentally found the islands, which he named the Philippines, in honour of King Philip II. Thus, the Spaniards started 333 years of colonial rule in the Philippines, which enticed large numbers of Chinese immigrants to come to the Philippines to serve as the backbone of the Spanish colonial economy.⁸

The earliest Chinese to arrive in the Cape (1660–1795) were the Chinese contracted by the Dutch East Indian Company and British officials to introduce agricultural and fishing skills and help develop their settlements, exploit the rich potentials of fertile soil, fresh abundant water and temperate climate. Since no Chinese were willing to travel that far at the time, the Chinese who were sent to the Cape were the Chinese exiles from Batavia, most of whom were convicts who hailed from Fujian province. Ironically, the first Chinese to arrive in the Cape were not the farmers with knowledge of rice and sugar planting, the fishermen, carpenters, mason and craftsmen that both Van Riebeeck and his successors sought. Instead, they were convicts banished from Batavia, either for debts owed the company or for other offenses and crimes.⁹

In contrast, during the same period in Spanish-controlled Manila (1560–1770), the Chinese served as skilled carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, silversmiths, bakers, shoemakers, painters and sculptors, weavers and performers of all kinds of services – barbers, tailors, cooks, vendors and other jobs that eased everyday lives in the colony.¹⁰ Most importantly, they served as middlemen. The native Filipinos were still in subsistence economy while the Spaniards refused to soil their hands in such lowly occupation as trade. Thus, the Chinese filled the vacuum and many gained wealth by being the distributors of Chinese goods and procurers of native products and raw materials for the western markets.¹¹

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III: Exclusion – African slaves and the Chinese labourers

The sharp rise in the Atlantic Slave Trade in the mid-seventeenth century (1640–1800) was generated by the establishment of sugar-plantation economies by several European nations in the West Indies, based on slave labour.¹² The spread of European colonial settlements in other parts of the Americas in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, further fuelled the demand for human cargoes, sourced mainly from Africa.

In the Philippines, large sugar haciendas were also established by the Spaniards but these were predominantly in the populous Panay region. With enough workhorses among the indigenous natives, there was no need to import slave labour to the Philippines.¹³

When the Europeans and the Americans stopped the inhuman practice of trafficking in slave cargoes, a crucial vacuum for labour was created and they looked towards impoverished and overpopulated China, devastated by famine, drought, floods, epidemics and plagues, and suffering from peasant revolts, political instability and the death throes of the Manchu Dynasty's misrule.¹⁴

The Chinese who made their way to Africa were marginalised both from the White majority and the Black Africans just as the Chinese who came to the Philippines were also marginalised from the dominant Malay native population and the White minority, dominant ruling clique (the Spanish then the American colonisers).¹⁵

48 The pull factors in Africa and the Philippines were equally important at that time. Chinese immigration to Africa remained negligible until after the middle of the nineteenth century when diamonds and gold were discovered. The mineral revolution coincided with the mass international emigration from China in the mid-nineteenth century. Chinese were indentured both by independent farmers and agents as well as by government departments for public works and local farming. The numbers of Chinese in South Africa, both free and indentured, increased markedly, first in diamond-producing region of Kimberley (in the 1870s) and then mainly in the gold mining town of Johannesburg and its vicinity (1880). The Chinese were prohibited by law to mine, but they established various trades and service businesses – import firms, groceries, laundries and market gardens were run by the Chinese.¹⁶

In the Philippines, the Manila-Acapulco trade came to an end in 1815. The Spanish trade monopoly gradually gave way to trade with the British and other foreign firms. In 1850, Manila was opened to world trade. The opening of the Suez Canal and the invention of the steamship eased transportation and communication which greatly facilitated trade with countries outside of Spain. There was an increased need for the Chinese traders to act as middlemen. They were effective '*agentes*' who sailed dangerous Philippine waters to reach remote hinterlands where no Europeans dared to set foot. They procured native products and raw materials for sale to foreign markets and distributed imported goods like quality textile from Manchester, furniture from China, jewellery and ornaments from Europe to households even in remote towns and barrios.¹⁷

South Africa later legislated the restriction and prohibition of Asian immigration due to bitter public opposition towards the arrival of the Chinese.¹⁸ Media reports were especially scathing of the Chinese. The *Graaf Reinet Advertiser* described the Chinese as 'human rubbish and moral plagues' and made dark predictions on the future of the colony if 'Chinese were allowed to gain a foothold'.¹⁹ The Asiatic Registration Act, or 'Black Act', demanded the compulsory registration of all Asians over the age of eight. A new certificate of registration was issued which required taking of fingerprints, which the Chinese protested against since it was considered humiliating and degrading. However, the new certificate was a prerequisite for the granting of trading licenses.²⁰

IV: Transformation and identity formation

The historical experiences of the Chinese in Africa due to the policy of segregation or apartheid and the Chinese in the Philippines due to the divide and rule policy of both the Spanish and American colonisers in the Philippines, had different results as far as identity formation is concerned. Each community dealt with the policy differently and with disparate consequences.

For the Chinese in Africa as a whole, the 1904 Exclusion Act necessitated the formation and strengthening of community organisations and forced the Chinese to look to themselves to maintain and protect the tenuous position they held in the Cape. It is most probable that the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904 was the catalyst for the formation of a new, broadly based organisation to represent the 1380 Chinese in the Cape colony. The Cape Colony Chinese Association represented Chinese associations in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Kimberley and East London. Over the next few years, it appealed directly to London and through the imperial Chinese Consulate General for the relaxation in the implementation of the Chinese Exclusion Act. Although various Chinese organisations and the Consulate General submitted numerous petitions for the repeal of the law, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904 was enforced for 29 years and effectively halted Chinese immigration into the Cape.²¹

The same is true for the Chinese in the Philippines. The Chinese Exclusion Law was applied to the Philippines as an American territory in 1901. It allowed only merchants, sons of merchants and professionals to come to the Philippines and created considerable rancour in the community. Like the Cape Colony, the Chinese Chambers of Commerce was founded in 1904 to fight the Chinese Exclusion Law and lead the Chinese in the Philippines in the worldwide boycott of American goods

movement in protest. The Chinese Chambers of Commerce failed to have the law repealed but won some important cases in court which challenged the interpretation of the law. For example, one contentious issue won in court was whether shopkeepers were considered labourers or merchants. The organised efforts of the Chamber strengthened community cohesion for mutual protection.²²

Professor Karen Harris concluded in her study of the interstitial Chinese-African community:

The relatively insignificant numbers have not exempted them from the discriminatory impact of the evolving structures of the apartheid system. On the contrary, their size, together with their colour and cultural heritage, gave them a precarious, inconsistent and ambiguous political and legal status. They became Africa's twilight people, or peripheral community, often forgotten and sometimes ignored, fluctuating between restrictions associated with 'non-white' classifications and access to white privileges as a result of the changing definitions and rigorous constraints of apartheid society.²³

50 Yoon Jung Park points out that both the international political and economic policies of the South African government, as well as political decisions involving South Africa, Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, influenced identity formation of Chinese South Africans. The domestic policies that have had an impact on identity formation in the Chinese South African community have been discussed above and these include restrictive immigration legislation, institutionalisation and sporadic implementation of apartheid legislation and the adoption of the new Employment Equity Act.

The segregation in Africa is reflected in Spanish-controlled Philippines. The attitude of the Spanish colonial government wavered between acceptance and need of the Chinese, to that of fear, envy and outright persecution. The Chinese immigrants were herded physically into the *Parian* (Chinese ghetto) enclave and travel permits were required for them to get out of their areas of residence. Only Christian Chinese or those married to Filipinos were allowed to live outside the *Parian* with the Filipinos. Particularly difficult were travels to nearby provinces. These policies had far-reaching consequences, isolating the Chinese from mainstream society.²⁴

Again, just like the Philippine experience, the size and makeup of the Chinese South African community and their relationship with broader South African society also plays a large role in their

identity formation. The very fact that the Chinese population in South Africa has always been so small and so easily (racially) identifiable has been tremendously important in both how they were viewed by other South Africans and decisions made as to how they would live within South Africa.²⁵

While in the Philippines, the state policies like the granting of citizenship, the Filipinisation of schools and nationalisation of economic endeavours pushed the integration process fast forward, and led the Chinese Filipinos to identify with the mainstream society, the apartheid policy in South Africa produced a community which is neither Chinese nor South African – something which Professor Harris described as unique yet ambiguous or in the twilight zone:

It was the emphasis on “Chineseness,” together with factors such as the community’s minuscule numbers, low profile, apparent political apathy, particular economic position and certain international considerations, which eventually contributed to its achievement of carving out a unique, yet ambiguous position within a racially divided and stratified South Africa.²⁶

Instead of identifying themselves with the non-European groups of Asians (mainly Indian descent) and Coloured people, they differentiated themselves and set themselves apart with the apartheid government’s acknowledgement and consent. They used their distinctive Chinese culture, together with their small numbers, particular economic position, political restraint and international connections to avoid the full impact of apartheid regulations:

That they did not identify with other oppressed groups in South Africa but rather adhered to their own cultural identity, is in some ways a measure of their success in subverting the aims and intentions of the creators of apartheid policy. Culture was transformed into a politically expedient tool.²⁷

While the post-war South African government imposed the policy of segregation among its racial groups, the opposite happened in the Philippines. The Pacific War cut off the ethnic Chinese from their home villages in China. The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in China halted the communication and return of the Chinese *‘huaqiaos’* (sojourners) to their hometowns. The civil war between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist troops and the establishment of the Chinese People’s Government in 1949 brought down the bamboo curtain and further cut off the links with

China. These historical events had far-reaching consequences in that it brought about the birth of the first generation of native-born Chinese Filipinos who would recognise the Philippines as their only home. The natural sociological process of integration was triggered by the objective reality of the Philippine environment, especially by the fact that because of the interrupted immigration and the application of the Chinese Exclusion Law, the ethnic Chinese only make up 1.2 per cent of the total Philippine population. State policies and/or the lack of a coherent, effective policy in dealing with the ethnic Chinese in the Philippines hastened or delayed the process of integration. Filipinisation policies in the post-war frenzy of 'Filipino-First' nationalism, the citizenship and education decrees promulgated in preparation for the diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China were two of the most significant state policies that had far-reaching effects on integration.²⁸

V. Conclusion

52 South Africa and the Philippines are continents and oceans apart. Yet, from the experiences of the ethnic Chinese communities in both countries, we see not only similarities in many of the experiences but we also discern how events in one country can affect those in another country. Professor Harris did a comparative study of the Chinese labourers in South Africa and those in the United States. The parallelism can extend to the Chinese in the Philippines who came under the American occupation, suffered from the Exclusion Laws in the same way as the Chinese South Africans did and were marginalised from the majority Brown Malay Filipinos, just as the Chinese in South Africa were marginalised from the majority Black Africans.

But the parallelisms in historical experiences have had divergent results, at least up to the turn of the twentieth century. In the predominantly Christian and tolerant pluralistic Philippine society, the Chinese Filipinos did not isolate themselves into a separate existence from the mainstream society. They found greater rewards and success in moving out of their parochial Chinese identities into that of a predominantly Filipino one, albeit recognising their ethnic Chinese heritage. Their lives are those lived with the Filipinos and their futures are those shaped mainly by events in their own country.

In multi-ethnic Africa, the Chinese South Africans have multi-faceted, conflicting and situational identities. As a consequence of the apartheid policies of South Africa, they found it more convenient to emphasise their Chineseness and separateness. But as the country enters the twenty-first century

and Chinese South Africans now outnumber the immigrants, identities have started to transform too. Like the Philippines, the crucial factor of their insignificant numbers in South Africa may yet be the deciding factor for them to choose to become South Africans first and foremost. Whatever identities are chosen and whatever future directions these communities decide to take, they are no longer dictated by their ties to China, Taiwan or their own parochial Chinese-community enclaves. Instead, they are shaped and dictated by the socio-cultural environment where they are full participants and the mainstream societies where they live.

Comparing the situations, experiences and identities of the Chinese Filipinos and the Chinese South Africans can hopefully add to the bibliography of studies of the Chinese diaspora and help us to understand and better appreciate the interplay of our common past with our unique experiences.

Endnotes

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An Activist who Never Runs Out of Ideas

Johan Bergh

I have known Karen Leigh Harris for her entire academic career. As the daughter of a British father and a South African mother, she came to my attention as an undergraduate student at the University of Stellenbosch. Despite being an English speaker in a predominantly Afrikaans-speaking environment, Karen was dedicated to making her mark. By the time she reached the Honours class, I started taking note of her remarkable academic abilities and versatility. Karen continued with her Master's and PhD studies with excellent results. After a stint as a History teacher at the Pretoria High School for Girls (PHSG) where she showed exceptional initiative to make History come alive, she was appointed as a Lecturer at the University of South Africa (UNISA). She joined the University of Pretoria (UP) in 1999 as a Senior Lecturer and Director of the UPA. With her extensive research and teaching interests, Karen continued to demonstrate her versatility in many achievements. In time she was appointed as a full Professor and subsequently in 2018 as Head of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies. Karen also contributed to the academic historical community in her role as President of the Historical Association of South Africa (HASA).

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The topic of Karen's PhD thesis covered the history of the Chinese in South Africa up to 1912. The unconventionality of the topic was questioned by colleagues who found it difficult to understand the justification for such an approach. Karen became a pioneer in the field of overseas Chinese studies, especially on the African continent, and witnessed the proliferation of research across disciplines in this field. She is a founder member of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO) and the African representative on its Board. Not only does Karen continue to collaborate and publish with scholars in the international network, but her work also influenced two South African court cases affirming the rights of South African Chinese.

At the University of Pretoria, Karen's research and teaching interests included a wide range of topics covering South African History, Heritage and Cultural Tourism, for which she received the University of Pretoria's Chancellor's Award in the Teaching and Learning category in 2022. She is well known for her passion for making a difference in the lives of students. She loves engaging in South African History with first-year undergraduate students and has a special way of communicating through

her presentations and lectures. The number of first-year History students has grown exponentially over time and includes students from a variety of other study programmes. Feedback on all her teaching endeavours in undergraduate and Honours programmes is extremely positive. Karen also attracted many Master's and PhD students wishing to work under her supervision. Most of them completed their studies successfully. In their reports, external examiners also expressed their appreciation for the quality of her supervision. Former PhD students include Ria van der Merwe, Alida Green, Bronwyn Strydom, Karina Sevenhuyen and Fred Brownell. Internationally, Karen was key in introducing visiting students from American universities, such as Florida and Delaware, to South African History.

58 In addition to enthusing students for History, Karen was instrumental in the development of Tourism as an academic discipline as part of the degrees in Heritage and Cultural Tourism. Over many years her Department conducted research for the National Department of Tourism with funding received for student bursaries. Another exceptional initiative was the founding of UP Campus Tours (UPCT) in 2003 as part of the practical component of the Honours programme. It is an enterprise run by the students in the form of a simulated tourism agency. UPCT has been sustained for 21 years and offered eight different packages in 2024. The practical approach incorporated in the Heritage and Cultural Tourism programmes fosters the development of students' management and entrepreneurial skills in marketing, administration, coordination, planning and financial management. Graduates are currently employed in tourism positions locally and across the globe. Karen is a regular speaker at tourism conferences and was, amongst others, a keynote speaker at the 18th World Federation of Tourist Guides Association Convention held in Tbilisi, Georgia in 2019.

Under Karen's leadership, the UPA was strengthened and expanded to become the most important and most comprehensive archives among South African universities. She was supported by her line managers, Professors Nic Grové and Caroline Nicholson, former and current UP Registrars respectively, as well as by Professor Susan Adendorff, Director of Facilities Management. With her long-term vision, Karen managed to obtain extensive archival spaces on UP's Hatfield and Groenkloof campuses and to appoint three full-time staff members, all with PhD qualifications. Karen considers archives as a teaching tool and postgraduate Tourism students conduct in-depth research in the UPA to uncover the rich history and heritage of the University.

Karen se toewyding en inisiatief is ongetwyfeld 'n voorbeeld vir kollegas in die akademiese

wêreld. Haar sukses kan toegeskryf word aan haar oneindige entoesiasme en aan die feit dat sy haar aan die voorpunt van verskillende akademiese terreine bevind. Sy is deur die jare sterk ondersteun deur haar gesin – Hennie, haar ingenieursman, en Kaylee, hul aspirant mediese dokter. Ons beste wense vir 'n produktiewe aftrede by die see naby Mosselbaai.



Thanks to Professor Karen Harris from all at ATLAS

Tara Duncan, Leontine Onderwater, Jantien Veldman, Corné Dijkmans and the ATLAS Board

The University of Pretoria has been a member of Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS) for over a decade, one of our longest standing Africa chapter members and they have been foundational in helping to ensure the success of ATLAS activities in Africa. This became even more true when Professor Harris (along with CR Botha) took on the reins of leading ATLAS Africa in 2021. What was immediately evident was Professor Harris' passion and engagement with the ATLAS community and the desire to revitalise ATLAS Africa as a regional chapter for the whole African continent. The ATLAS Secretariat – Leontine Onderwater and Jantien Veldman – thoroughly enjoy working with Professor Harris because of her cheery dedication to ATLAS and her ability to think a little 'outside the box' when considering events and activities for the region. Nowhere was this clearer than Professor Harris' suggestion of hosting the first (online) event on Valentine's Day (February 14th) and titling the session 'Falling back in love with tourism – An African affair'. The whimsical play on words of the webinar title worked beyond everyone's expectations. Whilst the title might have been light-hearted, it reflected a serious challenge for tourism in Africa in 2022 – how to successfully recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Professor Harris put CR Botha and a team of students to work inviting researchers, teachers and industry professionals from across the continent to contribute to the webinar and what started out as a two- or three-hour webinar turned into a full day of interesting and thought-provoking papers focusing on the state of Tourism in Africa in 2022 and considering where Tourism might go next.

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However, that was far from the end. In April 2024, Professor Harris, with the help of CR Botha and colleagues, hosted an online, one-day ATLAS Africa conference. Celebrating the 30th anniversary since the end of apartheid, the conference focused on democracy in Africa and attracted 77 abstracts from thirteen countries. The conference illustrated the breadth of research being undertaken in and about African Tourism and highlighted there is still much more to do. These two events also exemplify Professor Harris' commitment to advocating for the future of African Tourism through the sharing of knowledge and building of networks. The evidence of this includes the special issue of the *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure* that Professor Harris edited in 2022.¹

What stands out as another of Professor Harris' greatest achievements – from the ATLAS perspective – are the yearly student webinars about the award-winning UP Campus Tours (UPCT). Professor Harris' engagement, support and mentorship of her students is an example to senior academics globally. ATLAS has always looked for ways to support students and was delighted when Professor Harris suggested hosting the first webinar in 2021. What ATLAS thought might be a one-off online seminar has turned into a regular fixture on the ATLAS calendar and without a doubt, the ATLAS Secretariat, Chair and Board look forward to the reporting of the student projects about an aspect of the UPCT each year. The professionalism of the students, the depth of their research and the innovative ways they approach their topics are a credit to Professor Harris' dedication to the student learning experience. We hope that Professor Harris will pass on the mantle of her course and the subsequent ATLAS webinar to equally dedicated colleagues. We know that Professor Harris' legacy will continue through the UPCT and the avid engagement of her students (past, present and future).

62 A last light-hearted story to sum up with wonderful relationship between ATLAS and Professor Smith – we mean Harris! At the recent ATLAS Annual Conference (2024), a presentation mix-up meant Professor Harris became Professor Smith for a brief moment. Abject apologies were laughingly brushed aside, and Professor Harris took to the stage and wittily mentioned an esteemed guest speaker at ATLAS Africa events – Professor Melanie Harris – oops! No, it was Professor Melanie Smith. It was a moment of laughter for the conference attendees yet what it clearly showed was Professor Harris' humility, humour and wit.

And finally, we know how proud Professor Harris is of CR Botha and all the other students she has worked with over the years. She is an inspirational mentor to the next generation of scholars in Africa and beyond. We know her positive influence will echo long into the future, and we look forward to working with CR Botha and his peers to build on all of Professor Harris' initiatives. We hope that Professor Harris enjoys her very well-deserved retirement but at the same time, we are sure that she is far from finished in her work in tourism. We cannot wait to see what she does next and are eager to be a small part in her future journeys.

Congratulations on all of the achievements in your career Karen. Thank you for all your lovely African gifts (which are highly appreciated) and thank you for being an integral part of the ATLAS family.

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Looking Back: An Eclectic Scholar¹

Peter S. Li

The founding of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO) in 1992 in San Francisco marked the beginning of a new era in the study of Chinese overseas. The San Francisco conference may be seen as the culmination after several regional conferences on overseas Chinese.² However, it was the principal organisers of the 1992 conference, Professor Wang Ling-Chi of the University of California Berkeley and Professor Wang Gungwu, Vice Chancellor of University of Hong Kong, who elevated overseas Chinese studies to an organisational level with a global scope. The 1992 conference held at Miyako Hotel, San Francisco, adopted a bold theme to highlight the state of affairs regarding overseas Chinese studies at the time. Titled *Luo Di Sheng Gen*, literally translated as reaching the ground to take root, the conference theme was a deliberate attempt to break away from the conventional thinking using the metaphor *Luo Ye Gui Gen*, or falling leaves returning to their roots, to depict the aspirations of overseas Chinese scattered around the globe. The difference is more than just semantic.

When applied to overseas Chinese, the image of *Luo Ye Gui Gen* stresses the influences of China as homeland and the affinity of Chinese migrants to their ancestral roots. In contrast, the view of *Luo Ye Gui Gen* sees the struggle and survival of the Chinese immigrant community as integral to the development of their adopted country, often marred with a history of mistreating the Chinese as a racialised and marginalised minority.

The view of Chinese overseas communities as extensions of China has been widely adopted in studies of early settlements of Chinese in Southeast Asia.³ Freedman's classic studies of Chinese family and lineage in Southeast Asia and China clearly suggest the homeland influence in kinship organisation in the formation of Chinese overseas communities in Southeast Asia.⁴ The theme to study Chinese overseas communities as transplantations of culture and social organisation from China, albeit in modified forms, is also evident in studies of Chinese communities in many Southeast Asian countries, such as Indonesia,⁵ Cambodia,⁶ the Philippines⁷ and Thailand.⁸ Indeed, a dominant approach in the studies of Chinese overseas is to begin with China as the origin and interpret Chinese overseas communities in terms of the degree to which they adhere to the politics,

culture, kinship or clanship organisation of China.⁹ Using China as a frame of reference to study Chinese overseas also predominates the way historians of China periodise the history of Chinese overseas. A conventional approach is to construct such a history in the context of the social and economic development of China or China's trading relations with other countries.¹⁰

Historically too, China has maintained a claim of jurisdiction over Chinese all over the world. The term '*huaqiao*', or Chinese sojourners, became popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in China.¹¹ By the early twentieth century, the term *huaqiao* had become an all-encompassing term for all Chinese overseas.¹² Despite its popularity, the literal meaning of Chinese sojourning overseas implies a presumptuous jurisdiction of China over all ethnic Chinese outside of China based on a loose interpretation of descent.

It would be superficial to interpret the sojourning mentality of early Chinese migrants as their loyal adherence to ancestral roots in China. Wang¹³ has convincingly argued that there were many forms of sojourning among Chinese overseas prior to the twentieth century. In Southeast Asia, the Chinese migrants adopted innovative ways to accommodate to the local life, including by intermarrying local women or maintaining a male bachelor society bounded by religious and other social organisations. However, in Australasia and North America, the Chinese were forced to maintain a marginal lifestyle as a result of racial discrimination and social exclusion. In other words, it would be too simplistic to attribute homeland influence as a cause of sojourning since local conditions played a key role in determining the style of sojourning life.

The contending view that Chinese immigrants should be understood in their own right in the context of the settled society has wide support among those who break away from the historiographical tradition of China, and among those who study the Chinese as a racialised and marginalised group, notably in North America. According to this view, the materials and social conditions of the adopted country, the mode of racial incorporation of the Chinese in the local economy and the exigencies of survival in a foreign land compel Chinese immigrants to adapt and to accommodate to the local conditions, and to improvise survival strategies guided by pragmatism rather than primordialism. This view provides the basis to understand, for example, how the Chinese emerged as a racialised minority in North America, and how they survived as immigrants in a foreign land seeking to improve their livelihood, while subjected to a labour process that exploited them and to racial ideologies that marginalised them.¹⁴ In other words, the key to explaining the survival and

development of Chinese overseas communities lies in the context of the local society and its rules of racial accommodation, rather than in a remote homeland or a traditional culture from which they originated.

It was in the context of conceptual debates regarding how best to understand Chinese overseas that the 1992 conference in San Francisco was significant. Conceptually, it affirmed the claim that the Chinese overseas communities should be understood in their own merits and not as an extension of China. Organisationally, the 1992 conference brought scholars in Chinese overseas studies from different countries together and launched a permanent academic organisation dedicated to the study of Chinese overseas (ISSCO). Among the founding members were Karen Harris, whom I met in person for the first time at Miyako Hotel, San Francisco, in 1992. That was the beginning of a friendship and colleagueship that lasted for as long as the history of ISSCO, or thirty-two years to this date.

Karen Harris has made substantial contributions to the founding and development of ISSCO. Her unparalleled expertise regarding Chinese in South Africa has added a critical component to research on Chinese overseas around the globe. In the development of ISSCO, her work has been a major force in bridging a lacuna in the understanding of Chinese in Africa.

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As a historian, Harris holds the view that a researcher needs to look back in history before going forward to examine the present.¹⁵ As an example, her meticulous examination of the paper trail left behind by the 1904 Chinese Exclusion Act passed by the Cape parliament demonstrates how the small Chinese community was ‘registered, identified, monitored and hounded both on paper and on the ground’, and how the effects of the discriminatory law were felt far beyond even decades later.¹⁶

As a social scientist who studied cultural and minority groups, the writings of Harris were unequivocal on how Chinese in South Africa should be understood – not as a homogeneous group or a cultural myth from a distant ancestral country or an imagined community, but as a diverse living community in South African society being shaped by its history, its apartheid and post-apartheid legislation, as well as the deep-seated institutionalised view of racialised minorities.¹⁷ Harris has always been critical of simplistic views of Chinese in South Africa, especially when such views were based on racialised popular beliefs, detached from history and from social reality. In her own words, ‘The

Chinese in South Africa continue to be racialised as a homogenous group, buttressed by a media that perpetuates a sense of othering as part of a transnational identification of a so-called imagined community'.¹⁸

As a legal expert on discriminatory laws in South Africa, Harris is scrupulous in her research of legal documents and paper trails targeted at the Chinese, from segregationist policies of the mid-nineteenth century to the unequal legal status in the post-apartheid era.¹⁹ Her careful documentation and analysis show that the Chinese were able 'to use their cultural identity to challenge and transcend the apartheid divide', even though they were being relegated to an ambivalent position of being neither White nor Black.²⁰ The work of Harris elucidates the understanding of Chinese in South Africa as a racial minority that managed to survive in different historical eras of racial discrimination and institutional segregation, and to innovatively use their cultural identity to steer through the hazardous path as a marginalised group. It is in this sense that the Chinese in South Africa must be seen as a historical component and a living part of South African society, whose identity has been shaped by exigencies of social and institutional conditions as well as waves of different Chinese immigration, and not as a robotic formation transplanting a remote culture from a mythical ancestral land.

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Harris is an eclectic scholar whose work spans over a wide spectrum – Chinese minority in South Africa, racial inequality under apartheid and post-apartheid, heritage studies and cultural tourism. Her work is always historically anchored, meticulously researched, convincingly argued and carefully documented. Looking back, it is evident that Harris has made major theoretical and empirical contributions to the understanding in many areas of academic studies, but it is in area of study of Chinese in South Africa that has earned her a permanent seat and a deep respect in the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas which she co-founded in 1992.

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A Tribute to Karen Harris, her Career and her Legacy

Darryl Accone

It's given to too few to be pathfinders in their fields and to even fewer to inspire generations. Such is the career and the legacy that Karen Harris leaves.

She steps away from an unrelenting annual whirligig of Overseas Chinese Studies and introducing ever-larger numbers of first-year History and Heritage students to those disciplines. Although her peers in global Chinese studies will not lose Harris' presence and wisdom, future students at the University of Pretoria will. They can have no idea what that means but, albeit from afar, I have a good sense of what they will be missing.

Over the years, I have lost count of the number of conversations, emails and texts with Karen that have featured the latest first-year intake at Tuks. My sense of astonishment that the Head of Department would take it upon herself to teach the class with the largest numbers and, even more forbiddingly, take on the heaviest burden of marking, remains undimmed.

At the end of exams, with the marking monster lurking, Karen's energy and will continued on their indomitable way. Running into her at such times – more often virtually – elicited her acknowledgement of the weight of scripts, but never once a complaint. True teachers are absorbed always in the thoughts and efforts of their charges, nurturing and willing them on, harbouring hopes that here lies the future of a mutually loved vocation.

There are, however, fewer and fewer true teachers around. Infused with Milton Friedman, Margaret Thatcher laid siege to higher education in the United Kingdom, instrumentalising it into a factory producing workers for the economy. It took South Africa some decades to catch up, but the bean counters and 'professional' administrators – both types who know the cost of everything but the value of nothing – soon came to infest our universities.

Knowledge, wisdom and ethics were thrust aside to embrace expedience, ignorance and lax ethics at best. Places of enlightenment turned into sites of extraction – a mining of money from students

and of exploitative labour from academic staff. The administrators chuckled over their calculators and spread sheets and did nothing to advance the growth of those young people who had come to be educated, not processed into a vacuum-packed and compliant worker in the capitalist behemoth.

Hundreds and thousands of true teachers were cast aside, forced out, left voluntarily or retired early. Some made it to the appointed retirement age and for staying the course for so long, they deserve even greater thanks and praise. To adapt Winston Churchill's encomium to 'The Few', the Royal Air Force pilots who saved Britain from Nazi invasion in 1940: 'Never have so many students owed so much to so few teachers.'

Foremost in the ranks of those few true teachers is Karen Harris. It's a staple of the teaching profession, perhaps sentimentally held, to believe that if only one student from among the thousands you have taught truly 'gets it', the teacher has had his or her reward. In Karen's case, I would wager the number of enlarged lives, of young people with a whole new comprehension and appreciation of the world – and not only of history and heritage – runs into the thousands.

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The teaching part of her career brings to mind Michel de Montaigne's memorable conclusion to his essay 'On educating children'. He writes:

there is nothing like tempting the boy to want to study and to love it: otherwise you simply produce donkeys laden with books. They are flogged into retaining a pannierful of learning; but if it is to do any good, Learning must not only lodge with us: we must marry her.¹

The unflagging enthusiasm, robust vigour and wells of energy that Harris brought to teaching undergraduates and supervising and mentoring postgraduate students had equal expression in the field of Chinese studies. I can attest to the huge significance of her pioneering work. Growing up Eurasian, though largely Chinese, in Pretoria through the 1960s and much of the 1970s, I remember being delighted by the publication of Peter Richardson's *Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal* (1982).² At last, here was an academic treating a formative factor in the history and labour history of South Africa with care and due seriousness.

If there are no images of your people in popular media or they do not appear as players in the sweep of history, did they exist – and do you? Such were the typical youthful insecurities and ponderings in which a younger me indulged. Imagine when the effect of the Richardson book was amplified years later by *Colour, confusion and concessions: The history of the Chinese in South Africa* by Melanie Yap and Dianne Leong Man (1996).³

Less than two years after that came *A history of the Chinese in South Africa to 1912*,⁴ Karen Harris' Doctor of Literature and Philosophy thesis. Her approach was to link aspects of her PhD submission to the then-infant field of Chinese overseas studies that was being conceptualised by the eminent scholar Wang Gungwu. It was transformative to see the story of Chinese in South Africa as part of a far larger picture.

This global awareness, a nod to the particular within the universal and the universal within the particular experiences of Chinese émigrés, propelled the growth of the new micro-discipline as Chinese histories in North America, Asia outside mainland China, Australia and Africa came into focus and under research spotlights. So it was that Karen and I came to work together on a chapter in *At home in the Chinese diaspora: Memories, identities and belongings*, edited by Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng and Andrew P. Davidson (2008).⁵

It was an act of scholarly grace for Karen to invite me to co-author a piece. She was an established and respected authority in the field, a protégé of Wang and a beloved colleague of 'KE', Khun Eng, one of the co-editors. (Disclosure: Khun Eng treated me to a wonderful lunch in the University of Hong Kong's staff dining room in December 2004, a special few hours with a great sociologist.) For my part, I had published a book about the experiences of my maternal and paternal families, *All under heaven: The story of a Chinese family in South Africa* (2004),⁶ but could make no claims to serious scholarship and research in the field of Chinese studies, either in South Africa or abroad.

For our chapter, 'A century of not belonging – the Chinese in South Africa',⁷ Karen rather brilliantly interwove history and research with extracts from *All under heaven* and nuggets from our conversations and correspondence. It is still the most seamless and pleasant writing collaboration I've known.

Our working together also embodied something I had read and absorbed years before, some words by the Daoist sage Chuang Tzu: 'Everything in the world knows how to seek for knowledge that they do not have, but do not know how to find what they already know.' Karen knew, and knows, how to find the essential.

And so it is farewell to a true teacher and an indefatigable researcher and scholar. I give Karen thanks on behalf of all those she has taught and inspired and made a little more thoughtful and wiser. I thank her for the enormous contribution she has made to finding and telling the stories and history of Chinese in South Africa. I am very grateful to her for the difference she has made in my life, being unstintingly supportive as, for example, when I was working on "Ghost people": Localising the Chinese self in an African context' for the *Asian Studies Review*.⁸

For her days ahead, filled with a little more ease but, I am sure, holding much more researching, thinking and writing, I offer, once more, Chuang Tzu.

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Settle into your own views,
argue with others,
at times condemn those who are upright,
then those who are bent.
You should be like a great marsh land
with space for a hundred kinds of trees.
Or be like a great mountain
where the trees and grasses rest on the same ground.
That is what is meant by Talk of the Villages.⁹

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Karen Leigh Harris: An Appreciation

Alois Mlambo

I write in tribute to a respected and valued colleague and friend, Karen Leigh Harris, who will be retiring at the end of this year (2024) after an illustrious and highly productive career in academia. I worked with Professor Harris from 2004 to 2017 when I taught in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies of the University of Pretoria and served as Head of the Department in the last four years before retirement. She took over the headship of the department thereafter. I remain affiliated to the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies to date and I have continued to interact with her and the wonderful team that she leads. In the twenty years I have known and worked closely with her, I have always respected and admired her as a scholar and administrator, cherished her as a colleague and have always been highly impressed by her caring humanity and generosity of spirit. She has proved to be one of the most pleasant and collegial individuals it has been my pleasure to work with in my over four decades of life in the academy. She took me under her wing when I first arrived and took up my appointment in a country that was then strange to me and, together with her colleagues in the Department, helped me settle in and find my bearings in those bewildering first few months. She grew to be a close friend over the years, always there to lend a hand and give invaluable and timely advice when needed. I soon discovered that, in addition to these many admirable qualities, she was also a dedicated and accomplished mentor and teacher, an outstanding leader, an eminent citizen of the academy and a veritable pillar of the institution who went beyond the call of duty to ensure the smooth running of the University.

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Professor Harris is one of the few academics I have known in my career who thoroughly enjoys and is dedicated to teaching students and is unreservedly committed to their wellbeing and success. I had firsthand experience of this when I had the pleasure to co-teach a rather large first-year course with her for several years and was always impressed by her passion for imparting knowledge to the students as well as by her unbounded energy in class presentations. Students loved her classes because she made them great fun and pleasurable. Sitting in her classes was an inspiring experience even for a seasoned lecturer like myself. Year after year, I watched with ever-growing admiration as she captivated those young students and stimulated their interest in History

in ways very few other people could have been able to do. Many first-years, who came into the University unsure of what they wanted to do academically, ended up taking up History due to the inspiration that she provided in those students' first encounter with the subject at university level. Many of them went beyond the first degree to Honours and Master's programmes and some on to PhD. At each of these stages, Professor Harris was always there guiding, advising, and mentoring them, always ready to lend an ear and to give helpful advice where necessary; ever dedicated to the students' welfare and success. Not surprisingly, throughout the years I have known her, she consistently supervised the largest numbers of postgraduate students in the Department each year.

78 Her energy applied to whatever she is doing is something to marvel at. I always used to joke with colleagues that she was the only person that I knew who could carry out five different tasks at the same time and do them all outstandingly well! At the time when UP used to give History classes in both Afrikaans and English, because she is proficient in both languages, Professor Harris would teach multiple History classes on both the Hatfield Main and the Groenkloof Education Campuses every week, repeating English and Afrikaans lectures several times a week. She also did the same for the Heritage and Cultural Tourism degree programme offered by the same department on both campuses. Yet, she still found the time and energy to run the UP Campus Tourism business venture, a key component of the Heritage and Cultural Tourism Honours degree, in which students offer tours of the University of Pretoria's main campus as a business venture in order to learn invaluable business skills that stand many of them in good stead after graduation. Indeed, many graduates from the programme have gone on to secure prestigious positions in the local/international tourism industry, while others have successfully established their own tourist guiding companies. No wonder most students who passed through her hands have an abiding respect and love for the care she showed them during their time at the University. In addition to all this, she did not stint her other postgraduate students of their deserved attention and also gave full attention to the many administrative and committee duties she was responsible for. She also distinguished herself in her capacity as the Director of University of Pretoria Archives! Not many of us could multi-task to this level and manage to remain friendly and cheerful all the time like her.

As a scholar, Professor Harris is the world's expert on the history of the Chinese in South Africa, a field in which she has amassed such knowledge and expertise that scholars across the world defer to her on the subject and she is sought after internationally for that reason. She is a well-published and greatly influential scholar whose works appear in leading academic journals in the field. She has

also cultivated over the years, considerable expertise in the field of Heritage and Cultural Tourism and, likewise, she is one of the world's experts to go to for academic insights on the subject. Apart from her prodigious and highly impressive academic output in the form of publications, she has been invited to give keynote addresses at numerous local, regional and international conferences – a testimony to the great respect with which she is held by her peers across the globe. Her academic citizenship encompasses numerous international links with individuals and institutions as well as the leadership of academic associations, including the prestigious Historical Association of Southern Africa (HASA), which she led very successfully for many years. If you combine her own publication outputs, the many dissertations and theses that she has supervised over the years and her leadership of HASA and the many outputs from the organisation's numerous conferences and the publications of *Historia*, its journal, over the years, you have a phenomenally impressive level of contribution to academia that very few people can claim or achieve in one lifetime.

In addition, Karen Harris is an excellent administrator. She is retiring after an illustrious administrative career, as the Director of the University of Pretoria Archives, as noted, and as long-time head of the Faculty of Humanities Ethics committee. In addition, she has served on numerous University committees, as well as leading HASA and serving as Head of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies of the University of Pretoria for several years. Under her headship, the Department made major strides and consolidated its place as one of the leading history departments in the country, with a solid teaching portfolio and impressive research outputs by its staff and students.

To cap it all, Professor Harris is a loving, caring and supportive human being who will give her best to help others and who goes beyond the proverbial mile to ensure the welfare of her fellows. She has been a big blessing to my own life in the time I have known her and I know many others will testify to the same with regard to their own lives. I have always experienced her as a person who is all the above in addition to her always honest, cheerful, positive and constructive personality. While acknowledging that a time must come when each of us has to retire, it's a pity that the University of Pretoria is losing such a gem when she is, arguably, at the peak of intellectual productivity and is still central to the success and well-being of the University in particular and the academy in general. I wish her a happy and well-deserved retirement.



Making a Difference in the Lives of her Students – Professor Karen Leigh Harris

Dawid J. Mouton

Professor Karen Leigh Harris excels in multiple arenas: as a foremost historian of the Chinese in South Africa, a pioneer of the Heritage and Cultural Tourism degree at UP, Head of the Department (HoD) of Historical and Heritage Studies (DHHS), Director of the UP Archives (UPA), and a near inexhaustible font of energy, ideas and enthusiasm. It is, however, in the realm of teaching where I first met her, and where I believe she makes, and will continue to make, the greatest impact. I would thus like to explore and celebrate her contributions in the field of teaching, some of which I was privileged to witness as one of her students, a tutor, as a colleague and becoming good friends in the process.

It is worth noting a few important milestones which contributed to Karen's development as an educator. I think it should first be mentioned that she matriculated as Head Girl of Benoni High School in 1976. This suggests an early interest and enthusiasm in an educational environment. Karen completed a BA in English and History at the University of Stellenbosch in 1979, after which she completed a Higher Education Diploma the following year. A few years later, from 1984 to 1986, Karen was appointed as a History teacher at the Pretoria High School for Girls (PHSG), where her talent for teaching manifested itself.

When listening to Karen's stories of her days at PHSG, I get the strong impression that her methodology and philosophy of teaching was developed during this important foundational period. Karen often locked horns with the Subject Head for History due to her rather 'controversial' teaching methods. However, her methods were effective, because it engaged the learners' imagination and interest. Moreover, she truly cared about the learners and enjoyed teaching them. She mentioned numerous examples, but a few stood out to me. On one occasion, just before beginning a class on the causes of the First World War, Karen walked in with a bag full of cheap plates, which she unceremoniously, and to the delighted shock of the class, smashed on the ground. This heralded the outbreak of the war, and she instantly had the learners' full attention.

When teaching the Russian Revolution, she had the class make posters and flags to represent Bolshevism and the Soviet Union. The Subject Head, though, was appalled about the symbols of communism sprouting up in the windows of the History class. This was, after all, still apartheid and the Cold War, and there were some concerns about what the parents, some of whom worked for the anti-communist government, would think about these signs 'celebrating' the 'red menace'. Karen stuck to her guns, though, and the flags and posters stayed put.

To properly conclude this foray in Karen's days of high school teaching, I must mention the 'funeral' she organised for Napoleon Bonaparte while teaching the French Revolution. She dressed up one of the learners with the teacher's gown, and the class assembled outside on the grounds to put Napoleon to rest. Of course, the ever-watchful Subject Head came out, ready to scold both teacher and learners for gallivanting outside. However, according to Karen, just as the Subject Head began to scold them, the learner dressed in the gown stopped this teacher by calmly and seriously informing her that she must keep quiet now, because they are in the middle of a funeral for Napoleon!

82 However, Karen's path led her to other pastures. She took up a lecturing position at the University of South Africa (UNISA) from 1987 to 1998. While there, she completed her PhD in History in 1998 and also learned the invaluable skill of marking huge numbers of assignments and exams, with appropriate feedback, at great speed. Moreover, she had to develop teaching material suitable for distance education, which demands a clear and thorough style of writing. She contributed significantly to co-authoring the first-year study guide for South African history, and much of the content she helped write is used to this day. When I was at UNISA from 2014 to the end of 2015, Mr Nick Southey, who worked closely with Karen previously, insisted on keeping her name on the study guide, so great was her continued influence long after she had left. While at UNISA, she also fought hard to improve the level of educational instruction provided to students, particularly with regard to writing History essays. She always maintained that it is no use assessing students according to criteria which the students were not even aware of. Transparency, clarity and fairness to students were lessons which Karen took with her to UP.

It is at UP where I believe Karen built an impressive legacy of tuition excellence, and where I first encountered her as a first-year student in 2003. She was appointed as a senior lecturer in 1999, became a Professor in 2004, and the HoD in 2017. In 1999 she designed GES 154 – 'Conflict and cooperation: The making of South African society'. It has transformed since then into GES 120 –

‘African and South African history’, which she still teaches despite all her other duties as HoD. This fact alone attests to her passion for teaching and making a difference in the lives of students.

As a quick aside, she is fond of reminding others that I landed her in trouble when I was but a first-year student in 2003. She exclaims, to my embarrassment (my face turns beet-red) but also to my secret delight, that she was scolded by her colleagues for daring to give me 100% for the then GES 154 test. They argued that there is always room for improvement and that full marks should never be awarded. Karen countered that what is the point of 100% existing if not to award it when all requirements set by the assessment had been met? The debate rages to this day. The point, though, is that this story illustrates some aspects to Karen’s approach to teaching, emphasising fairness, generosity, recognition of achievements and audacity!

She played an essential part in establishing Heritage and Cultural Tourism at UP in 1999: EFK 152 – ‘South African leisure resorts and nature reserves in heritage and cultural tourism perspective’; EFK 354 – ‘South African cultural activities: Heritage and cultural tourism in practice’; and EFK 752 – ‘Trends in heritage and cultural tourism’.¹ Sadly, I was not involved in these modules and have little knowledge about them, but I understand that the work Karen did in this field was of immense value to the development and advancement of the Heritage and Cultural Tourism degree at UP – undergraduate and postgraduate.

As at PGHS, Karen was innovative in her teaching approach at UP. I will specifically focus on the first-year History she presented. One notable characteristic of what is now GES 120, to the despair of students and the dumbfounded horror of colleagues, is a series of weekly continuous assessments. Despite the significant rise in student numbers since 1999, now close to 1 200 in 2024, these assessments remain a core component of the module, albeit changed to some degree since the early years. It involves significant effort on the part of Karen and her assistants, but these assessments have proved their worth time and again as they encourage students to engage with the reading and keep up with the content. Karen insists on a quick turnaround: the students must receive feedback on their previous assessment before the next one is submitted. Every year several students confess that although they were initially horrified by the amount of work, these continuous assessments ultimately pulled them through.

Another characteristic of GES120 present since the beginning is the Biography Assignment. Students write a 1 500 to 1 800-word biography essay on an African or South African historical figure. The intent is to expose students to their first significant piece of written research in History, disguised in an interesting package. Many students who carry on with History to postgraduate level remember this assignment with nostalgic fondness. I remember my biography was on Jan Smuts. Karen also organised a yearly prize for the best biography essay, sponsored by Historical Publications Southern Africa, which is one of many methods to encourage the best students to continue with History.

I would be remiss not to comment on Karen's classroom presence. In my opinion, Karen was, and still is, one of the best lecturers DHHS has. She is akin to a whirlwind in the classroom, flitting from corner to corner with an infectious enthusiasm and energy. It is almost impossible not to get caught up in her wake. She has a razor-sharp wit and quick mind which keeps one engaged and interjects the discussion with seemingly off-topic musings before jerking the lecture back to the main point. She is anything but boring and even to this day I look forward to her lectures and seminars. It is a rare skill to both entertain and educate during a lecture.

84 She also has a deft educational touch outside the classroom. Over the years she has supervised numerous Master's and PhD candidates. In 2023 alone she guided many Master's and three PhD students to success. What strikes me the most about her postgraduate students is their fierce loyalty and devotion to Karen as supervisor. Her office wall is covered with photos of her postgraduates over the years, and her bookcase is filled with dissertations and theses. In June this year I chanced upon one of her old Master's students at the *Medieval Fayre* near Krugersdorp. During our conversation, she declared her intent to do a PhD, but only if Karen is her supervisor. She refused to even consider any other person or institution. More recently I conversed with one of Karen's 2023 crop of PhD graduates. I asked what made Karen such an effective supervisor. She replied that Karen truly believed in her and her topic, inspiring her and bolstering her self-confidence in the process. Her second comment was somewhat unexpected, even though I knew Karen did this, but I did not fully appreciate its impact: Karen has a phenomenal response time on chapters and theses drafts. Indeed, it is rare to see Karen without a thick stack of printed chapters scribbled over in red ink! (Karen hates MS Word and track changes). She often works through the night to get a chapter back to one of her students at near supernatural speed.

To conclude, Karen is an educator at heart and truly cares about her students. This is what, I believe, ultimately makes her so extraordinarily effective. She was recognised for her excellence in teaching during UP's 22nd Annual Academic Achievers' Awards in 2022, where she received the Chancellor's Award in the Teaching and Learning category. I think it is appropriate to end this section with a direct quote from Karen after receiving this award:

For more than three decades teaching has been my passion. My life has been immensely enriched by the undergraduate students I have taught and the postgraduate students I have supervised.²

Endnotes

- 1 Renamed and reorganised, in order presented above, to EFK 110 – 'Introduction to Tourism'; EFK 310 – 'The South African Tourism Product'; EFK 320 – 'Current Discourses in Tourism (Tourism Entrepreneurship)'; EFK 752 – 'Heritage and Cultural Tourism in Practice'.
 - 2 Mathibela, X. 2022. Top scholars honoured at the University of Pretoria's annual Academic Achievers' Awards, *University of Pretoria*, 4 November. [Online] Available at: https://www.up.ac.za/historical-heritage-studies/news/post_3112845-top-scholars-honoured-at-the-university-of-pretorias-annual-academic-achievers-awards (Accessed on 8 November 2024).
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Not your Archetypal Archivist: Reflections on a Personal Journey with Karen Harris

Bronwyn Strydom

My experience of Karen has been as a supervisor and as a line manager. My first encounter with her in 1999, when she started at UP, left a deep impression on me. I was in the final year of my part-time History Honours and had recently been appointed as a History tutor for the year. I did not have very high expectations as I arrived on the first day of the job, so I was extremely surprised to find an office already set up with two desks for my fellow tutor and myself and a potted plant for each of us with a little note welcoming us to the job. This attention to detail and the thoughtful gesture arranged for this first meeting is an aspect of Karen's approach to her friends and colleagues that I would come to know well over the next nearly three decades of my association with her. It also left a strong impression on me of how meaningful these small gestures can be in terms of providing motivation and a positive outlook for colleagues and students alike.

My stay as a tutor was for only six months but during this time Karen approached me, knowing that I had recently completed a year of study in France, with a find in the UNISA Archives which would later become the base for my Honours Research Report and my Master's dissertation. This was another instance of Karen's attention to detail and also untiring willingness to go the extra mile. It impressed me, as I had never actually been her student in any classroom setting, that she had drawn a connection between my pursuit of History and my studies in French to alert me to a record in the archives which could spark my interest. The French novel written by Swiss missionary Henri-Alexandre Junod also appealed to my literary curiosity. After the results were made available for the Honours Research Report, I also have an outstanding memory of Karen calling me at home to congratulate me on the completion of my first postgraduate qualification.

My next relationship with Karen was as a supervisor for my Master's dissertation in History. I was overseas at the time and still contemplating my future plans when Karen contacted me encouraging me to continue with my studies in History. This return to South Africa and UP also saw me starting to work as a Student Assistant in the UP Archives. Again, Karen went both above and beyond by pointing me in the direction of a bursary for my studies and giving me the opportunity to work in the

Archives. Alongside my colleagues in the Archives, I was introduced to the workings of an archive as Karen delegated responsibility for research projects and collections. Both of these expanded my understandings of the workings of an archive and gave me an introduction into the history of UP which would later become for me a dedicated field of research.

Prior to this working experience in the Archives, I had spent a holiday after one of my Honours' years in 1998, manning the office of the UP Archives while the staff member there was on leave. My experience had been of a quiet place filled with boxes and endless cataloguing. At the time I was grateful that the telephone did not ring very often and that very little seemed to be happening. My next working experience of the Archives under Karen, starting in 2002, was completely different. While we still continued with endless sorting and cataloguing, Karen brought an energy to the Archives and an outward-facing attitude. Those first years felt like a series of projects and exhibitions and initiatives – we made a digital presentation and learned music editing skills in order to work UP history into a slideshow timeline; we set up exhibitions, permanent and temporary; we digested information, worked through photographs and cut and pasted for all manner of events and occasions; we held events in the piazza and investigated innovative ways to meet alumni and staff with endeavours to ensure the preservation of UP's history and the expansion of the Archives' record. The stereotypical archivist, quietly nursing historical records in a solitary space, did not make her appearance at all.

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A few years later I was appointed in a full-time position in the Archives. A highlight of this time was the move of the Archives reading room to the Old Arts building and the mounting of various exhibitions and material in the Archives' spaces for the 2008 centenary of the University. Although we sometimes privately shook our heads at Karen's ideas, her innovative approach to exhibitions and to promoting the mission of the Archives kept our lives interesting and transformed the Archives into a more centrally placed and critical entity at the University. This was also an era in which we ran a regular photographic competition and workshops aimed at UP students and staff, with a goal of generating visual material related to the University, its campuses and activities. Karen's initiatives gave the Archives a more prominent place at the University, which greatly assisted in creating awareness regarding the role of the Archives in preserving the University's historical record. A notable result of this visibility was the transfer of over a century of the University's personnel records to the Archives – a task which involved ladders, dust, multiple truck loads and hours spent sorting – resulting in the preservation of a critical aspect of UP's past. In addition, her encouragement of staff to participate in

workshops, conferences and discipline-related societies, gave the Archives more visibility in wider domains. There was a steady increase in the number of outside institutions and other universities who contacted the Archives for consultation regarding its practices and approach.

It was during this period that I began my PhD studies, investigating the early history of UP. I had a strong realisation again, as I had had with my Master's dissertation, of the absolutely key role that a supervisor plays in postgraduate studies. While this period was one of some major ups and downs for me on a personal level, Karen remained steadfastly enthusiastic and engaged in my studies. For part of the time, I was living in Johannesburg and Karen would suggest Sunday evening meetings at a Pretoria coffeeshop to discuss the progress of my thesis. Her unfailingly positive attitude went a long way to keeping the momentum going on, what turned out to be, quite an extended process.

In 2017 I returned to UP in a number of capacities, one of which was initiated by Karen. This also saw my return in a part-time capacity to the UPA. Under Karen's leadership this eventually extended into a full-time appointment in a different section of the Archives and expanded scope for involvement in research related to the history of universities in South Africa. In this time, I have been responsible for two book publications based on her initiative and a range of other projects which, as in my earlier time in the Archives, do not always line up with the image of a typical day in the Archives. As with all that she undertakes, Karen projects an attitude which is not easily discouraged by seeming obstacles and which is always game to find innovative ways to turn dreams and ideas into real experiences. These have brought the Archives to the UP community in engaging first-hand ways and have added real spice to the experience of working in the Archives. For me personally, I am deeply grateful for the broadening experiences and for having a champion on so many levels. Karen has left indelible marks on UP, on the UP Archives and on all those who have been part of this journey with her.



The Ultimate Academic with a Human Touch

John Illsley

I first got to know Karen when she was still a schoolteacher and I was in the early years of my career at Pretoria Boys High (PBHS) as a History teacher. After she entered the History Department at the University of Pretoria, we touched base occasionally when I needed a reference on a new teacher applying to the school or some other matter relating to the teaching of the subject.

One other reason for us interacting for some years, had nothing to do with History. Karen was responsible for running the Battle of the Chefs at the annual Girls High Spring Fair while her daughter was attending our sister school, Pretoria High School for Girls (PHSG). She invited PHSG to send teams of boys and staff to compete in the cooking competition. With none of my colleagues willing to take on the challenge, I accepted, and over successive years became a regular staff participant. Although my culinary skills are decidedly limited, I thoroughly enjoyed teaming up with different PBHS boys in a friendly rivalry against the girls. Karen and her husband did a splendid job in organising the event, including all the ingredients, stoves and prizes. One year, the Chairman of the Aeronautical Society of PBHS and I were a team and with me mainly doing the menial tasks, we won the competition. He went on to become a professional chef.

One of my abiding regrets after I started teaching was that I had never managed to complete a Master's degree. After more than thirty years in the classroom, it was still on my bucket list. There are advantages to doing this later in life, but by the time I got to my late fifties, I had rather fixed conditions under which I was willing to pursue the venture.

With my not very admirable 'all or nothing' attitude, I made an appointment to go and see Karen Harris to discuss the feasibility of doing a Master's degree. I had a topic in mind on the interrelationship between military and civil aviation in South Africa and I took along a book of mine that had been published in 2003 which related broadly to that subject matter.

I made two preconditions very clear at the outset: I was not interested in a topic beyond what I

was proposing and that I would only undertake the thesis under her guidance and nobody else. I made it clear that I would respect her opinion on both of these issues and that if it was not feasible, I would walk away knowing that I had at least tested the waters and could, with a clear conscience, give it up as a bad idea.

Karen very patiently listened to my proposal and paged through the book. She made some cryptic notes and at the conclusion of the discussion said that she thought the proposed line of argument could plough a fresh furrow and that she was willing to be my supervisor. She said that I should register and make a start on the literature review that normally constitutes the first chapter of the thesis. In the space of an hour, I found myself with no excuses. I was elated: both my wishes had been granted and I was enthusiastic about the task, although it represented two years of hard work occupying what limited spare time I had.

92 Since this piece makes up a small part of a tribute to Professor Harris, it is important to justify why I was so adamant that she should supervise my thesis. Over the years I had formed the impression that many academics in the field of History (and other branches of academia) were only interested in pursuing topics that were part of the trendy mainstream historical themes that interested a new generation of History students. The subject matter that I was interested in clearly would not fit the bill. Indeed, this had been pointed out to me by other academics when I had broached the subject of this thesis at other institutions. I think Karen was very brave to take on a topic that was in many respects highly technical and in which she had limited historical background.

But the second, and perhaps even more important reason why I was only willing to work under Karen's supervision was that I needed to be able to work with someone who had a human touch and who would be the supportive figure who would guide and encourage. I am sure I am one of scores of undergraduate and postgraduate students who have worked under her tutelage who can attest to the fact that without compromising academic standards, Karen is a wonderfully warm and caring person. She really is the ultimate example of an accomplished academic with a human face.

That may come across as a controversial opinion in terms of what it implies about many lecturers in tertiary education, but it is I think incontrovertible. As a mature student I was not willing to work with a humourless academic, irrespective of their other credentials. I have come across several past students of Karen's over the years and every one of them has spoken fondly of her as a person. If I

was going to undertake two years of hard slog to produce a thesis, I wanted to do it with someone who was on my side in the enterprise, rather than an individual who was more concerned with what the exercise would do to enhance *their* reputation. In this regard, I think that Karen is a relatively rare example of an academic who is cerebral without losing sight of the fact that students, at whatever stage of life or studies, are also human and not some lower form of life.

During the course of completing my thesis, I invited Karen to be the guest speaker at the PBHS annual Remembrance Day ceremony. She became the first ever woman speaker at this solemn event and delivered an address that was perfectly suited to the occasion.

The two years I spent working on the thesis went by all too quickly. I enjoyed the process of writing and submitting chapters and receiving feedback. Karen was firm in upholding conventions of writing and standards of language, but she offered kind encouragement the whole way through and made allowances for a student who was undertaking this as a part-time endeavour. When we met to discuss chapters over a cappuccino, I was always reminded of that other trait with which everyone in her circle would be familiar and that was the sheer energy she possesses. I often got glimpses of her as a wife and a mother, which made me wonder when she got time to read all of the material being generated by her current crop of students. I felt guilty that she was, often late at night, having to wade through my latest offering and it made me grateful that she had agreed to take me under her wing (so to speak) to write an academic piece on a subject that genuinely interested me.

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I consider it an honour to have worked with Professor Harris and I again extend my sincere thanks for helping make one of my dreams come true. It was an experience for which I am all the richer and which I will always appreciate.

I wish her a very happy retirement which I am sure will be filled with all sorts of pursuits. May she get to enjoy many happy years with her family.



***Daoshi* and Me in the Rainbow Nation: A Chinese Encounter with South Africa**

Ying Li

Time flies! I have been studying and working in the rainbow nation – South Africa – for more than twenty years. Over the past years, I obtained the degrees of Honours, Master’s and PhD from the University of Pretoria (UP). After completing my Master’s in 2006, I was appointed as a permanent member of staff at the University of South Africa (UNISA). Since then, I have been employed as a Mandarin Chinese Lecturer and was promoted as a Senior Lecturer after being awarded a PhD in 2015. ‘Those who pick fruit think of their trees; those who drink streams miss their sources’ (The five tone songs of the Northern Zhou by Yu Xin, a poet in the Northern and Southern Dynasties of China); and those who achieve academic achievements cherish their supervisors.

I am grateful to Professor Karen Harris, my *Daoshi* (supervisor) and *Bole* (finder of talent), for her discovering and developing me when I did not know what Heritage and Cultural Tourism meant. It was she who guided me to the dreamlike and colourful field of Heritage and Cultural Tourism. In my studies for Master’s and PhD on the development of tourism between China and South Africa, her excellent guidance will never be forgotten. Effortful and meticulous revision of the individual chapters, as well as her contribution to the development and improvement of my theses from initial conceptions to the final completion, made my studies a success. I am thankful to *Daoshi* for her guidance to take a significant and remarkable leap in my professional endeavour: from a student with a student visa to a permanent member of staff at UNISA. I have been incorporated into the South African community since then. This was what many foreigners who reside in South Africa, such as Chinese, dream of. I am also indebted to *Daoshi*, in my toughest times in South Africa far away from family, for firmly holding my hand to survive my health issue so that I could complete my PhD successfully. I am deeply obliged to *Daoshi* for her excellent supervision, continuous encouragement, endless patience and support through thick and thin on my long and arduous journey to academic success in South Africa. Her dedication to her students and profession will stimulate me to continue to pursue my dreams.

After obtaining a Bachelor’s degree in English in 1986 from Inner Mongolia University, China, I

worked as an English Lecturer at a university in China. I arrived in South Africa in 2002 for academic development and changed my major from English to Heritage and Cultural Tourism. At the UP, a tall and slender lady, who lectured the first-year module 'South African Leisure Resorts and Nature Reserves', deeply impressed me. Her bright eyes, blond hair, particularly her smile, inspired me. It was not until I registered for the third-year module 'South African Cultural Activities' that I discovered she was Professor Karen Harris, a historian with a highly international reputation for her research on the Chinese in South Africa.

When I started the Honours programme, I was often puzzled by what the lecturers spoke about in class and began to experience anxiety and frustration. One day, Professor Harris took us on a campus tour. As we passed a broad-leaved coral tree, she picked up two red beans. She gave them to me saying, 'Jane, I wish lucky beans will bring you luck in your studies in South Africa.' I told her, in China, there were red beans named as 'missing beans'. 'I give you lucky beans today and you can give me missing beans someday,' she smiled. Since then, I have been pondering how someday I could string red beans into a necklace with silk thread from my heart for Professor Harris to express my deepest appreciation and admiration.

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When I began my Master's in 2004, Professor Harris became my supervisor. She corrected my papers in a precise manner, not missing a single incorrect punctuation mark. When I felt frustrated, she always encouraged me and said: 'Jane, how many South African students can study in Chinese in China? But you are studying in English in South Africa. You should be proud of yourself.' Hearing these warm words, I never felt overwhelmed, even when I walked in Sunnyside, an area with high levels of crime in Pretoria. I read *Daoshi's* writings, a wide range of topics that reflected the extent and significance of the Chinese presence in the world, particularly in South Africa, to understand the Chinese in South Africa, one of the factors why Chinese tourists came to South Africa. I was reputed to be a 'rainbow student' and 'my pride' by *Daoshi* as a result of my hard work. My thesis was referred to as a 'monumental work' in the development of tourism between China and South Africa.

In 2007, I embarked on the journey to a PhD with a thesis entitled *Chinese outbound tourism to South Africa: A strategic approach*. This meant I would change my research approach from tourism history to tourism management. The research method would focus on the mixed method, such as both a qualitative and quantitative analysis, instead of a qualitative analysis as in my studies for Honours

and Master's. It was a great challenge for *Daoshi* and me. I could not change my research approach and disliked losing Professor Harris as a supervisor. At last, it was agreed that *Daoshi* would be responsible for the qualitative analysis, while the co-supervisor Professor Peter Van Dyk for the quantitative analysis. I was often confused about what I should do with the broad and complicated sources I browsed and collected. *Daoshi* guided me on exploring the sources in a systematic manner and constructing my thesis in a logical way.

Daoshi and I had been struggling for the scholarship since I began my Master's. In 2006, when I was about to complete my Master's, UNISA advertised a Mandarin Chinese lecturer position. *Daoshi* helped me complete the application form. She also authored a recommendation letter in response to my application. She affirmed that no matter what position I applied for, she would always support me. Before the interview, *Daoshi* help me simulate it many times. She provided me with advice on how to present myself; how to overcome nervousness; and how to react to unexpected questions. I was appointed as the lecturer and became a permanent staff member at UNISA! At that time, there were no more than four Chinese who were employed permanently in the universities of South Africa. The financial issues that had troubled me since I arrived in South Africa were finally resolved!

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In the busiest years of my PhD studies, it was found that there was an aneurysm behind my right eye. I was required to undergo surgery. Before the procedure, *Daoshi* communicated with the doctor and marked the date for medicine on the prescription. She frequently held my hand so that I could not fall due to being unable to accurately determine the stairs as a result of blurred vision. The evening before the operation, *Daoshi* prepared some food and a gown for my stay in the hospital. I finally overcame the aneurysm owing to advanced medical skills and the caring from *Daoshi*. I completed my PhD and became the first PhD graduate in Heritage and Cultural Tourism at UP. On the day of graduation, *Daoshi* congratulated me with a bunch of flowers, as well as a card with a Chinese character 'Heng' (eternity). She hoped that my efforts and our friendship would be carried forward forever.

Daoshi also expressed her deep admiration for China, the motherland of the Chinese in South Africa. As she has been conducting research on the Chinese in South Africa for more than forty years, she was appointed as an executive board member of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO). In 2007, *Daoshi* and I attended the ISSCO conference hosted by Beijing University, China. During the conference, we visited the Great Wall, as well as enjoyed Chinese

cuisine and clothing. We also helped UP and the Chinese Embassy in South Africa for the visit and speech of Hu Jintao, the President of China. *Daoshi* recommended that I teach Chinese to Principal Professor Carlie Pistorius. On the day when the Principal welcomed the President in fluent Chinese, 'Your Excellency Mr Hu Jintao, President of the People's Republic of China'. *Daoshi* and I smiled at each other because the overwhelming applause was the best award for our efforts. In 2008, on the issue of the Chinese in South Africa concerning the Employment Equity and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE), *Daoshi*, from a historical point of view, supported the Chinese. She clarified their status in relation to affirmative action and empowerment legislation in the High Court of Pretoria. She also published a journal article entitled 'BEE-ing Chinese in South Africa: A legal historic perspective' to propose her ideas on the issue. In an interview on the Open Day of 'Happy New Year' hosted by the Chinese Embassy in South Africa in 2011, *Daoshi* advocated her ideas that the Chinese in South Africa should be paid attention to by the South African government as a new ethnic group in South African community.

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In addition to the responsibility of the ISSCO, *Daoshi* works as the chairperson of the Historical Association of South Africa, the Director of the University of Pretoria's Archives and a Coordinator and Chief Researcher for the research projects conducted for the National Department of Tourism of South Africa. She also holds editorial positions on both local and international academic journals. Owing to her excellent academic achievements, as well as being a pioneer in the field of Heritage and Cultural Tourism at tertiary level, she was appointed as the Head of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the UP.

There is a Chinese idiom, 'Peach and plum trees do not speak, there is a path under them'. It states that peach and plum trees do not speak, as the people come to them for their beautiful flowers and delicious fruit and a path is stepped under them. It implies that for a person with noble morality, honesty and integrity, he will naturally be respected and admired by individuals without self-promotion. The long hardworking years dyed the brown hair of *Daoshi* grey and made her wear reading glasses early. However, the reading glasses have never diminished her bright eyes and dedication.

On my long walk to academic success in South Africa, it was *Daoshi* who accompanied me 'who ne'er succeed' to experience the hardship and the 'sweetest' in my 'sorest need' ('Success is counted sweetest' by the American poet, Emily Dickinson). I have been a hard-working student and

I am striving to be an excellent supervisor like *Daoshi*. I have kept the numerous drafts corrected by *Daoshi*. These will remind me all the time to guide and supervise my students like *Daoshi* because I deeply believe that only by keeping diligence and integrity can they be relegated an eternal existence. Today, I still have numerous challenges in my life, but I have learned how to confront them in a confident manner. My family, friends and *Daoshi* have greatly contributed to what I have achieved in South Africa. It was *Daoshi* who guided me in surviving South Africa and realising the triumph of my dreams in the rainbow nation!

A Chinese saying states, 'Teacher for one day, father forever'. It means that once someone becomes your teacher, you should admire and respect him as a father all your life. At this moment, I would like to say: Professor Harris, you are my dearest *Daoshi*: past, now and future! I love you, forever!



Trailblazer, Pioneer, Innovator, Creator and Mentor – *Professor Karen Leigh Harris*

CR Botha

There are countless words to describe Professor Harris. However, I fundamentally believe that the above gives the objective reader and unknowing onlooker – who has yet to have the privilege to be in her presence and see her in action in the classroom or in the field – a glimpse, a window, or a ‘snapshot’, into her incredible legacy, awe-inspiring influence and lasting impacts she has had – and continues to have – on the University of Pretoria (UP), and more broadly in the tourism fraternity of South Africa and beyond. So here are just a few professional and personal ‘moments’ in tribute to this phenomenal, strong and fabulous human-being I have come to respect, revere and treasure over the last ten years.



*Professor Harris and me on our first fieldwork endeavour together
in the Augrabies Falls National Park in the Northern Cape.*

Joining UP in the late 1990s from the University of South Africa (UNISA), upon her appointment Professor Harris was immediately tasked with the 'saving' and 'revolutionising' of 'heritage studies' as an academic discipline on the outskirts of the Social Sciences cluster at the time. It was a domain with little uptake from students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in the Humanities Faculty at UP, though the skills embedded within the sphere were critically needed within the new democratic dispensation of the country, where the nation state's 'checkered heritage' (no matter how big or small) had to be safeguarded, protected, curated, preserved, conserved and archived – appropriately, sustainably and responsibly.

Yet, although recognising the importance of the domain, very few academics locally, or internationally for that matter, had the innovative insights, creative flair and industry knowhow to 'flip-the-academic-project-upside-down' and to start thinking laterally 'outside-the-box', while at the same time, progressively seeking for actual change and transformation within 'heritage studies' at a 'grassroots' level throughout the country – but more importantly at UP. It is in this small academic lacuna that Professor Harris introduced her 'state-of-the-art' and 'hands-on philosophies' as well as 'radical-for-the-time-period action plan' surrounding the formulation, incorporation and deployment of an 'indiscipline' that would become 'Heritage and Cultural Tourism' in the Faculty of Humanities at UP. And as the saying goes – the rest is 'historical studies' – after this 'ahead-of-its-time dream' became a reality ...

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As the 'brains behind – and in front of – this indiscipline' and given her unwavering ambition to complete every plan she puts her mind, heart and soul to, Heritage and Cultural Tourism, or more colloquially referred to by many as 'EFK' these days, became registered as a module, scarce skill and undergraduate degree at UP by the late 1990s. It was initially offered only as a capped course that could take a maximum of fifty first-year students per academic year (flashforward to the present with the programme having over a thousand undergraduate students!). Moreover, and to no one's surprise retrospectively, this 'new-indiscipline-on-the-Humanities-block' took off in quick time amongst a new inclusive, diversified and transformed student cohort keen on 'saving' and 'validating' this new independent nation state's at-risk tangible and intangible artefacts, sites and stories, of the past and present, for future generations to enjoy.

Consequently, this significant uptick in undergraduate student numbers in turn led to Professor Harris being tasked by the UP Executive in the early 2000s to create four additional postgraduate

degrees so that students could specialise in Heritage and Cultural Tourism at an Honours, Master's (research and coursework) as well as PhD levels in years to come at the institution. An early testament to her dedication to the 'indiscipline' of Heritage and Cultural Tourism, perhaps showcased in the fact that she formulated, implemented and taught all these programmes and courses, in addition to several undergraduate and postgraduate modules in History, by herself, shortly after giving birth to her only daughter – Kaylee Stella Harris – around the same time.

Nevertheless, true to form, Professor Harris' drive and passion for Heritage and Cultural Tourism, with its many students by this stage, would again lead to another 'breakthrough' for this 'indiscipline' when coming up with the idea to implement a simulated tourism entrepreneurship and business incubator in the taught Honours degree programme in 'EFK'. The latter entity was called UP Campus Tours (UPCT), now a renowned and award-winning enterprise twenty-one years on, where students enrolling for this Honours degree would be taught the theories and methodologies of this new 'indiscipline', whilst simultaneously gaining a vetted years' worth of industry and professional experience and exposure while running, operating and conducting campus tours around the Hatfield Campus of UP (as accredited, licensed and certified culture tourist guides for Gauteng). In this context, Professor Harris acting as the 'shadow business partner', trainer and facilitator to all UPCT members and their encounters with prospective students, academic staff members, industry professionals and practitioners, as well as international dignitaries that these students were tasked to guide and entertain on a daily basis as 'industry-trainees', 'up-and-coming specialists' and 'university ambassadors' for a full year.



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Professor Harris and Cassie Carstens, one of the first Heritage and Cultural Tourism and UPCT graduates at the latter's twenty-year reunion.

UPCT continued to grow as an institutional entity at UP for many years to come (and even today) under Professor Harris' watchful eyes, compassionate heart and entrusting soul. To date hundreds of Honours students have gone through this professionalised training course and have likewise gone out to make wide-reaching impacts and differences at a local, provincial, national, continental and international level as well-rounded Heritage and Cultural Tourism scholars, researchers, specialists, practitioners and professionals.



Professor Harris and many of her UPCT trainees over the years at the twenty-year reunion of this tourism incubator's establishment at UP.

It was this elevation of postgraduate student capacities and capabilities to industry benchmarked best practice standards, that Professor Harris came to be recognised and known by industry leaders, travel experts and policy regulators in the Ministry of Tourism for South Africa, South African Tourism, as well as Brand South Africa, in particular, by former Ambassador Dr Kingsley Makhubela, then Director General of the Ministry of Tourism. After encountering, seeing and experiencing Professor Harris' students many times in the field, it was Dr Makhubela who reached out to Professor Harris for a meeting to discuss tourism capacity building and skills development at a national level, based on the teachings and trainings of Heritage and Cultural Tourism, towards the late 2000s.

After initial negotiations it was decided that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and a Service Level Agreement (SLA) be signed by UP and the Ministry of Tourism to further develop academic-based industry skills amongst the postgraduate student cohort specialising in Heritage and Cultural Tourism. At the same time, emerging academics, researchers and scholars in the 'indiscipline' were tasked with conducting, fine-tuning and professionalising tourism-related research themes by way of commissioned research projects. Thus, UP postgraduate students, under the supervision of Professor Harris, would receive industry bursaries, research training and field exposure, while the Ministry of Tourism received tested and workshopped research reports, completed by Professor

Harris and ‘academics-in-the-making’, that could then be presented to the National Tourism Subcommittee in the Parliament of South Africa on a yearly basis.

It was, therefore, a ‘win-win-scenario’ for all stakeholders involved, with these commissioned research projects, spearheaded by Professor Harris, proving pivotal and instrumental, especially in the last few years as South Africa’s travel industry grappled with internal policy changes and external pandemic challenges. The first MoU and SLA between the Ministry of Tourism and Professor Harris, acting as the Principal Investigator on behalf of UP for these research projects, was signed in 2011/12. I am delighted to report that this MoU and SLA was again extended for the 2024/25 to 2027/28 financial years – with Professor Harris graciously agreeing to continue to lead and act in the above capacity going forward.

Since the start of this collaborative partnership, spearheaded by Professor Harris and founded on her academic principles encapsulated within Heritage and Cultural Tourism, eleven highly relevant and successful research reports have been completed, with Professor Harris training in this milieu over a dozen academics, specialists and researchers as well as funding over fifty postgraduate students across all degree levels. Some of these collaborative projects undertaken to date include:

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<p style="text-align: center;">2023 – 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">‘The integration and recognition of Indigenous Story Tellers (ISTs) in the tourist guiding sub-sector’</p> <p style="text-align: center;">– <i>with CR Botha</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2022 – 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">‘The piloting and refining of the Domestic Tourism Remodelling Model (DTRM)’</p> <p style="text-align: center;">– <i>with CR Botha</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2021 – 2022</p> <p style="text-align: center;">‘Remodelling the local domestic tourism market of South Africa within a COVID-19 environment’</p> <p style="text-align: center;">– <i>with CR Botha</i></p>

<p>2020 – 2021 'The Indigenous Story Teller (IST): The Northern Cape as a case study' – <i>with CR Botha</i></p>
<p>2018 – 2019 'Cross-border themed tourism routes in the Southern African region: Practice and potential' – <i>with Hannes Engelbrecht</i></p>
<p>2017 – 2018 'A policy review of the tourist guiding sector in South Africa' – <i>with Tiffany Morolong, Sian Pretorius-Nel and CR Botha</i></p>
<p>2016 – 2017 'The potential of the creative industry for destination development in South Africa – Film tourism as a case study' – <i>with Charlene Herselman and Alida Green</i></p>
<p>2015 – 2016 'Harmonised tourist guiding in Southern Africa (Phase IV)' – <i>with Richard Wylie and Charlene Herselman</i></p>
<p>2014 – 2015 'Harmonisation of tourist guiding training regulations and standards in Southern Africa (Phase III)' – <i>with Richard Wylie</i></p>
<p>2013 – 2014 'Harmonisation of tourist guiding training regulations and standards in Southern Africa (Phase II)' – <i>with Richard Wylie</i></p>
<p>2012 – 2013 'Understanding the concept of cross-border guiding in Southern Africa (Phase I)' – <i>with Richard Wylie</i></p>

These research projects have similarly led Professor Harris and her Heritage and Cultural Tourism research team to conduct impactful engagements and fieldwork, as well as present at workshops and conferences with grassroots communities, institutional authorities and private entities in South Africa and around the world. These include:



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Conducting fieldwork on Indigenous Story Tellers (ISTs) near Askham and Andriesvale in the Northern Cape.



Presenting on the potential of domestic tourism in South Africa at a government workshop in Soshanguve in Gauteng.



Conducting fieldwork on the power of storytelling in tourism destinations, attractions and sites in Khayelitsha in the Western Cape.



Presenting a workshop on the Domestic Tourism Remodelling Model (DTRM) to community leaders and members in Rietfontein in the Northern Cape.

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Delivering a paper on localised travels in South Africa at the international Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS) conference in Breda in The Netherlands.

Yet, despite these ‘above-and-beyond’ theoretical and practical milestones Professor Harris has met, achieved and surpassed over the last twenty-five years at UP, her philosophies, dedication and support has not wavered in the slightest when it comes to her ‘indiscipline’, her students, her colleagues, her peers and her superiors. So, as I summarise this small tribute – to my Head of Department, Professor, supervisor, mentor, ally, support-system and lifelong friend – I just want to reiterate and echo, wholeheartedly, the words I have said to you at academic conferences, expert forums and in some ‘far-off unconnected parts of South Africa’ while talking and debating the day’s findings around a ‘Kalahari boma fire pit’ or ‘Drakensberg indoor fireplace’ ...



Heating up after presenting an industry workshop at the Adventure Tourism Summit on tourist guiding near Winterton in KwaZulu-Natal.

Firstly, that your legacy has touched and influenced, literally, thousands of people who have had the utter privilege to spend just a few seconds in your welcoming presence and ‘positive aura’. Secondly, that you have equipped your students, researchers and colleagues with the knowledge, skills and expertise to actualise the change in the world they want to see – ‘no matter where they come from’; ‘no matter their socio-cultural background’; ‘no matter how small their initial idea might be’; ‘no matter what time of the day or night’; or ‘how others may react to them chasing their

'wacko' ideas'. Lastly, the successes, acknowledgements and accolades your students, colleagues, Heritage and Cultural Tourism, UPCT and the Ministry of Tourism research projects have achieved, and will still achieve in the future, is in large part due to you and your originality, uniqueness, innovations, charisma and fearlessness that stand out in any space like a beacon of light, hope and comfort. And as you always say – 'the best way to predict the future is to create it, and to just make it happen ...'.

Thus, in conclusion, this publication is a celebration of you, and the gigantic legacy you have now graciously bestowed on others, professionally, to carry forwarded as we develop, grow and advance your notions, endeavours and projects at UP and beyond. Each forward step is based on your founding wishes, ideas and dreams for this field and the subsequent change it could create in the world. Then, on a last emotional, bittersweet and personal note, I would also just like to thank you for including and entrusting me with the great opportunity to build on your legacy at UP in a variety of ways – so just **thank you** for being my one-amongst-eight-billion role model.

112 So here is to you Professor Harris – a trailblazer, pioneer, innovator, creator and mentor – to myself, to colleagues, for Heritage and Cultural Tourism, as well as the local and global tourism fraternities you have graced with your knowledge, spirit, dedication, drive and fierce activism day-in and day-out!



Onwards and upwards ...



Forever and always ...



Karen Harris and her Contribution Towards the South African Tourism Sector

Anemé Malan

I had the honour and privilege to work with and learn from Professor Karen Harris over a number of years. Professor Harris is a remarkable and dedicated person and academic who contributed tremendously to the tourism sector and her students.

Her research has contributed significantly to the Tourism Sector in general but also specifically as part of the Department of Tourism Department's research programme through the partnership of the Department and the University of Pretoria.

I am thankful that I could work with her in the execution of our research programme as this afforded me the opportunity to learn and grow from her example. Her contribution included, for example, the professionalising and upliftment of tourist guides and research titled: 'A Policy review of the Tourist Guiding Sector in South Africa'.

Professor Karen Harris also availed her time and expertise to address and share her insights and knowledge at a number of events that the Department hosted, these include amongst others, International Tourist Guide Day Celebrations and the Department's Sharing of Best Practices Workshop addressing participants across the globe.

She has not only contributed to the body of knowledge in and understanding of the tourism sector but her dedication to and love for her students and team members contributed to building the capacity of future leaders and professionals in the sector.

I wish her all the best for this new chapter of her life, filled with good health, great memories and lots of laughter.



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I Have No(t) (Enough) Words¹ ... (An attempt to convey the essence of the *phenomenon*² that is Karen L. Harris)

Karina Sevenhuysen

I have on two previous occasions³ tried to describe the *extraordinary* characteristics and personality makeup that make Karen the *special* person that she is. It remains a struggle of vocabulary inadequateness!

I have known Karen for more than 25 years as a colleague, friend, PhD supervisor and human being. Over the years, we have become closer through similar personal joyful and challenging events. Our daughters were born in the same year (hers in January and mine in December), and we both have experienced cancer close to home. When your workplace is the place where you spent most of your time, you tend to gravitate towards people who have the same personal and professional principles and values. That was and is the case with Karen and me.

When one is confronted with a task of epic proportions and overwhelming evidence (as this attempt to capture Karen's essence surely is), I will follow her recommendation in this regard, thus, following in the footsteps of the *master* and *super supervisor*. I will therefore organise her characteristics according to themes: Karen as an academic, lecturer, and supervisor; as an administrator and boss; as an empath; and lastly as a human being.

As an academic, lecturer and supervisor Karen is known for her unique *creativity, dynamism, innovation, enthusiasm* and *passion*. Here one could think of many examples but the conceptualisation and realisation in practice of UPCT remains a shining example of these characteristics. Her unwavering *dedication* to teaching is enviable. Her *energy, inspiration* and *speed* in this regard are continuously mentioned by students. One student even lamented with a combination of admiration and despondency that she is 'too fast for time'! As academic and supervisor she has absolutely *no comparison* to any other (in the Department, even the universe!). Her *discipline* and *hard work* in providing *intelligent, extensive, experienced* and timeous feedback; her *dependability* regarding assistance; and her *excellence* in *mentorship* and *supervision* resulted in reference to her as a 'super supervisor'.

As administrator and boss (Head of the Department) she has exhibited many striking characteristics. First and foremost is her superhuman ability regarding *multi-tasking*. She literally can perform 1 000 tasks a day (once propagated about Stalin). In her *leadership* capacity she leads by *example*. Her *loyalty* and *commitment* to the Department and colleagues is remarkable and unique; she reveals *courage*, *determination*, *fierceness* and *tenacity* when handling and sorting out our 'crap' (her word!) and when she is fighting for the Department, our students and fellow colleagues. Her *patience*, *diplomacy* and *fairness* in dealing with university structures and bureaucracy deserve the highest medal of honour. Her *accessibility*, *support* and *welcoming attitude* (with the customary plant!) towards new colleagues are uncommon but extremely endearing. Karen's *problem-solving* abilities, her *diligence* and *thoroughness* in handling academic and administrative red tape remains spectacular to witness. There is no problem too big or too small that she cannot rectify or solve, and she always believes and practises the saying 'there is always a way; it might not be the *Autobahn* but the gravel road will also do'.

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Many a colleague and student have experienced Karen as an empath. Her *empathy and sympathy*, *care*, *understanding*, *attentiveness*, *thoughtfulness*, *compassion* and *kindness* is extremely unique and rare in the often harsh and neutral world of academia. A little note, a flower, a chocolate, an electronic message to persons in need of care and support are all part of her caring and mothering personality. These actions are neither essential nor necessary but they are extremely encouraging, supportive and ... human!

The last category describing Karen as a human being might seem strange and out of place. But, precisely because of those reasons, it is of the utmost importance to mention this. She is *humanity* personified within the often very harsh, inhumane and number-crunching university world. If someone shows you that you as a person matters, a wonderful dynamic and experience of interaction and reciprocal action can occur. This is often the case in Karen's interaction with others. What makes it even more astonishing is that this is not done in a conscious and pretentious manner, it is who she is and will always be. Her natural *grace*, *femininity*, *humility* and *wholesomeness* add *sincerity* to her actions and words. Her *gratitude* through a handwritten 'thank you' note is customary and always much appreciated. She exudes *wisdom*, *integrity* and of course, a wonderful and very sharp *sense of humour* (can you hear her laughter?).

How dearly will we miss you?

How will we remember and honour you?

Through our admiration, our appreciation and by honouring and upholding your legacy – the privilege of having ‘experienced’ you as a phenomenal, principled and unique human being who has shown compassion and has instilled wonderful and long-lasting elements in our lives as students, colleagues and human beings.

You – the phenomenon that is Karen L. Harris – will always be
in our thoughts,

in our hearts and

in our lives through our striving to honour your legacy, values and principles.

Endnotes

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- 1 To be unable to describe someone in a way that adequately and accurately represents the person’s exceptional nature and qualities.
 - 2 A remarkable person; someone exceptional because the person is completely different from the norm and therefore extremely rare and worthy of admiration.
 - 3 On 15 September 2018 (when the DHHS organised a surprise birthday party and colleagues and tutors were asked to each describe her in one word) and on 15 May 2024 (at the annual departmental Awards Function with the theme ‘on the shoulders of giants’ where a special dedication was made to Karen as the ‘Giant among giants’).
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*Dr Alida Green, Dr Sian Pretorius-Nel, Professor Karen L. Harris,
Dr Karina Sevenhuysen, Robyn Schnell*



*Professor Johan Bergh, Professor Karen L. Harris, Dr Karina Sevenhuysen,
Professor Alois Mlambo.*

Honouring Karen Harris: A Tribute to an Exceptional History Teacher

Elena Bielich

Professor Karen Harris was appointed at Pretoria High School for Girls (PHSG), where she taught History to Grades 8 to 11 from January 1984 to December 1986. Her tenure at the school left an indelible mark on both her pupils and her colleagues.

From the start Karen identified herself with the ethos of the school, setting standards of excellence both for herself and her pupils. She soon stood out as an exceptional teacher. It became evident that she had boundless energy and an in-depth knowledge of her subject, as well as creative methods of sharing historical facts. She was not a conventional teacher who prepared lessons from the prescribed textbooks. She is a lateral thinker who earned a reputation for out-of-the-box thinking and improvisation when imparting her understanding of the role of historical characters and events in world history. Her innate sense of fairness and her ability to be objective and offer both sides of a story endeared her to her listeners.

Karen has a natural ability to build a meaningful rapport with her pupils, making it easier to instil in them a keen interest in the subject. Her dynamic teaching methods and engaging personality fostered an appreciation of the past. In her classroom, regardless of the level she was teaching, Karen ensured an effective rotation of subject presentations and posters on the wall. She encouraged her pupils to dramatise historical scenes, making learning interactive and memorable. Her quick wit, remarkable memory and organised mind enabled her to compartmentalise information effectively, making it easier to compare protagonists or different eras in the journey of humankind. She encouraged her pupils to think independently, to question intelligently and to reach rational conclusions – such valuable skills for later studies and life in general.

Karen willingly shares her ideas and effectively involved both colleagues and pupils in her projects. She taught the French Revolution and Napoleon in a novel way, enacting many of the scenes. Her classroom windows were decorated with the *tricolor*, the flag adopted during the French Revolution. A memorial service was organised in her classroom for the burial of Napoleon. One of

the girls wore Karen's academic gown to portray a minister of the church standing at a tombstone made from cardboard with the inscription of Napoleon's birth and death dates. Each pupil in the class was asked to research some aspect of his life and relate it, another testament to her creativity and enthusiasm for bringing History to life. When teaching the Russian Revolution and the birth of Communism, relevant symbols decorated her classroom, a brave stance to take at the height of the Cold War.

Karen organised three successful history tours to Kimberley as she believed that visiting the area would bring the Anglo Boer War battles in that region to life. Her sense of responsibility, initiative, precise organisational skills and resourcefulness were all reflected in these tours. Both teachers and pupils visited the Magersfontein Battlefield, where on 11 December 1899, the Boers, led by General de la Rey, delayed the advance of the British forces under Lieutenant-General Metheun. The latter were on their way to relieve the siege of Kimberley. Their path was blocked by the Boer forces entrenched in the surrounding hills. As one of the teachers on the first tour, I recall the impact made on me by the guide who related the story of how the Boers kept the British at bay. The tour included a visit to the Kimberley Siege Memorial commemorating those who had died during the Siege of Kimberley, the Sanatorium, the Big Hole where diamonds had been discovered in 1867, as well as the local Art Museum. Nothing was too much effort for Karen; she always went the extra mile.

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In March 1986, Karen played a pivotal role in organising the Commemorative Dinner for the 100th anniversary of the discovery of gold. The event, attended by over one hundred guests, was a grand affair with teachers and history pupils dressed in period costumes, encapsulating the spirit of the era. Karen dressed as an elegant English lady. The following comments, taken from the 1986 PHSG magazine, were written by pupils who attended the evening:

The evening didn't start off with a cold atmosphere and slowly warm up. Oh no, the hall bubbled and vibrated with shrieks, giggles and applause from the word go. We wandered around, greeting everybody, who put on accents according to their dress. Elegant ladies had their hands kissed, businessmen and miners mingled ... The dinner had really begun with a flourish. The following morning in Prayers, the headmistress said, 'The history dinner was a great success.' The history girls turned to each other and grinned as one person. What an evening! – *Robyn Alexander*

As an example of the great impression made on those attending the evening, Andrea van Reenen

is quoted as saying:

Although this was an evening of high entertainment, a lot of background information was fed to us along with the scrumptious food. Yet the presentation was so polished we didn't realise we were broadening our horizons.

Gill Taylor made this observation:

The History Dinner was an evening to lock away in my mind so that when I feel nostalgic, I can bring it out, examine it carefully and enjoy it all over again.

Lynette Lewis noted:

We were entertained by dancers and we entertained by dancing (even if our waltzing didn't quite fit the music!). Speeches by the likes of Cecil John Rhodes and our own dear Paul Kruger (accompanied by his wife and the family Bible) contributed to the atmosphere of the occasion.

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An account by Ella Romanowska of what happened during the preparation and build up to the dinner:

'Mrs Harris!' came a call of distress from a girl holding a box of rocks. 'Mrs Harris? Help!' The girl was sorting place names. At first, I couldn't see the connection between names and rocks, but as I came closer, I saw that the names of girls were in gold lettering on every rock ...

Gold lettering on rocks is an example of the extent to which Karen would focus on the minutest details to make an occasion as realistic as possible.

Such enthusiasm and attention to detail in recreating the past surely ignited a sense of wonder and curiosity in the history pupils taught by Karen Harris. She planted seeds of curiosity, nurtured and watered them and encouraged them to be curious, explore and appreciate the richness of the past. Such passion and dedication exhibited in the presentation of her subject matter no doubt enhanced their academic performance.

In addition to her high academic standards, Karen was involved in a number of extra-mural activities. She and her colleagues in the History department, Carol Verwayen and the late Vida Gutstein and Anne Williams and I were involved in the History Club that met fortnightly. Outside speakers were often invited to address the members on a specific historical or current affairs topic. One that comes to mind was an account given by a lady who was a Holocaust survivor.

She established the Gymnastrada Club and trained the members. Her motivation was to give girls who had *two left* feet an opportunity to be part of a school team. These girls were not naturally top sporting achievers. Karen organised gym clothes for them and they took part in a few competitive events. Not only were they given a sense of belonging but could bask in the fact that they had represented their school and were applauded for their excellent teamwork.

Karen inspired and stimulated both large and small groups, while her organisational flair, empathy and genuine concern for the needs of others made her contribution to the fibre of the school immeasurable. The headmistress, Miss Beryl Mullins wrote in a reference letter, 'A teacher of Mrs Harris' calibre is indeed rare, and she will be sorely missed at Pretoria High School for Girls'.

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Karen Harris' legacy at PGHS is one of innovation, enthusiasm and a profound appreciation of the past. Her influence continued when her daughter Kaylee attended PGHS during the period 2014 to 2019. Karen introduced the 'Battle of the Chefs' at the annual Spring Fair. She went to extremes to collect sponsorship from local supermarket chains who donated ingredients and sponsored prizes. She herself bought all the cooking utensils and sourced sponsored prizes for the winners of the different cooking challenges. She invited local celebrity chefs to act as judges and encouraged Pretoria Boys' High School headmaster and boys to participate. Weeks of preparation and planning went into the event each year and much fun was had by all.

Following her time at PGHS, Karen Harris continued her academic journey by joining the History Department at UNISA, where her passion for history continued to flourish and students from a much wider circle had the privilege of being taught by this exceptional lady, whom I have been privileged to call one of my dearest and most loyal friends for over 40 years .

A Champion for the Chinese – Karen Harris

Melanie Yap

Karen Harris has spent more than 30 years studying and researching the role of the Chinese in South Africa, producing numerous academic studies on the community.

I was surprised to hear of Karen's imminent retirement but considering my professional association with her goes back to the early 1990s, it certainly now makes sense that she wishes to retire.

I can't remember when I first met Karen but I do recall meeting up with her and her husband at the first Luodi Shenggen conference in San Francisco in November 1992. Organised by the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas, it attracted academics and researchers worldwide to focus attention on the Chinese diaspora. Both she and I presented papers there on the Chinese in South Africa and met at subsequent conferences in later years.

After the publication of the book, *Colour, confusion and concessions: The history of the Chinese in South Africa*, in 1996, she wrote several reviews of the work in various publications. At that time, I was the General Secretary of the Chinese Association of South Africa (CASA), the national representative body for the Chinese community in South Africa. She was researching the Chinese community and we offered her whatever assistance we could.

In December 2007, CASA launched an application in the Pretoria High Court against three ministerial departments: the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Trade and Industry and the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development to have the Chinese included in affirmative action and B-BBEE initiatives. All three respondents filed notice to oppose but conceded the merits of the case in April 2008.

Judge Cynthia Pretorius ruled that in case number 59251/07, the South African Chinese:

- Fall within the ambit of the definition of 'Black' people as per section 1 of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 and

- Fall within the ambit of the definition of 'Black' people as per section 1 of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003.

Karen Harris submitted an affidavit in this case supporting CASA's application and citing historical examples of discrimination against the Chinese over many years. The Chinese community has valued the dedication and commitment Karen has shown in educating the broader South African and international community on the role of the Chinese in South Africa. Her academic stature has added weight to her comments and she has been a champion for the community, regularly attending several Dignity Day celebrations marking the success of the B-BBEE court case in Pretoria. Her studies on the Chinese over many years have made a major contribution to understanding the role of this minority in South Africa.

Thank you, Karen, for the significant role you have played personally in highlighting the position of the Chinese in South Africa. May retirement open new doors for your enquiring mind to pursue and conquer.



Melanie Yap, Arthur Song of University of Durban Westville and Karen Harris



Karen Harris, Hennie Harris and Melanie Yap



Arthur Song, Karen Harris, Melanie Yap and panel convenor, Alan Kolling – taken just before our presentations to the conference.



Arthur Song, Huguette Li Tio Fane, Karen Harris, Peggy Liang from Vancouver and Melanie Yap.



三字經¹ – The ‘Three-character Classic’ of Professor Harris: A Personal Perspective

Wendy Cox

Introduction

In 2009, historian and archival theorist, Zhaogui Qin, published ‘The three-character classic of archival work’.² The poem traces the long historical development and practice of the Chinese archive from ancient times to the present. In his poem, Qin adopted the traditional form of the ‘三字經’ (*San zi jing*) or ‘three-character classic triples’. The *San zi jing* is a centuries-old Chinese primer for teaching children to read, write characters and teach basic maths, science, history and a myriad of moral lessons. It originated in the twelfth century and was used until the early twentieth century. The *San zi jing*’s format and style are the highlight: the textbook consists of 101 verses; each verse comprises a set of four phrases of three characters each, for a total of twelve characters. The phrases are very short and cryptic, but concisely metrical to make the contents easy to read, understand and memorise. Qin’s poem on archival work follows a similar composition: the poem consists of twelve verses and each verse consists of four phrases of three characters, for a total of twelve characters. It has been said that the *San zi jing* is ‘a box of treasures, a puzzle within a puzzle, with layers of meaning’.³ Both works are grand tours, one of Chinese history and the other of the archival history and development in China; both provide a view of the richness of Chinese culture, history, civilisation, archival work and education and teaching methods.⁴



An example of the San zi jing (three-character classic) produced in the mid-nineteenth century in the Chinese writing convention: from top to bottom, right to left.⁵

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It is in the analogy of the three-character classic that this tribute is framed. The *San zi jing* and Qin's poem were purposefully chosen as both these works highlight three themes relevant to Professor Harris' legacy that this paper pays tribute to, namely, historiography – her contribution as a historian; archive and memory – her pioneering role as archivist; and education and teaching – her legacy as a Lecturer and supervisor. The three characteristics can be approached as distinct motifs, however, they are also creatively layered and interwoven in her career.

Historiography

The first verse (lines three to twelve) of Qin's poem 'The three-character classic of archival work' is relevant to this tribute and reads as follows:

1. The Value of Archives⁶

- ³ The role of archives,
- ⁴ Is to keep the truth.
- ⁵ Strengthening memory,
- ⁶ Governing society;

- ⁷ Based on archives,
⁸ Culture is preserved.
⁹ Using archives as original evidence,
¹⁰ People can keep integrity;
¹¹ As Janus has two faces,
¹² Archives have dualistic value.

Historical research and writing is not possible without the archive and an understanding of the importance of archival material. The poem beautifully links this notion together by referring to the role and value of archives in memory, society, government and culture. In later verses of the poem, Qin weaves the tale of archivists and ‘great historians’ together and foregrounds the fact that histories cannot be told or written without advocating for both. This is a notable strand in Professor Harris’ scholarly work.

Professor Harris’ contribution to the historiography of both South Africa and the world is significant. She specialises in overseas Chinese studies and has contributed to this field for over three decades. Her PhD research focused on the history of the Chinese in South Africa from the seventeenth century to 1912. Although some scholars considered her subject matter unconventional, even controversial, Professor Harris’ research and writing on the Chinese in South Africa was groundbreaking. It is noteworthy that much of her research was (and is) done using primary archival sources. It is the skilful historian who is able to read and interpret not only the language used in a primary source document, but to read it against the grain; to use all skills available to the historian to read, deconstruct and re-construct history as it is preserved. Furthermore, it is the adept historian who reads the text (content) and the context of the archive and is mindful of the contested nature of the archive, the power that is at play, and the ever-present possibility of new layers of context and meaning emerging from primary sources. Professor Harris is acutely aware and mindful of this as she wrote in 2017: ‘The writing of history is not only determined by historians and their audiences, but also by the sources available to them.’⁷ Furthermore, she pointed out that the nature of the primary sources critically influences the reconstruction of the past. However, the archive is more often than not ‘contentious, scattered, or even at times non-existent’⁸ and this makes the writing of history that more challenging.

John Tosh, the renowned British historian and writer, alluded to certain indispensable qualities and skills a historian has to have. The ability to find primary sources, as mentioned above, features high

on the list as facts do not lie close to hand and establishing historical facts is not without effort. Interpretation, composition and conceptualisation of these facts into meaningful syntheses are some of the most essential skills of a historian. Furthermore, verbal and literary skills are important. '(G)ood writing', Tosh continues, 'is more than an optional extra or a lucky bonus. It is central to the re-creative aspect of history.'⁹ Considering these skills and abilities as described by Tosh, it becomes clear that we as students, past and present, have been blessed with an exceptional historian in Professor Harris who, by taking her craft seriously, raised the standard of archival research and historical writing in her students. She is an exemplary academic with proven intellectual energy; appreciative of the complexities of history and is one of the rare academics who has the ability to explain these matters with clarity.

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Through her research and writing, primary archival sources in local and international archival repositories have been made accessible and have highlighted the history of the Chinese in South Africa. Her contribution to this field of study is not only recognised nationally but also internationally and this is evident in the fact that she is a founder member of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO) and serves on its Executive Board of Directors. She also served on editorial teams of various international journals and authored multiple articles and book chapters. Furthermore, she served as president of the Historical Association of South Africa (HASA) from 2011 to 2023. Professor Harris is an executive board member of the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS). Besides the above, she is member of several more bodies associated with History, archives and teaching.

In 2019, Professor Harris was inaugurated as Head of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies (DHHS) at the University of Pretoria, the first woman to hold this position since its inception in 1908. Her inaugural address considered South African historiography as well as the many twists, turns and transformations the DHHS has undergone. Moreover, the address once more centralised History, archives and the teaching of History and Heritage (Cultural Tourism) on secondary and tertiary levels. Through her leadership, passion, sheer drive and awareness of the challenges faced by history, the DHHS is thriving.

Professor Harris' work is not only highly regarded academically but also helped shape current events. Two recent court cases, in 2008 and 2022, involving the South African-born Chinese population are cases in point. Her work was drawn upon and provided a historical overview of the legal position

and status of the Chinese community in South Africa. Through her work, she demonstrated that discrimination against the Chinese was rife and is evident in historical records from the seventeenth century. In both cases, the court ruled in favour of the South African-born Chinese. Professor Harris’ work can be described as highlighting the history of the neglected and marginalised; giving a voice to the voiceless; and making the invisible visible. Her scholarly research and work bring to mind Kenneth Carroll’s poem, ‘A people’s historian’. The first line reads, ‘who will come tell us what we know’,¹⁰ demonstrative of the work of the historian through accessing the archive, oral and written, and ‘telling’ the history-story, to bring it and the people to remembrance again. The second verse of Carroll’s poem continues and again speaks to the historian’s responsibility:

who memorializes us when we have been vanquished
who recounts our moments of resistance, explicates
our struggles, sings of our sacrifices to those
unable to hear our song

Indeed, the ‘song’ of the history of the South African Chinese community is heard and will continue to be heard through Professor Harris’ work.

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Archivist

The second aspect considered here is Professor Harris’ contribution to the archive. She has been involved with the University of Pretoria Archive (UPA) since her arrival at the University of Pretoria. She is the head of the DHHS and also the Director of the UPA with all its diverse responsibilities and challenges. However, her experience stretches further than the UPA as she served on the National Archives Advisory Council from 2005 to 2008.

One aspect worth mentioning sits at the intersection of Professor Harris’ role as archivist, lecturer and historian, namely the ‘What’s in the Box?’-project. This project forms part of the Honours students’ coursework within the theory and methodology module. It entails, firstly a theoretical component where students are exposed to archival theory and principles, and secondly a practical component where History students are given the opportunity to experience the archive hands-on and study primary documentation. Every group of students are assigned a random box from the archives’ collection and are asked to apply in practice what they have learned in theory, namely, to

arrange the documents, analyse, appraise, describe and contextualise them. Finally, the students have to prepare a presentation on their findings and work. The 'What's in the Box?'-project, the first of its kind to be rolled out at any university in South Africa to the writer's knowledge, creates an ideal situation where students learn by doing and reflecting on their experiences. Through this creative learning opportunity, students are exposed to many facets of the craft of the historian and archivist which equip them for independent research.

Professor Harris' experience in and proximity to the archive puts her in an ideal position to inculcate in History students the close link between History and archives and push to the fore the importance of archival material.

Teaching History

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It is fair to say that not all lecturers are born teachers, but Professor Harris is an exception. Her creative teaching method regarding the 'What's in the Box?'-project was mentioned above and the University of Pretoria Campus Tours is another case in point. This enterprise was initiated by Professor Harris 21 years ago and is managed by the Heritage and Cultural Tourism Honours students as part of their Honours degree. Similar to the 'What's in the Box?'-project, it provides an opportunity for students to apply what they have learned in theory. Furthermore, it points to the practical relevance of History as a subject.

The phrase, 'Go back to the beginning!' is familiar to any of Professor Harris' students. As a gifted teacher, she has equipped and inspired many students with her enthusiasm, knowledge and creative ideas and approaches. To her postgraduate students she supervises she is unfailingly supportive and dedicated. Therefore, it did not come as a surprise when Professor Harris was nominated for and received the Chancellor's Award in the Teaching and Learning category during the 2022 Annual Academic Achievers' Awards ceremony. Commenting on the acknowledgement of her lifelong work, Professor Harris said: 'For more than three decades teaching has been my passion. My life has been immensely enriched by the undergraduate students I have taught and the postgraduate students I have supervised.'¹¹

Most students, if not all who studied under her, will agree that Professor Harris is a giant amongst giants. History and the teaching of History meant something to her, as did her students. She provokes

excellence in her students and with humility, empathy and sheer brilliance she brings out the best in them. Professor Harris is generous with her knowledge, her time and many a great mountain was diminished by her encouragement and genuine interest in people and their welfare. Moreover, she gave the gift of desire and skills of life-long learning to her students.

Her legacy as teacher and supervisor is evident in her students and colleagues and the good seeds she has planted over the years will no doubt bring forth a rich harvest.

Conclusion

This tribute to Professor Harris began with a reference to Qin’s poem, ‘The three-character classic of archival work’ and the tribute ends where it started, with the beginning of the said poem:

1. The Value of Archives

₁ A man leaves behind a reputation,

₂ As a bird leaves its song;

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Qin explained these lines as being a Chinese saying that implies human beings leave behind traces of their lives, including records which can be used to construct collective memory.¹² Through her scholarly work, Professor Harris added considerable historical context to the body of knowledge of Chinese overseas. Furthermore, it can be argued that her work as a historian and archivist serves as memory, as John Tosh pointed out ‘academic history can be regarded as a form of memory, in that it provides society with the best available record of past experience.’¹³

As students, her song has touched our lives and left its traces; it inspired and equipped us; in the vortex of research, analyses and syntheses we could follow its sound and be affirmed that we, our individual song, is worth sounding.

It is with great thankfulness and deep respect that tribute is also paid to Professor Harris’ family. They paid a price enabling us to have her brilliance and time to complete our studies.

Endnotes

- 1 *San Zi Jing* – translated into English: ‘The three-character classic’.
- 2 Qin, Z. 2009. 档案事业‘三字经’ [The three-character classic of archival work]. *Archive Management*, 1: 65–68. The poem became very popular among students and practicing archivists and in 2021 it was translated into English. See: Qin, Z., Qu, C. and Hawkins, A. 2021. The three-character classic of archival work: A brief overview of Chinese archival history and practice. *Archival Science*, 21: 97–116.
- 3 Pepper, J. (translator). 2020. *San zi jing: A three-character classic in Chinese and English*. London: Imagin8 Press.
- 4 See for instance: Zhu, Z.S. and Hu, B.Y. 2011. *San zi jing: A Chinese primer*. *Childhood Education*, 87(6): 415–420.
- 5 Anon. n.d. *San zi jing*. Harvard University Library: Curiosity Collection. Chinese Rare Books. [Online] Available at: <https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/chinese-rare-books/catalog/49-990081517350203941> (Accessed on 8 November 2024).
- 6 It was pointed out above that the verses of the mentioned poems consists of four phrases of three characters each, it is however not the case in the English translation. The classical Chinese language is much more compact than the English language, hence the longer phrases and explanations in the English version.
- 7 Harris, K.L. 2017. Contested encounters. A select literature review of Dynastic China and ancient Africa. *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 13: 244.
- 8 Harris, K.L. 2017. Contested encounters. A select literature review of Dynastic China and ancient Africa. *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 13: 245.
- 9 Tosh, J. 2015. *Pursuit of history. Aims, methods and new directions in the study of history*. London: Routledge, p. 195.
- 10 Carroll, K. n.d. A people’s historian. *Poets.org*. [Online] Available at: <https://poets.org/poem/peoples-historian> (Accessed 7 November 2024).
- 11 Mathibela, X. 2022. Top scholars honoured at the University of Pretoria’s annual Academic Achiever’s Awards. *University of Pretoria*, 4 November. [Online] Available at: https://www.up.ac.za/historical-heritage-studies/news/post_3112845-top-scholars-honoured-at-the-university-of-pretorias-annual-academic-achievers-awards (Accessed on 8 November 2024).
- 12 Qin, Z., Qu, C. and Hawkins, A. 2021. The three-character classic of archival work: A brief overview of Chinese archival history and practice. *Archival Science*, 21: 104.

- 13 Tosh, J. 2015. *Pursuit of history. Aims, methods and new directions in the study of history*. London: Routledge, p. 326.
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Mentor and Muse: Karen Harris and her Contributions to the University of Pretoria Museums and Advocate for Heritage in Higher Education

Sian Tiley-Nel

We as historians must remain “curiouser and curiouser” as we continue to peer expectantly into the past to see History through the Looking Glass¹

I am writing this retirement homage to Professor Karen Harris as a long-time colleague and a former student from a personal lens as both my mentor and muse for nearly twenty-five years. We have worked alongside several important University of Pretoria committees, those lesser known to many. Largely, those committees were dedicated to making a case for the importance of safeguarding, preserving, curating, researching and making accessible archival, historical, museum and all related heritage, as a critical need and serving an essential purpose in higher education.

We have sat side-by-side in many internal formal and informal meetings, taking on initiatives and seeing them through as working groups in the collective effort to sustain heritage, museums and archives in a higher education setting. Often, what others have found a waste of time, no resources, or ‘nice to-haves’, but to ensure that the cultural and natural heritage of the University of Pretoria is integral to campus scholarly life. Appreciating the beautiful past, present and future heritage campus collections and landscape by droves of students, staff and visitors from around the world is an extension of sustainability.

Together with the University of Pretoria (UP) Museums, Harris has supported many initiatives, simply too many to mention here. For example, South Africa’s first higher education, gardens, galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAMs), the annual global celebration of International Museums Month in May (IMD), International Archives Week (#IAW), to taking on and caring for the largest art archive in South Africa. She serves as an advocate for museums and archives as places and sites of well-being, promotes and lectures on prescribing social visits to university museums to improve mental health, as well as a more recent venture on a working group on UP’s new and unique Mental Health Museum at Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital which dates back to 1892.

Another major contribution is her twenty-year partnership with the University of Pretoria Museums and UP Campus Tours, better known as UPCT. The postgraduate module 'EFK 752' uses and promotes archives and museums as practical and professional training grounds, beyond teaching modules in lecture halls and walls – taking place often outside in the natural campus environment. The heritage on campus remains an open, accessible, engaging textbook and applied reference for any student. Many of Harris' sustained efforts have been based on mutually beneficial museum projects to advance and advocate for the agency of university archives and museums and sometimes serve as champion for the hodgepodge of innumerable, immeasurable (sometimes unwanted) heritage collections that fill a niche research and teaching sphere in higher education.

As a historian, Head of Department, Lecturer and a Professor, Harris has held many positions and posts, received many accolades in her dedicated career, always distinguished and highly respected within an array of disciplines ranging from History, Cultural Tourism, Heritage, Archives, and university museums. Yet, another contribution is as being one of the quiet driving forces in recognising and advocating for archives, museums, heritage and the cultural, aesthetic, research and architectural impact of the University of Pretoria's integration into the tourist economy. Through the institution's rich history – the good, bad and the ugly – the legacy of the University of Pretoria's heritage, both past and present, even future-focused, is in service of the greater Tshwane region and the City of Pretoria.

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From a more personal perspective, she was my supervisor, my greatest supporter and finest critic in preparing me for my PhD thesis to become an emerging historian. This was a late career move, away from my familiar disciplines in Archaeology, Conservation, and Museum Science, she wholeheartedly encouraged this pursuit and musings towards History. She introduced me to the academic works of two luminaries, the South African archivist and activist Verne Harris and the Canadian archivist, Terry Cook's modern archival theory, its attractive disruptive nature and porosity, 'we are what we keep, we keep what we are'.² Harris also repeatedly expressed the importance of layers, the archival slivers of the past and this deeply resonated with me as an archaeologist, like excavating archival material, notably of the unpopular past. Harris has made me acutely aware that no matter what you read about history, it is not what the author has written, it is about what you have to say, transparently about what has been written, and so History to me is learning to think for yourself. Investigating history through multiple lenses and bringing it into the present where it has more meaning is increasingly more important for an archaeology for the future.

Harris would certainly feel uneasy if one referred to her as their muse and mentor, knowing that she is extremely modest and never views herself above others. She is the first academic in Africa to introduce the concept of university campus tours, her creative and novel nurturing of UPCT developed out of her drive for preparing Heritage and Cultural Tourism students for working in the domestic and international tourism industry and using university museums is a unique perspective. Harris reached out to the UP Museums to partner and actively use museum collections and archives spread across eight campuses, in teaching Cultural Heritage and Tourism, to the point that five university museum staff members, including myself are distinguished alumni from the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies, three of whom were also former postgraduate students of UPCT. In 2017, the University of Pretoria Museums initiated an annual museum book prize awarded to the best Honours research report and merit award in Cultural Heritage to honour this long-held partnership and the possible opportunities it offers to students to leap into a working professional career.

Harris' commitment to the UP Museums has been strengthened by her formation and active participation in the University of Pretoria Heritage Committee which first started in 2009, a first higher education in South Africa. She further diligently serves as a board member of the University of Pretoria Museums Committee chaired by the Registrar and is an active member of UP's GLAM community in association with the Department of Alumni Relations. She is always willing to lend a hand, an ear, word of advice, support, even use some powerful connections and good influence, she finds and makes the time to attend events and exhibition openings, goes and gives lectures amid meeting madness and a very full schedule. Harris is like an atom, able to split herself repeatedly, releasing a large amount of energy, triggered on an ongoing basis, it becomes a chain reaction and this serves as what I coin to be known as the 'Harris Theory'.

Harris has without hesitation impacted the University museum and archival domains, directly with her years of expertise, willingness for lifelong learning, passion for all forms of heritage within higher education and through her positions as Head of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies and Head of the UP Archives. She has 'worn many hats' and subsequently over the years, mentored me on how best to wear many hats, even those worn-out ones, and how to keep one's head up positively, wearing and carrying it well, even in times of adversity. She recently advised me to continue to lead more intuitively and stay true to my role as a leader. Also, to be conscious of the aspirations and needs of other people first, and to keep learning from those whom I admire, to be

open to new learning avenues and remain 'curiouser', but know where to draw the line and where to continue, staying true to oneself above all.

I hope that Harris, while now at her crossroad of academic 'retirement', knowing she will never slow down to fully retire, finds the much-needed peace she deserves. She could consider writing an autobiography perhaps titled, '*Life of a curious historian*' as she has touched so many lives, impacted a countless number of students throughout her professional career and changed the career trajectory of so many professionals and staff. Her establishment of the UPA, UPCT and the sustained partnership with the UP Museums and her positionality within advancing heritage in all its forms in higher education serves as inspiration and a stimulus to many who will follow and continue in her path.

I will always respect and admire Harris as my mentor and muse, her active interest in my self-development, her guidance in my embracing History with a critical and contested mirror yet, more how my ideas matter and encourages my deep curiosity of what I find to be worthwhile. She will, as always, continue to deeply support the University of Pretoria Museums as they grow, evolve and mature.

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Harris is truly a rare earth element who has been forged in academia, she draws interest and respect from all directions and is genuinely a rare gem. I hope this contribution to a book dedicated to Karen Harris finds its deserved place on every student's bookshelf, in every library, and lodged in many an archive for perpetuity.

Endnotes

- 1 Harris, K.L. 2018. History “through the looking glass”. *Historia*, 63(2): 13–14.
 - 2 Cook, T. 2011. ‘We are what we keep; we keep what we are’: Archival appraisal past, present and future. *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 32(2): 173–189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00379816.2011.619688>.
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Aloe Flowers for Karen Harris – Champion History Teacher

Johan Wassermann

Many a time, I struggle with how to start writing – simply because I am unsure where to begin. Writing this piece on Professor Karen Harris was even more difficult. I have known her in numerous capacities: scholar, administrator, teacher, Head of Department, Chair of the Historical Association of South Africa, and most importantly, as a mensch. I wanted to honour her and say goodbye simultaneously, but I did not want it to sound like an obituary. Unfortunately, many farewell contributions end up sounding like that. Karen, I hope mine doesn't and that it's a worthy recognition of one aspect of your work – teaching.

In his article in *Forbes* titled 'What we never say out loud in higher education',¹ Nicholas Ladany posed a provocative question. He asks:

Why is it that the primary workforce in universities and colleges—the faculty—is not trained to do an essential job, that is, teach? You would be hard-pressed to identify another nonprofit or for-profit business that takes this approach toward hiring. The majority of university and college instructors are selected for their advanced degrees and specialised content knowledge, rather than their teaching abilities. Unlike K-12 educators, who undergo extensive training in pedagogy, higher education instructors lack formal preparation in teaching methods and curriculum design, yet “own” the curriculum within most institutions, deciding what to teach in class and how. This discrepancy contributes to a range of issues, including lower student success rates, prolonged degree completion times, outdated or irrelevant curricula, and increased student debt.

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While I fully agree with Ladany, I want to point out that Karen Harris has asked a similar question numerous times at all kinds of fora at the University of Pretoria – formal, informal or nonformal. And the focus was always the same: why do we not understand that our primary responsibility is to teach students well? Teach them well to be good historians and good teachers of History, Heritage and Cultural Tourism. If we teach well, she would argue while standing firm like an *Aloe ferox* in its

habitat, then we can turn South Africa around. And always, she would stand firm on these principles, rebuffing flimsy arguments. In this regard, Karen was at her provocative best during the orientation session for the Faculty of Education students earlier this year. I recall her taking the stage in front of the education first-years like a whirlwind, making it very clear that the most important profession is the teaching profession and that every child serves good teachers and that good teachers will turn this country around and not the 'EFF and ANC'.² Many students spontaneously applauded. She continued to explain that good History teachers are especially needed in this regard. What Karen said on that day I have heard her say numerous times at the BEd Forum (where different faculties that teach education students gather twice a year to engage) or to me personally. In my view, Karen's strong position in teaching, rooted like an *Aloe ferox* in the soil of the Eastern Cape, is that she is a qualified and certified teacher who has worked in schools before joining the university sector. She, regarding the quote from Ladany, is trained to do an essential job, understands her essential job in terms of the nuts and bolts involved, ranging from administration to compassionate student-centred pedagogy and thus speaks from an informed position, unlike the vast majority of staff at the University of Pretoria who make choices about what is the key function of the University in a third world context in the Global South, where most students come from schools that do not function optimally. And this is, in my view, the moral and logical bottom line of her positioning.

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It is easy to talk the talk, but not everybody walks the walk. Regarding teaching at the University of Pretoria, Karen always walked the walk. This ranged from her being the Head of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies, teaching large classes of hundreds of students compassionately, to expecting her staff to do the same. This was done at the Hatfield and Groenkloof Campus, which houses the Faculty of Education. This means that many undergraduate modules were taught twice on two different campuses. While this was standard practice for Karen and the History Department, others had a much more hostile view of the Faculty of Education students as not being 'our' students. But Karen was different and did not tolerate such forms of othering. To her, all University of Pretoria students needed to be taught well and that teaching is central to our duties and the key to making South Africa a better place. And this was done innovatively at all times. The 'What's in the Box?' project that the History Honours students do every year is a point in case. The unsorted archival material of the old Transvaal Education Department is used to teach students to think and work like historians and archivists. And being the good teacher she is, she researched her teaching and taught her research, as can be gleaned from the endnote reference to her 'What's in the Box?' teaching.³ Fortunately, the University did acknowledge Karen for her personal teaching excellence

with a Teaching and Learning award. This was a necessary and apt recognition of a champion of teaching.

I am convinced that Karen's strong positionality that good teaching is the key to the transformation and upliftment of South African society did not always go down well with individuals and those in power alike. After all, the mantra we all have to chant is 'research, research, research'. But Karen broke the mould; she taught well and is an exceptional administrator, archivist and researcher. Consequently, she earned the moral and intellectual right to chant her mantra, 'teach well for a better South Africa'.

How do we say goodbye to an exceptional educational activist and practitioner like Professor Karen Harris? I think music will help as it soothes the soul during troubling times. In this regard, an adaption (and apology from my side for my artistic liberty) of the first verse of 'Teach your children'⁴ of the Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young song is, in my view, a good place to start:

You, who are on the road (*Karen leaving us*)
Must have a code, you try to live by (*You had that code, and you lived by it, Karen*)
And so become yourself (*That you truly did*)
Because the past is just a goodbye (*Because what you have done cannot be erased*)

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But any goodbye needs flowers. So, in the words of the great Bluesman, Champion Jack Dupre, I want to bring you flowers while you are living and not when you are dead and gone. I want to bring you big, bright-red tubular *Aloe ferox* flowers because they symbolised well-being and grace in ancient cultures and are, in my view, symbolically you who aloe-like stood your teaching ground. And as you close the *plaashek* (gate to the University of Pretoria farm in student language of a bygone era) at the intersection of Roper and Lynnwood behind you, I leave you with 'Plaashek' by Uys Krige and his beautiful imagery of roads, travelling, nostalgia and aloes. Hopefully, this will aid you in looking back and forward, Janus-like, at a job well done as a champion teacher.

Plaashek

Uys Krige

*Bloedrooi die aalwyn langs
die slingerpad.
Dis of daar vonke uit
elk vuurpyl spat.
Maar niks, niks roer nie . net
’n luggie wat
skrams aan die ritselende
grassate vat.*

*Daarbo die blou, blou lug,
daaronder die rivier
wat deur die boorde kronkel met
’n groene swier.
Niks stoor die yle swewende
bergstilte hier.*

*Ná al die jare maak ek weer
’n plaashek oop.
Waar het my paaie
tog nie geloop
om my hier by ’n hek te bring
van al my waan gestroop,
maar met my denke helder
en in my hart die hoop?*

*Die hek staan in die skad’wee van
’n kremetart.
Die stilte in my’s volkome met
niks troebels, niks verward.
Ek lig die knip. Ek maak
’n hek oop in my hart.*

Endnotes

- 1 Ladany, N. 2024. What we never say out loud in higher education, *Forbes*, 5 August. [Online] Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicholasladany/2024/08/05/what-we-never-say-out-loud-in-higher-education/> (Accessed on 8 November 2024).
 - 2 Two political parties in South Africa, Economic Freedom Fighters and the African National Congress.
 - 3 Harris, K.L. and van der Merwe, R. 2020. 'What's in the box?' - Archives, history skills and honours students. *Yesterday and Today*, (23): 30–43. [Online] Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10394/35501> (Accessed on 8 November 2024).
 - 4 Nash, G.W. (1970). Teach your children [Song]. *Déjà vu* [Album]. Atlantic Records.
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HONOURS GROUP



Khumo Sebola ✂

2008

Loenie Potgieter

Kobie Jacobs
a.k.a. Kobie

Tessa Bryson

Chantelle Snyman

A Tribute to Karen L. Harris: Professor, Mentor, Teacher and Friend

Cornelis Muller

Where does one begin to write a tribute to Professor Karen Harris? I have grappled with this question, as I am not sure that anything I write here can truly capture what a remarkable historian, lecturer, researcher, colleague and friend she is. A true polymath, she effortlessly masters every role she undertakes and exemplifies a level of competence and dedication that is truly superhuman. She is someone who does not wait for things to happen but makes things happen. As we celebrate her bittersweet retirement from the University of Pretoria, an institution to which she has dedicated so much of herself, many will attest to the exceptional legacy she leaves behind. Through her commitment to higher education and her contributions to the fields of History as well as Heritage and Cultural Tourism Studies, she has distinguished herself as an expert and respected leader both in South Africa and beyond. It is particularly in her role as a mentor that she has profoundly shaped my development as an academic, especially regarding teaching and learning.

From the moment I first encountered Professor Harris as a first-year student, I was captivated not only by her deep knowledge and understanding of South African history but also by the dynamic energy she brought to the lecture hall. Her lectures were far more than mere information delivery; they were immersive experiences that ignited a passion for History in all her students. Her ability to bring History to life, connecting past events to contemporary issues with insightful humour and wit, made the subject both riveting and relevant.

In 2024, as fate would have it, I had the opportunity to co-teach this very same module with her – a module she has taught for more than two decades. In our introductory lecture, she celebrated the hundreds of students who chose to study education and embark on a career in teaching. She encouraged them and reminded them of their responsibilities, noting that ‘a brain surgeon works on two brains a day, but a teacher works on hundreds’. I can only imagine the countless minds she has influenced and inspired as a teacher throughout her career. While technology has evolved and we have both grown older – and hopefully wiser – the core of her enthusiasm, dedication and high expectations for her students remain unchanged from the two decades since she first enthralled me as a first-year student with her evident love for history and teaching.

As I transitioned from student to colleague and had the opportunity to work much more closely with her, I was inspired by her creativity, meticulous organisational skills, and devotion to her teaching. Teaching was the core around which she juggled all her other responsibilities. Even when promoted to full Professor and later appointed as Head of the Department, she still carried a full teaching load. Observing her behind-the-scenes efforts revealed the depth of commitment required to create meaningful learning experiences. I realised very quickly that teaching is hard work and that it requires hours of commitment that those in power often take for granted or acknowledge only by scrutinising throughput rates and demanding quantifiable outputs. But despite this, as she has always made clear, it is the students and their success that matter. She has been an excellent educator. Her assessments encouraged students to work hard and quite literally think outside the box. She has this enviable ability to magically conjure up meaningful learning opportunities. Her famed biography assignment for first-year students, for example, offered a unique, contextual, challenging and creative learning opportunity. It introduced students to primary source research, and indeed, for many of us, this was our first foray into the world of research and would kickstart our journeys into academia.

152 Another characteristic that deserves to be highlighted is her endurance. When it came to teaching, I have never heard her complain, even during the most demanding times. All academics are known for grumbling about their workloads, but if we are honest, it is not the teaching that gets us complaining but rather the marking. Teaching may have its challenges, but marking? That is where the real drama unfolds. There was one unforgettable moment when Professor Harris and I co-taught a World History module, and she invited me to mark the final exams at her home. Imagine a mountain of exam scripts piled high on her kitchen table, looking like a paper Kilimanjaro. We dove into the marking with enthusiasm. And marked. And marked some more. As the hours ticked on, we found ourselves in the wee hours of the morning. I glanced over at Professor Harris, who was still at it with laser-like focus, pen in hand, eyes glued to each script. Meanwhile, I was starting to resemble a zombie from an exam apocalypse. Eventually, I was shown to the spare bedroom for a much-needed nap. I woke up a few hours later, expecting that she had taken a break from the marking too, but instead, there she was, still at the table, eyes burning through those scripts as if they as if they held the key to unlocking an ancient truth. The dedication was palpable. Not everyone can pull an all-nighter of epic proportions (nor should they), but that moment truly highlighted to me her unwavering commitment to getting the job done.

Another significant quality she possesses is her exceptional ability to guide students back on track. I benefited greatly from this assertive approach when I struggled with procrastination and lack of direction during the completion of my Master's studies. Although she was not my supervisor at this time, she noticed my struggles and intervened with keenness and motivational prowess. Her commitment to my project became unwavering, as demonstrated by her prompt feedback and our regular meetings, often on Sunday afternoons at a coffee shop. Her high standards and insightful guidance taught me the value of commitment, timely intervention and the perfect blend of constructive criticism and encouragement.

When I finally wrote in the acknowledgements of my dissertation that my 'study would have been so much poorer without her guidance and support' and that she 'gave me the courage and inspiration to complete this study', it barely scratched the surface of how much her supervision meant to me. It remains the qualification I am proudest of, and a graduation photo of me flanked by her and Professor Johan Bergh, taken on that memorable day, is proudly displayed in my office. It fills me with appreciation every time I see it. Her influence did not end with my degree; it has profoundly shaped my own approach to supervision. I aspire to be for my students what she has been for me and I hope to carry forward her spirit of dedication and support to the students I will have the privilege to supervise.

Professor Harris' impact is also reflected in her notable leadership within the academic community. Her role as Director of the University of Pretoria Archives, becoming the first female Chairperson of the Historical Association of South Africa, and later chairing the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies set new standards for leadership and mentoring. Her ability to foster an inclusive and collaborative environment was instrumental in advancing the academic standing of these institutions and providing a model of excellence in leadership for emerging and established scholars alike. Our Department and the Faculty of Humanities will miss her guidance and wisdom. She cares about individuals and she goes above and beyond the call of duty to support every student and colleague who crosses her path.

Becoming an academic requires extensive study and knowledge, but being a truly exceptional academic involves qualities that go well beyond what can be gleaned from books. Traits such as kindness, creativity and a genuine passion for the field are essential and are developed through experience. This is not something that can always be taught. Professor Harris embodies these

qualities and her investment in those she mentored was not just a series of fleeting efforts but the foundation of her enduring legacy. She has indeed left an indelible mark on higher education. As we celebrate her remarkable career, we do so knowing that her approaches to pedagogy, research, leadership and just being a good human being will remain a source of inspiration as we strive to uphold the standards she has set for us.

In her retirement, she will undoubtedly transition from her current duties and responsibilities but will likely continue working on many of the projects she is involved with now and will undoubtedly take on new ones in the future. We look forward to what this new phase in her life will bring. For her enthusiasm, commitment and friendship, I will forever be grateful. Thank you also to Hennie and Kaylee for sharing her with us. Professor Harris, may retirement be a time for you to reflect and bask in your accomplishments. A very long time ago, I assured you that if ever you needed our help, there is an army of students ready to rise up and support you. I maintain that this is still true. Rest assured that with the unwavering support of those you have mentored and those you have taught that your legacy will continue to inspire students for generations to come.

Channelling Chinese Chronicles: Karen Leigh Harris and Chinese South African Studies

Nisa Paleker and Sias Conradie

There is no consensus on what the constituent elements of a *festschrift* are. Some scholars argue that it is an edited volume of essays honouring an individual's oeuvre while others are accepting of a single essay as *festschrift*. This is a single *festschrift* in an edited volume. David Schleicher (2013) offers a somewhat tongue-in-cheek formula for writing a *festschrift*.¹ First, offer a praise poem, second, engage with the scholarship and in particular, find a gap in that scholarship and third, reflect on how one's own work addresses these gaps. We can do the first and attempt the second and third part of the formula because neither one of us as co-authors are authoritative specialists in Chinese South African studies, Paleker less so than Conradie. Despite this and not strictly applying the formula, we can offer a *festschrift* in the best possible way we know how.

Festschrifts are a distinctly European, and more so German, as the word indicates tradition. A routine search for models on writing or compiling a *festschrift* brings forth a patchy body of scholarship and what is available offers contentious meanings, and more importantly, a variety of opinions on the value or merit of a *festschrift*. It has been described as a routine, a somewhat onerous task celebrating a scholar's contribution.² These same authors identify the Latin name for a *festschrift* as *'liber amicorum'*, or 'book of friends'.³ These contentions around the meanings and purpose of the *festschrift* of course add to the perception that *festschrifts* have little academic value, particularly if it is a 'book of friends'. It is 'a ritual celebration which confirms that the spirit of a scholar has been passed to others'.⁴ In this sense, it is a rite of passage, not so much for the honouree as for those doing the honouring. It calls for reflection on the meaning of a body of scholarship and the scholar being honoured.

This *festschrift* is occasioned by Harris' retirement this year. This essay is an attempt to offer an appraisal of Harris' scholarship on Chinese-South African historiography, admittedly by a non-specialist and an emerging scholar. This is neither a review essay that offers nuanced critique of Harris' scholarship nor is it a complete survey of all her published scholarship on this subject. It offers a selective reading of selected works and how these have been taken forward by other

scholars. In this sense it is also an attempt to assess the impact and place of Harris' oeuvre in a larger body of scholarship on Chinese South African studies.

Karen Harris has been Professor of History in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies (DHHS) since 1999. Wearing a different hat, she has also served as the Director of the University of Pretoria Archives for a quarter century. Since 2017 she has been Head of Department of the DHHS. Part of institutional history in more ways than one, Harris is inscribed into the academic space as teacher, researcher, colleague, supervisor, mentor, archivist and friend. In all these roles she commands respect and allegiance on the basis of a shared history, shared struggle and a shared vision with close colleagues and students.

This brief essay is structured in two distinct registers based on each of our experiences with Karen Harris. Sias Conradie was one of Harris' PhD students working in the field of Chinese South African studies and is now an Assistant Lecturer in the Department, while Nisa Paleker is a colleague in the Department. Our contributions thus reflect these different relationships.

156 **Paleker:** I met Karen Harris in 2011 as an external moderator for my History course at UNISA. In October 2012, I joined the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies. We were now colleagues. And over the years we became friends, finding a strong alignment in our vision of higher education. In the words of Gayatri Spivak, both Karen Harris and I are 'university teachers'⁵ for whom 'teaching comes closest to the sacred'.⁶ We work in Spivak's 'teaching machine' which is not actually a teaching machine anymore. And in this sense, based on our shared understanding of the role of the university as no-longer a teaching machine, we are on the margins. In writing about the teaching machine and her place within it, Spivak speaks to her marginality as an Indian woman. I am speaking about a different kind of marginality arising from feeling displaced in an academy in which teaching, in the noblest sense of the practice and calling is no longer the '*raison d'être*' of a public university. To borrow Spivak's title: Harris and those who share her vision and idea of the public university, find ourselves '*Outside in the teaching machine*'.⁷ Like other machines, the teaching machine is not overly concerned with the human. Numbers – of publications, graduates, pass rates, ranking and benchmarking and performance indicators – are the engine animating the teaching machine. How the numbers are arrived at is of less importance. One of the consequences of this is the fantasy of autonomy and individualism within the academy. Another is the illusion of consensus, transparency and 360-degree accountability. Within this configuration, academics and

students are both economic units of measurement. This is not only the case of the institution in which Harris finds herself, but a global phenomenon identified as the 'neoliberal' university.

Much has been written about the neoliberal university, the managerialist and hierarchical culture of institutions, the lack of top-down accountability and transparency. This body of scholarship offers searing critique of the neoliberal university/machine, frequently followed by calls for transformation. Transformation within South African higher education, however, is in a state of suspended animation, responsive only to addressing apartheid injustices and inequalities. Despite the plethora of global critical scholarship and the animated voices, such as Harris for one, within the machine, and most importantly, despite the global and local calls for decolonisation, the machine remains impervious. As machines are wont to do, number-crunching remains a major driver. Students and academics are reduced to units of measurements: pass/fail, research outputs. And key to this is performativity. Driven by global market pressures, higher education institutions no longer function as public institutions serving a public good.

Within the reconfigured university/machine, someone like Harris stands out for a number of reasons. This is where I find myself aligned with her vision of the university/machine as serving a public good, where teaching is at the core of what academics do, along with research and publications. During her tenure as the Head of the Department, Harris has continuously sought to challenge the larger institutional culture of managerialism, the relegation of teaching as subordinate to numbers of publications and has given substance to ideas of consultation and consensus, transparency and accountability. Within the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies, these are not illusions. She is a vocal advocate of whatever remains of the idea of public service within higher education. Furthermore, she has been instrumental in cultivating a departmental culture of accountability, serving students and colleagues rather than imposing managerial hierarchies. There is no doubt many other scholars and Heads of Departments who embody these and other fine qualities. I can, however, only speak of my direct experience of the workings of the department in which I work with Harris.

One shared experience which perhaps illustrates the importance of teaching, not instruction to meet the 80+% pass rate, as well as the university/machine's insistence on performance indicators, relates to both Harris and I being called to account for a two-year pass rate below 75%. We had to account for our course contents, assessment instruments and teaching praxis. While

accountability is necessary, the implication of having our courses 'reviewed' because they were 'high touch' – meaning student pass rates did not meet the university requirement – was that we were not doing enough to ensure student pass rates. What was implicitly communicated to us was that our respective courses were too challenging, we were expecting too much from students and assessment instruments were perhaps too difficult. Given this, what was further implied was that we perhaps not insist on too many written assessments. In this instance also, Harris' vocal defence of, and insistence on, reading and writing as a necessary requirement of the discipline of History, once again affirmed for me her vision of higher education.

Lest all of the above suggest that Harris is a rebel or bona fide revolutionary, let me hasten to add that she is less rebel and more consistently true to her own vision. Or perhaps, if holding on to a vision of higher education as a public good is revolutionary inside the teaching machine, then she is revolutionary. She is 'outside in the teaching machine'. But this is also not entirely an accurate description. As Head of Department, Director of the UPA, Chair of the Research Ethics Committee and frequently acting in many other managerial capacities, she is also part of the governmentality of the university/machine. However, in all of these various capacities she holds true to herself, navigating the insider/outsider position with dexterity and grace. This is only possible I believe when there is a strong moral purpose animating her teaching, research and management tasks.

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Through years of engagement with Karen Harris I have come to believe that her sense of self is inextricably tied to teaching. Her research, her sense of the past of things, of preservation and heritage, all flow from this first pillar. As a university teacher, she is passionately committed to the success of her students, undergraduate and postgraduate. As a mentor, she has guided many of her students into fulfilled adulthood as thriving, productive members within and outside the academy. The human is very important to her. It is no surprise then that her research also focuses on the human, as I will elaborate further.

Within a machine institution, Harris therefore stands out as a vocal advocate of the human. Small human touches like a bloom from her garden left outside my office, or adorning the office of the Departmental Administrator are one example. A thank you note for a favour or a gift recalls an earlier, genteel time, as does her meticulous attention to the niceties of a departmental tea or lunch. A solicitous word to colleagues, an inquiry into the well-being of a family member, remembering a colleague who is gluten intolerant and so many other human gestures of kindness manifest a large and generous spirit.

Conradie: The course of my own work certainly would have been very different had it not been for Professor Harris' involvement. Although my interest in Chinese history, and resultingly my pursuit of Sino-African history with a focus on Southern Africa as a speciality, emerged before I met Professor Harris, during my time abroad in Xiamen, it is to her that any serious scholarship I have produced on the subject is indebted. I still remember as a Master's student at Stellenbosch University puzzling over what my topic of research should be, debating between several different areas of interest or if I should build upon my Honours' work and focus on journalistic history. However, I ultimately fell back on my old passion, Chinese history. Seeking to find a way to marry it to something new and more relevant I turned to the body of work concerning Chinese history in South Africa.⁸ Here was my first encounter with Professor Harris' work because she is easily the authority on the subject. To even consider writing on this topic without consulting her works first would be a catastrophic academic failure. When I finally found for myself a lacuna, that of the history of the Qing Dynasty's involvement with Southern Africa, I was met with a new challenge. None of my supervisors had expertise in this field or experience with it. South African-born Chinese history is a narrow enough avenue as is but the history of the Qing Dynasty? Virtually unheard of in South African historical scholarship.

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At this juncture came a moment that has had an indelible impact on the future arc of my career. My supervisor at the time, Dr Anton Ehlers, was the one who suggested that we reach out to Professor Harris, see if she would be interested in supervising my PhD research. I might have been sceptical at the time that she would agree to such a thing but, as anyone who knows her personally can attest, Professor Harris has a seeming inability to say no to more work (even when she really should sometimes). The moment a student goes from simply reading about the works of a preeminent scholar and source of their own studies to actually working with them, corresponding personally, is always sure to have a profound influence and it was no different for me. Professor Harris' advice and insights proved invaluable. It was Professor Harris who first introduced me to the wider study of Overseas Chinese migratory communities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Without her I never would have been able to fully understand the works of Gungwu and Yen-ching Hwang, or been able to use their own meticulous cataloguing of the history of Chinese overseas migration to formulate a broad understanding of the phases of Qing policy towards such migration. It was also Professor Harris' detailed body of work considering the lived experiences of the Chinese indentured miners on the Transvaal which helped to develop the full picture of Consul-General Liu Yulin's involvement with the Indentured Labour experiment and the Transvaal government.

When I decided to continue in the same general topic for my PhD it was through discussion with Professor Harris on the many different aspects of Chinese-Southern African history that I came to see the absence of research concerning Lesotho. Here was yet again a neglected piece of history, among the highest percentage of Chinese living in Southern Africa, yet of their own history little to nothing had been preserved or investigated. Indeed, Professor Harris has always maintained a keen eye not just for the large base of knowledge she has accumulated over the years but also for where there are still gaps in the scholarship. As any historian worth their salt could tell you there is always more to investigate, even in our seemingly oversaturated present, but it increasingly requires the ability to dig deeper, through broad strokes, and see what exists between or underneath. Professor Harris has continued to encourage the development of the field of Chinese-Southern African history in this way, helping to foster future researchers such as myself in our exploration of parts of this history which remain unexamined. Professor Harris also provided indispensable assistance to me through the contacts she had developed. My work on the lived history of the Chinese in Lesotho would have been inexcusably less comprehensive had Professor Harris not introduced me to Sean Maliehe, a native of Lesotho who had done some of the only academic work concerning the Chinese communities within Lesotho at the time.⁹ It was thanks to her that I was also able to meet and establish long running contacts with Dr Bao Maohong, assisting him with access to the *Rand Daily Mail* archives for his own research and accompanying Professor Harris to meet him personally when he visited the University in 2023.

Putting aside even the granular details of her specific contributions to my own work and my own research, Professor Harris' style and our work together shaped my own approach to my work. As a PhD candidate I can recall Professor Harris once commenting on how she used to keep by her desk a calendar with all the different things she needed to get done in a paper, the separate sections and subsections, how this helped her hold herself accountable to make sure that, no matter how small, she always got at least something done every day. Although incremental progress can, by definition, seem small, when one is consistent it quickly builds not only to objective progress on any project but also to a mindset change, a feeling of advancing which makes it easier and easier to return to the work. I use this exact approach in my life still today, not only for my scholarship but even concerning other aspects of life.

I think anyone who has ever worked with Professor Harris can tell you about her work ethic, so I will not dwell on that long. Suffice to say I have rarely met a person more constantly on the go, from one

obligation to the next, from running the UPA, the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies, overseeing multiple and different students' work, teaching the first-year History students, involving herself with the UPCT and chairing the Faculty of Humanities Ethics Committee. Professor Harris has brought this same diligence and drive to her all facets of her research. More than anything else, however, it is her continuing fascination with this relatively under-researched part of South African history, which has left its mark on me. After creating what I would call the comprehensive account of the history of the South African Chinese communities, Professor Harris was still more than intrigued by the prospect of examining the history of state-level contacts between the Qing Dynasty and different colonial administrations of Southern Africa, of the intersection between Chinese and Indian resistance to the Transvaal Asiatic Registration Act and of our ongoing pursuit of the *Chinese Overseas Gazette*, the *Qiao Sheng Piao*, the oldest Chinese-language publication in Africa. The discovery of the *Gazette* has been a passion project of Professor Harris' since before I even began to consider specialising in Chinese-Southern African history and even today, still, we frequently discuss hopes and plans for the eventual discovery of copies of the *Gazette* with descendants of the old Chinese migrants to Southern Africa.

It is this passion for her field which goes a long way in explaining why she has become the indisputable foremost South African historian on anything Chinese related. It is this same passion which, also, shaped my own studies and my own work. I believe it is also this passion that will in large part ensure that she remains the foremost expert within this field for some time to come, whose work has done more than any other to shine light on an oft-neglected part of South Africa's past and also provide a sturdy foundation upon which the work of future researchers and students will better be able to build and expand.

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Chronicling the Chinese in South Africa and abroad

As the leading, and really only, South African sinologist of note, Harris' focus on Chinese South African history started with her PhD studies; the title of the thesis, *A history of the Chinese in South Africa to 1912*, was submitted in 1998.¹⁰ The study focuses on the early history of the Chinese in South Africa, going back to the seventeenth century Indian Ocean entanglements. The thesis outlines these early entanglements before zooming in on Chinese indentured labour in the period 1904–1910. But the Chinese presence in South Africa went further back in history to the seventeenth century. The Dutch entanglement with and colonisation of parts of the Indian Ocean world brought

the many and diverse peoples of the Indian Ocean, including the Chinese, to the Cape. Though numerically small, the Chinese presence was sufficiently disturbing for the Dutch and later, British settlers, to view them as a threat, as thoroughly alien and other. Her PhD study shifted the study of the Chinese in South Africa away from the indentured labour-economy lens in more ways than one. First, by tracing the Chinese presence to the seventeenth century, her PhD study brings into sharp focus what would later be termed transnational colonial networks.¹¹ Second, by widening her scope, the study uncovers the complexity of early, and later, nineteenth and twentieth century colonial entanglements and networks, especially with the Indian Ocean world; the Chinese were not just historically fixed in coercive labour regimes but also displayed agency in voluntary migrations. Third, Harris' PhD study anticipated later scholarly attention on Africa-Indian Ocean connections, still a relatively small field in comparison with the degree and scope of scholarship on the Atlantic world. And four, her PhD study opened up a new field of 'minority studies' within South African historiography. The study of the Chinese in South Africa remains a limited field which implies that Harris' scholarly interlocuters are largely international.

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While Chinese indenture figures prominently in this early study, the thesis offers a broader scope that focuses on what she describes as the 'human' element, that is, the perceptions of Chinese among Black and White South Africans and the impact of this on the small Chinese community. This perception, as she shows with ample evidence, was largely negative. The hostility towards Chinese migrants emanated at the popular and government level, with numerous pieces of legislation such as the earliest Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904, framing Chinese migrants as wholly other and unwelcome. More significantly, through the examination of correspondences of these early indentured Chinese, the thesis foregrounds Chinese voices who recount their experiences in these letters.

This early study in what is variously termed as Chinese-South African history, overseas Chinese studies has been followed by numerous publications on various aspects of the history of the Chinese in South Africa. Arguably the foremost South African historian focusing on Chinese-South Africa history, Harris has also been involved with the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas as the Africa representative. In the 2006 article "Not a Chinaman's chance': Chinese labour in South Africa and the USA", the comparative transnational perspective is widened to include global stereotypes and perceptions of overseas Chinese.¹² This article, as well as other publications by Harris have been widely cited by numerous scholars from a range of fields. Barry van Wyk, a scholar

in journalism studies, in his 2020 article 'Networking a quiet community: South African Chinese news reporting and networking' takes up one of the global stereotypes, namely that of an insular community which has managed to make connections and forge networks 'to maintain its unique and vibrant identity in a dangerous environment'.¹³ By focusing on Chinese South African media, van Wyk paints a picture of a dynamic community with transnational networks, predominantly with China and other overseas Chinese communities. However, the perception of the Chinese as insular remains. These networks may be transnational, but they are predominantly within Chinese cultural and ethnic circuits. The implication of this is that perceptions of the Chinese as an insular and insecure community in South Africa that Harris first discussed in her PhD thesis continue into more contemporary scholarship. What van Wyk's scholarship does successfully outline is the extent to which the Chinese community in South Africa have managed to carve out a space for themselves, replete with what van Wyk terms Chinese media. The precarity and racism faced by the early Chinese community as Harris outlines in several publications, is less overt. What precarity remains is opportunistically criminal as indicated by the vignette van Wyk describes in his article.

Philip Kuhn makes two salient observations that also run as threads through Harris' Chinese South Africa oeuvre. The first, and linked to perceptions of host communities, is the point that Chineseness in the 'mental maps of the majority' is reflected back to the Chinese communities outside China.¹⁴ This is described as 'prescribed otherness'.¹⁵ Kuhn's second point regards ethnic essentialism, that there are distinctly Chinese qualities that are considered unique to the Chinese, such as the quiet descriptor van Wyk deploys. Chinese insularity, unobtrusiveness, thrift and hard work are among the popular stereotypes, which, as both Harris and Bright show in their respective works, filled the popular imaginary and kept the Chinese community othered over centuries.

The Chinese indenture experiment and experience is paralleled by the Indian indenture experience, especially in South Africa. This is another area of the Chinese South African history that Harris returns to in a 2013 article which takes a comparative approach to the Chinese and Indian indenture experience.¹⁶ Despite the apparent similarities in the experiences of both the Chinese and Indians as unwanted 'others', there are significant differences that Harris highlights, most notably the size of the two population groups, the nature of indentured and free labour (services) as well as the question of gender, among other differences. The question of gender remains an unexplored area for further studies both in respect of the Indian and Chinese indenture experience and migration more generally.

In the admittedly limited corpus of scholarship on the Chinese in South Africa, the Chinese voice remains largely muted, even in Harris' scholarship. There are glimpses of Chinese agency evident from Harris' PhD study through to a later article published in 2002 and more so in the 2010 article on commemorations and the 2017 article on Chinese responses to Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE).¹⁷ As Harris acknowledges in her 2002 article, "Whiteness', 'blackness', 'neitherness'", focus has largely remained on what can be termed 'official' Chinese responses to discriminatory legislation, segregation and oppression.¹⁸ The absence of the Chinese non-official voice is thus a lacuna in both the larger corpus of South African historiography as well as Harris' work. This lacuna unfortunately entrenches the stereotype of the Chinese as insular and impenetrable and consequentially, always the other.

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Although today the field of Sino-African studies is enjoying something of a vogueish *je ne sais quoi*, from economists to political scientists and journalists, it can be rather easy to forget that this is still a relatively recent development, particularly with regard to South Africa. Harris' decision to focus on the history of the Chinese in South Africa has proved almost prescient, anticipatory of the interest in the field that would develop in the decades since she completed her thesis. Much of the emerging Sino-African field has also remained bound to the present, to studies of economies and postulations on geopolitics. Were it not for Harris' seminal, if not foundational, work to place a historical lens over this topic it may well have continued to linger on, neglected and silenced, for some time still. Though counterfactuals are rarely worth investing in, what can be said without a doubt is that regardless of the 'what ifs' or 'could haves', Harris' work is the largest contribution to the scholarly study of Chinese history in South Africa to date. Harris' contributions have not remained consigned to the field of the theoretical either. From practical and active involvement with the Chinese community of South Africa, to a formative and pivotal role in guiding and supporting the emergence of South African sinology through younger, prospective, researchers, Harris' influence within the field exists both in a local as well as an international context.

If one were to assess Harris' importance to the field of global Chinese history based on the company that she has kept, then there cannot be more impressive company than Professor Wang Gungwu himself.¹⁹ The father, in many senses, of the contemporary field of Overseas Chinese study, Wang Gungwu first met Harris when he was still serving as the Vice Chancellor of the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1992. At the time Harris was doing research in the Public Records Office when she was invited by Professor Gungwu to become a founding member of the International Society for

the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO). ISSCO has continued to serve as a platform for sinology ever since, combining the efforts of scholars throughout the world and helping to deepen the breadth and depth of Chinese studies.

Harris' work has also had a very tangible consequence for the lives of people living in South Africa today. Her work was involved in two significant court cases within South Africa. The first of these was a 2008 case contending that South African-born Chinese also constituted a formerly discriminated against class of individual within apartheid South Africa.²⁰ Through her work, Harris had built up a large corpus of evidence for targeted discrimination against the Chinese community of South Africa which began even before there was a Union of South Africa, with both the earlier Cape and Transvaal settler administrations having passed their own legislation specifically targeting South African-born Chinese. The court's decision in favour of the Chinese Association of South Africa (CASA) who brought the matter to a head paved the way for more comprehensive reparative justice by acknowledging that the Chinese of South Africa had been among the many victims of the institutional White supremacy of both apartheid and the administrations which had preceded it. Harris' work would also be tangentially used in the 2022 successful hate speech case The Chinese Association (TCA) brought before the Equality Court.

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A festschrift, as an act of honouring a scholar, functions as a pause button, for reflection, evaluation and assessment. What is evident from this very brief reflection is that Harris has not only significantly shaped a field of study but continues to do so beyond disciplinary boundaries and outside the academy. Our combined but different experiences of and with Harris as colleague, supervisor, mentor and friend have one element of commonality, our appreciation of the '*menschlichkeit*'²¹ that Harris embodies and reflects in her teaching, research and engagement with colleagues.

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A Tribute to Professor Karen Harris

Patrick James Chong

On behalf of the Chinese community in South Africa, I would like to pay tribute to Professor Harris, who through her affidavit assisted us in being recognised as previously disadvantaged under the apartheid regime and therefore to be included in the generic definition as Black in terms of Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE).

The negotiations with the Minister of Labour (Membathisi Mdladlana) started in 1999 and it was never the intention of the Chinese Association of South Africa (CASA) to go to court and embarrass our government. I appeared personally before the Labour Portfolio Committee in 2006 and was given assurances that there was no reason for South African born-Chinese and those who would have been entitled to have been naturalised before April 1994, to not be recognised as historically disadvantaged. Even with the support of the Labour Portfolio Committee, we could not get any positive reaction from the Minister of Labour. After many letters and meetings, the Minister informed us that only the courts could rule on this matter. We therefore approached the courts on the recommendation of the Minister.

When the journey started in 1999, we approached the late Advocate George Bizos, who had over the years represented Nelson Mandela and the ANC, to ask his opinion on whether we had a strong case in seeking recognition as historically disadvantaged. Advocate Bizos advised us that we should seek recognition and accepted our request to represent us together with ENSafrica (Africa's largest law firm boasting more than one hundred years of experience)¹ as the instructing attorneys.

All the evidence and affidavits provided for the case were from Chinese community members, except for the affidavit from Professor Harris. The fact that Professor Harris had written many articles on the history of the Chinese in South Africa made her the perfect expert on the topic. When I first spoke to her about whether she could help us, she was more than enthusiastic and offered us examples of how disadvantaged the community had been through the years. The legal team felt that her affidavit was the independent view of an unbiased expert.

The impact of getting Chinese recognised as historically disadvantaged has been huge. The main reason that I personally took on the task was that education has always been ultra-important to the Chinese community. The ruling has allowed our youth to continue to graduate at our top universities. With the skills shortage impacting on our economy, the Chinese graduates are making a meaningful contribution to our country. Professor Harris, by getting involved and supporting our fight for recognition has made a lasting contribution to South Africa

The Chinese community in South Africa will always be grateful for your assistance in our court case and we wish you all the best on your retirement.

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... and So it Begins ...

Heather A. Thuynsma

What a truly awe-inspiring woman we have had in our midst!

As the tributes assembled here prove, Karen Harris has had an impact on all she has encountered, however briefly. She has certainly earned the right to be celebrated for her professional prowess.

But she should also be hailed for her profound humanity.

Her generous spirit is something she has modelled for all her colleagues and students. And it is my fervent hope that each of us will embrace the lessons she has painstakingly shown us and pay her compassion and thoughtfulness forward as we go through our lives.

Karen, you and I have walked a turbulent road together and ushered more than a few *hadedas* out of our way! I treasure the concern you have always shown me, your endless encouragement – especially during our 2 am text-message exchanges – has made me think and kept me inspired.

However, now I can only hope you will take more time for yourself and get more sleep. As I said, I can only hope...

In you, Karen I have found a fellow convergent thinker whose natural ability to make connections (often in half sentences and thoughts!) has sparked many a new venture and opened the door to several new realities. This curiosity and your attention to detail has spread to your students, many of whom are/have been project managers within ESI – including the very talented editor of this volume.

I am personally grateful for your support for ESI and its publishing arm over the years. You have done more to promote our work than even our own communications team! It is, therefore, fitting, and an honour, for our team to be able to produce this volume for you.

I will tell you, this was a struggle ...

Our plan was to keep this entire project a surprise. But we are also very aware of your uncanny sixth sense, and you have no idea how many times you unexpectedly dropped in on our planning discussions! Over the past year, we have run several stealthy information gathering operations with the help of your family and your colleagues in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies and the UP Archives. The contributors to this book were sworn to silence – we even went so far as to give the project the code name ‘Special K’ to keep details from slipping. I know you suspected something because you peppered each member of the team with questions, but we hope this volume was still a surprise.

As Vasu Reddy continues to remind us, retirement is a question of punctuation. For most they see it as a full stop, but here he encourages you to treat it as a semi-colon. It is a necessary pause for you to reflect on a celebrated career, but it is also a time for you to gather up a head of steam for the next challenge I know you are already plotting.

172 The ESI team looks forward to working with you as you turn to the next chapter of your life.

Come on, we simply can’t wait!!

We hope this book will give you some inkling of what you have meant to people at the University of Pretoria and around the world.

May you read of your awesomeness, treasure the memories each one of us has shared, and continue to inspire every person you greet.

Karen, my colleague and dear friend ... THANK YOU!!

About the Contributors

Vasu Reddy

Professor Vasu Reddy is Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Internationalisation) at the University of the Free State. He is former Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria.

Robyn Schnell

Originally hailing from the coastal city of Durban, Robyn Schnell began her tertiary education at the University of Pretoria in 2018. She completed her undergraduate degree, a Bachelor of Arts majoring in History, English and Psychology in 2020. Following this, Robyn continued studying and completed her Bachelor of Social Science Honours (History) in 2021 and her Master's of Social Science (History) in 2023, both under the supervision of Professor Karen Harris. She has previously worked as a project coordinator and writer for the Faculty of Humanities' Communications Department at UP and also as a project liaison between the Faculty of Humanities and the InnoFood Africa Project. Since April 2023, Robyn has worked as a press manager for ESI. She is currently enrolled for a PhD in History at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom, which she plans to complete by the end of 2027.

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Edwin T. Smith

Having been involved with writing for almost four decades, Mr Edwin T. Smith is the author of *Immortal: A poetic memento for Vuyisile Miles Smith* (2016) and *Umalusi (The Shepard): A collection of Xhosa poems* (2023). Smith has published academic articles in peer-reviewed journals and opinion pieces in the popular media like newspapers and magazines, local and abroad. Smith, who was the inaugural Director of the Mamelodi Campus of the University of Pretoria (2004–2016) currently holds the positions of Manager: Campus Operations for the Mamelodi Campus, Head of Residence: Tuksdorp and Extraordinary Lecturer in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies, Faculty of Humanities where he is a PhD candidate (History) in the self-same Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the University of Pretoria.

Caroline Nicholson

Professor Caroline Nicholson completed her BProc and LLB degrees at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and her LLM and LLD degrees at the University of South Africa (UNISA). She served her articles of Clerkship in Johannesburg and was admitted as a practicing Attorney and Notary Public. Professor Nicholson joined the Law Faculty at UNISA in 1986 and remained there for twelve years, after which she moved to the University of Pretoria (UP) where she remained for fifteen years. During her time in UP's Faculty of Law, Professor Nicholson progressed to full Professor and Head of Department, completed training as a Family Mediator and completed the Arbitration Foundation of Southern Africa National Diploma in Alternative Dispute Resolution. In 2014, Professor Nicholson was appointed Dean of Law at the University of the Free State (UFS). As Dean of Law at UFS, she was a Co-founder of the Free State Centre for Human Rights. She also served two terms as an Acting Judge in the High Court during her tenure at UFS. In January 2018, Professor Nicholson returned to the University of Pretoria as University Registrar.

Verne Harris

Professor Verne Harris is Acting Chief Executive of the Nelson Mandela Foundation. He was Mandela's archivist from 2004 to 2013, directed the Foundation's archives programme for fifteen years and the dialogue and advocacy programme for five years. He is an Adjunct Professor at the Nelson Mandela University, served in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and is a former Deputy Director of the National Archives. He has authored or co-authored six books, the most recent one being *Ghosts of Archive* (2021). He is the recipient of honorary PhDs from the University of Cordoba (Argentina 2014) and the University of Pretoria (South Africa 2023), held the Follet Chair at Dominican University (Chicago) from 2018 to 2019, received archival publication awards from Australia, Canada and South Africa, and both his novels were short-listed for South Africa's M-Net Book Prize. He was a selection panel member for Atlantic Fellows for Racial Equity (2017–2022) and has served on the Boards of Archival Science, the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, the Freedom of Expression Institute and the South African History Archive.

Ria van der Merwe

Dr Ria van der Merwe has been working in the University of Pretoria Archives for the past 25 years. She received her archival training from the Swedish National Archives, the South African Cultural Heritage Training and Technology Institute, Michigan State University, Chicago Historical Society and Smithsonian Institution, USA. She holds a PhD in History. She has presented a number of academic papers at international conferences and has published numerous peer-reviewed articles.

Alida Green

Dr Alida Green recently received a PhD in History from the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the University of Pretoria, with a dissertation titled *Dancing the night away: A history of Johannesburg's social dancing worlds, 1920s to 1950s*, under the supervision of Professor K.L. Harris. She has written numerous articles about ballroom and social dancing in South Africa, as well as a chapter titled 'Similar steps, different venues: The making of segregated dancing worlds in South Africa, 1910-39' for the book *Worlds of social dancing: Dance floor encounters and the global rise of couple dancing, c. 1910-40* (edited by James Nott and Klaus Nathaus 2022). She is an archivist at the University of Pretoria Archives and has worked with Professor Harris for the past twenty years.

Teresita Ang See

Teresita Ang See is a well-known social activist who has worked for social cohesion and integration of the ethnic Chinese minority into mainstream Philippine society. She is the founding President of Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran and now serves as Executive Trustee of the Kaisa Heritage Centre that houses Bahay Tsinoy, the museum of the Chinese in Philippine life. She is past President of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO) and the Philippine Association for Chinese Studies (PACS). She has written extensively and given lectures on the Chinese in the Philippines in local and international fora. She authored the five volumes of *The Chinese in the Philippines – problems and perspectives* (1990), among others; co-edited ten other books, among them *Tsinoy – the story of the Chinese in Philippine life* (2005), and co-edited with the late former Ambassador to China, Chito Sta. Romana, the *Philippines-China relations – beyond disputed waters* (2013). She is, however, better known as a peace and an anti-crime advocate who founded the Movement for Restoration of Peace and Order.

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Johan Bergh

Professor Johan Bergh is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Pretoria and was Head of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at UP from 1986 to 2011. He obtained his degrees cum laude from the University of Stellenbosch and UNISA and held positions at three universities. Johan is the author of eleven academic books and more than 35 articles in South African and international journals. He made regular contributions at local and international conferences and universities and was chairperson of two South African historical societies. Johan received research grants from prominent institutions and foundations, including the Mellon Foundation, the University of Oxford's Oppenheimer Fund, ABSA, the Jan Marais National Fund, the LW Hiemstra Trust, the Rupert Education Foundation, and the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns.

Tara Duncan

Tara Duncan is a Professor in Tourism Studies in the Centre for Tourism and Leisure Research (CeTLer) at Dalarna University, Sweden. Her research focuses on the intersections between mobilities, work and tourism, with a focus on decent work, dignity and sustainability within tourism and hospitality careers. She is the Chair of ATLAS (Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research), is a Resource Editor for *Tourism Geographies* and sits in the editorial board for *Social and Cultural Geography*. Jantien Veldman and Leontine Onderwater are the project event managers for ATLAS. Corné Dijkmans is the Manager Research at the Academy of Tourism, Breda University of Applied Science, the Netherlands. He is the incoming Chair of ATLAS (2024-) and the digital transformation of tourism is the central thread to his research.

Peter S. Li

Dr Peter S. Li is Professor Emeritus of Sociology, University of Saskatchewan, Canada, and Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. His research areas are race and ethnicity, immigration, and Chinese in Canada. He has published over 100 academic papers and eleven books, including *The Chinese in Canada* (1998), *The making of post-war Canada* (1996), and *Destination Canada: Immigration debates and issues* (2003). He was President (2004-2005) of the Canadian Sociology Association, and Editor (2005-2009) of the *Journal of International Migration and Integration*. He is an ex-officio Board member of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas. He has received several prestigious awards, including the Outstanding Contribution Award (2002) from the Canadian Sociology Association, the Earned Doctor of Letters (2011) from the University of Saskatchewan, and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012) as well as the Order of Canada (2016) from the Governor General of Canada.

Darryl Accone

Mr Darryl Accone is a writer, journalist and independent scholar in Johannesburg. He is the author of *All under heaven: The story of a Chinese family in South Africa* (2004) and *Euripides must die* (2018). Among his anthology pieces are contributions to *We write what we like: Celebrating Steve Biko* (2007), *From Jo'burg to Jozi: Stories about Africa's infamous city* (2011) and *Soweto inside out: Stories about Africa's famous township* (2005). He was Arts Editor of *The Star* from 1996 to 2000 and Books Editor of the *Mail & Guardian* from 2006 to 2017, during which time he revived and directed the M&G Literary Festival. His interests include Du Fu, Thomas Aquinas, Michel de Montaigne, Herman Melville, Guy Debord and the operation of the Fates and Fate in the works of Euripides and

Thomas Hardy. Melville and Debord feature in his Harold Wolpe Memorial Lecture of 2003, titled 'Passageways: Revisiting self, the society of the spectacle, and Moby-Dick in the wake of September 11'. He is a Fellow of the Salzburg Seminar and of the International Writers Workshop of Hong Kong Baptist University.

Alois Mlambo

Professor Alois Mlambo was born in 1952 in Zimbabwe. He was educated at St. Ignatius College, Harare, University of Canterbury, Kent, UK (BA Honours in English/History), the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) (MA in African History), Wesleyan University, Connecticut, USA (1982) (MA in American History), and Duke University, North Carolina, USA (PhD in Latin American History). He has taught at the following universities: Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, University of Zimbabwe, Duke University, University of North Carolina at Raleigh, University of Minnesota, the United States Coastguard Academy, New London, Connecticut, and University of Pretoria. Professor Mlambo has published widely on the social and economic history of Southern Africa, with a focus on Zimbabwe, including eight books. His most recent book publications are *History of Zimbabwe* (2014) and *A history of Southern Africa* (with Neil Parsons) (2018).

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Dawid J. Mouton

Dr Dawid J. Mouton first encountered Professor Karen Harris in 2003 as one of her first-year History students. He completed a BA in History and Cultural History in 2005; Bachelor of Heritage and Cultural Studies Honours in History in 2006; MA in History (Research) at the University of Nottingham in 2008; and returned several years later to the University of Pretoria (UP) and completed his PhD in History in 2023. He is a newly appointed Assistant Archivist at the UPA but before that he dabbled in a variety of areas, notably as a private research consultant and as a part-time temporary Lecturer at UP for GES 120, GES 210, and GES 310. He was also a full-time temporary Lecturer at UNISA from the middle of 2014 to the end of 2015. As for his work with Karen, that began in 2006 when he was a tutor. He returned in 2010 to continue work as a tutor under Karen's direction until the end of 2011. More recently, he was Karen's teaching assistant for GES 120 from 2017–2023.

Bronwyn Strydom

Dr Bronwyn Strydom works as an Archivist in the University of Pretoria Archives. She completed her PhD in History, focusing on the early history of the University of Pretoria and two post-doctoral fellowships also investigating the history of universities in South Africa. She has been a lecturer both

in History and History Education. Her responsibilities in the University of Pretoria Archives include the curation of the Art Archives collection and the oversight of UP collections in the Archives' Groenkloof Campus holdings.

John Illsley

Mr John Illsley was born and educated in Johannesburg, attending Roosevelt High School and the University of the Witwatersrand. He studied History and Geography and after a two-year stint in the SA Air Force, he started teaching at Pretoria Boys High School where he was head of the History Department for over twenty years and became the school's longest serving Second Master (Senior Deputy), retiring in 2023. He founded the school's Aeronautical Society which he ran for thirty years, earning recognition with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Aero Club of SA. In 2017-18 he undertook a Master's degree in History under the supervision of Professor Karen Harris. He has authored books and articles on aspects of aviation history in SA. His pastimes include rebuilding and flying vintage aircraft.

Ying Li

178 Dr Ying Li is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages at the University of South Africa. She obtained the degrees of Honours, Master's and her PhD in Heritage and Cultural Tourism from the University of Pretoria. Under supervision of Professor Karen Harris, she successively completed her Master's and PhD in 2006 and 2015. She was reputed as a 'rainbow student' owing to her hard work and her Master's thesis being referred to as a 'monumental work' in the development of tourism between China and South Africa. She completed her PhD with a thesis entitled *Chinese outbound tourism to South Africa: A strategic approach* and became the first PhD graduate in Heritage and Cultural Tourism at UP. She is a pioneer in the field of tourism development between China and South Africa at tertiary level in South Africa. She also specialises in applied linguistics, the learning and teaching of Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language, as well as Chinese cultural studies.

CR Botha

Mr CR Botha is a Lecturer and Program Coordinator for the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. In the former capacity he teaches junior students at second (Community-based Tourism) and third (Tourism Entrepreneurship) year and supervises the research of senior students at an Honours and Master's

level. In the latter capacity he oversees all postgraduate operations for both History and Heritage and Cultural Tourism at Honours, Master's (research and coursework) and PhD levels. In addition to the above, he currently also serves as a Senior Researcher and Project Manager for the Ministry of Tourism in South Africa, whilst acting as Executive Board Member and Chapter Coordinator for Africa on behalf of the international Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS). He is likewise a registered culture tourist guide for Gauteng and is a member of a number of academic and professional societies and organisations, locally and globally. His current research interests revolve around: tourist guiding; tourism law; sustainable development; indigenous storytelling; and tourism in South Africa and the global South more broadly.

Anemé Malan

Ms Anemé Malan was appointed Deputy Director-General at the Department of Tourism in October 2011 and holds a Master's degree in Economics (cum laude), a BCom Honours degree, a BSc and a Postgraduate Higher Education Diploma. She joined the public service in 1988 and her professional career has included service at Statistics South Africa, the National Treasury and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. She held senior management positions since 2003 and has extensive experience in the field of research, statistics and knowledge management. Ms Malan had the honour and privilege to work with and learn from Professor Karen Harris over a number of years. She is married and is the proud mom of two boys, one who had the privilege of being a student of Professor Harris.

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Karina Sevenhuysen

Dr Karina Sevenhuysen has been a lecturer in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies since 1990. She has lectured in History and Cultural History in the past and is currently involved in Heritage and Cultural Tourism modules. Her research focus is South Africa during the period of segregation, especially Black urbanisation and the creation of infrastructure in Black townships in the period before and during the Second World War (1939–1945). She completed her PhD under the supervision of Professor Karen Harris in 2023 on 'model native townships' in South Africa during the period of segregation (1910–1948).

Elena Bielich

Elena Bielich completed a BA majoring in English and History in 1977 at the University of Pretoria. She later completed a Higher Education Diploma in 1978 and later a BA Honours in History in

1984 both at UP. In 1992, she completed a Master of Business Leadership from the University of South Africa (UNISA). Bielich taught at Pretoria Girls High School from 1979 to 1982 and again from 1984 to 1986. This is where she met Karen Harris who was her colleague in the History Department at the school. From 1987 to 1992, Bielich lectured in History at Vista University in Pretoria, after which she entered the corporate environment. In 1997, Bielich became a shareholder and the first registered employee of Etion Create, an electronic design and manufacturing company originally known as Parsec. Etion Create became part of the listed Reunert Group in 2022. Bielich is currently the Executive Manager of Human Resources at Etion Create, which currently has 185 employees.

Melanie Yapp

A Chinese South African by birth, Melanie Yap has worked as a journalist, copywriter, researcher and teacher. She spent over fourteen years researching and writing *Colour, confusion and concessions: The history of the Chinese in South Africa* (1996), in collaboration with librarian, Dianne Leong Man. She has played an active role in the Chinese community, writing a newsletter for the Transvaal Chinese Association (TCA) for many years and serving as General Secretary of the Chinese Association of South Africa from 1980 to 1998.

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Wendy Cox

Ms Wendy Cox is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Pretoria in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies. Her research interest is the history of the South African public archive with specific reference to women archivists in the twentieth century.

Sian Tiley-Nel

Dr Sian Tiley-Nel is the Head of the University of Pretoria Museums, Curator of the Mapungubwe Collection and Head of the Mapungubwe Archive. She is also a former student of Professor Karen Harris.

Johan Wassermann

Professor Johan Wassermann is a full Professor in History Education at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. He is also the Head of the Department of Humanities Education in the Faculty of Education. Prior to his academic career, he taught History and Geography at the high-school level. Additionally, Professor Wassermann serves as the Editor-in-Chief of *Yesterday & Today*, an accredited journal focused on History Education. He serves on numerous editorial boards and is

the President of the Historical Association of South Africa and Co-Chair of AHE-Afrika. His primary professional objective is to prepare History teachers to critically engage with the subject matter within diverse South African classroom settings. In his research, he focuses on History textbooks, teaching controversial issues, minorities, and the minoritised in colonial Natal. He has a strong publication record in both national and international journals in the fields of Education and History and is a CI-rated researcher in the South African context.

Cornelis Muller

Dr Cornelis Muller is a Lecturer in History at the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies (DHHS) at the University of Pretoria, a position he has held since April 2024. He previously spent eight years as a History Lecturer at Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley. His research interests focus on South African history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Cornelis began his academic journey at the University of Pretoria in 2003, where he first met Professor Karen Harris who was his Lecturer for South African History in his first year. In 2005, Cornelis started tutoring for the DHHS and began working more closely with Professor Harris. While completing his Master's degree under her supervision, he had the opportunity to co-teach with her. This experience not only allowed him to benefit from her expertise but also profoundly shaped and affirmed his academic identity. Thanks to her guidance and support, he left the University of Pretoria at the end of 2012 to pursue a PhD in History with the International Studies Group at the University of the Free State, which he completed in 2016. Professor Harris has had a profound influence on his career and he is deeply grateful for the guidance and inspiration she has provided as a teacher, colleague, supervisor, mentor, friend and, more recently, as his boss.

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Patrick James Chong

Mr Patrick James Chong was born in 1951 in a Coloured township in Cape Town, South Africa. He attended the Cape Town Chinese School until grade eight, after which he attended St Georges Grammar School where he matriculated. Mr Chong initially began a BSc Engineering degree at the University of Cape Town (UCT) before changing to a Certificate in the Theory of Accounting. He passed his FQE and registered as a Chartered Accountant in 1979. Mr Chong became a partner at Sprigg Abbott Incorporated in 1980 and obtained a BCom Honours degree in Data Processing a year later. During his career, Mr Chong has also held the following positions: he was elected as Chairman of the Cape Town Chinese Students Society in 1976; Chairman of the Western Province Chinese Sports Association in 1987; Chairman of the Western Province Chinese Association

(WPCA) in 1991; since 1991 Mr Chong has either been the Chairman or Vice Chairman of WPCA; he was elected as Chairman of the Chinese Association of South Africa (CASA) in 1998 and served as Chairman or Vice Chairman until 2016.

Nisa Paleker

Dr Nisa Paleker is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the University of Pretoria. Her research interests are social and cultural histories, including film, media and visual history as well as food histories.

Sias Conradie

Dr Sias Conradie is a recently graduated from the University of Pretoria's Historical and Heritage Studies Department with his thesis entitled '*A social history of the Chinese in Lesotho*'. His work on the Chinese in Southern Africa has been published in the journal *Historia* and he was a peer reviewer of the book *Searching for sweetness: Women's mobile lives in China and Lesotho* (2022), published by the Hong Kong University Press. He also administers the Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students (TALPS) for the University of Pretoria's Unit for Academic Literacy. He is an Assistant Lecturer in the University of Pretoria's DHHS.

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Heather Thuynsma

Dr Heather Thuynsma is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria and the Senior Research Fellow for the intra-institutional Critical Food Studies Programme. She is also the Founding Director of the Emerging Scholars Initiative (ESI) and the ESI Press.

Academic, Archivist & Activist:

A Tribute to

Professor Karen Leigh Harris

Edited by Robyn Schnell



Academic, Archivist & Activist is not merely an academic commemoration, but rather a celebratory tribute to a remarkable teacher, a formidable scholar and an extraordinary human being. Professor Karen Leigh Harris has had a phenomenal career, one which many academics dream of but only few are able to achieve. This volume consists of 26 contributions written by individuals from the breadth of Professor Harris' career. Among the contributors, there are former students who became collaborators, mentors who became academic equals and colleagues who became friends. This tribute should be viewed as a semicolon rather than a full-stop – this is not a festschrift marking the end of Professor Harris' distinctive career, but rather an acknowledgement to the impact she will continue to make within various disciplines and domains as well as the exciting endeavours she will undoubtedly undertake in the future.

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ISBN 9781037027901



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