

## **CITATION IN SUPPORT OF AWARDING A GOLD MEDAL TO MR HERBERT MAURICE JOHN PRINS**

Mr Herbert Prins is a distinguished architect and one of South Africa's most eminent authorities in the field of architecture, design and heritage. He is renowned for his work in heritage objects conservation, a relatively new field, for which the modalities of practice are still being established.

Mr Prins served at the forefront of the development in this area long before historic conservation became a popular word in the discipline and his contributions in the field both in South Africa and abroad, are evident. At the age of 91, he continues to actively and energetically contribute to public interest projects in Gauteng and beyond.

A Wits graduate, Mr Prins qualified as an architect in 1952 and holds a five-year professional Bachelor of Architecture degree, a Masters of Architecture qualification and a Diploma in Town Planning. A dedicated teacher, he practised as a full time architect and then served as a faculty member in the Wits Department of Architecture for 26 years, serving as the Head of Department, a member of Senate and a member of the board of the faculty. At Wits, he was responsible for developing the Mining and Geology Building and the former Medical Library and Medical School in Esselen Street, Johannesburg. He also developed the master plan for the Science Campus and the Physics Building at the then University of Natal.

Mr Prins focused his energy on heritage conservation in the later years of his career and worked as a heritage consultant on several major projects including the restoration of the Reserve Bank in Pretoria, the restoration of the Pretoria Railway Station which was gutted by fire in 2001, the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication in Kliptown which commemorates the Congress of the People in 1955, the Newtown Precinct in Johannesburg and the upgrading of Vilakazi Street in Soweto.

Mr Prins has been an unflagging and prominent activist for South Africa's, Gauteng's and Johannesburg's architectural heritage. Since shortly before his retirement from Wits in 1996, Mr Prins has served as a member of the Building Committee of the Constitutional Court and he played a key role in the construction of the new Constitutional Court on Constitution Hill. Former Constitutional Court Justice Kate O'Regan lauds his attention to detail and deep commitment to the constitutional project of building a society to free the potential of all South Africans, a view with which former Constitutional Court Justice Edwin Cameron concurs. He adds that Prins's views are "knowledgeable, authoritative and compelling and bring a truly vast array and depth of architectural, design, aesthetic and cultural-historical wisdom and knowledge to the work of the Court".

Post the second World War, Mr Herbert Prins also played an integral role in planning the centre of Harlow New Town in Essex, England, amongst several other major projects.



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A registered member of the South African Council for the Architectural Profession, Mr Prins is also an Associate Member of the Royal Institute of British Architects. He has been awarded the Gold Medal of Distinction from the South African Institute of Architects, the Gold Medal of the Simon Van der Stel Foundation (now Heritage South Africa), the Gauteng Institute for Architecture's Honorary Life Membership Award and is a lifetime member of the South African Institute of Architects.

Due to his noteworthy contribution to heritage, preservation and architecture, his professional and academic distinction, and his exceptional contribution and service to society, it with great honour that Mr Herbert Maurice John Prins is presented with the University of the Witwatersrand's Gold Medal.