

wits LEADER

Celebrating 90 years of excellence

"Mining is an important part of the Wits story and the School of Mining Engineering at Wits is probably one of the biggest and best schools in the English-speaking world," said Bobby Godsell, former CEO of AngloGold Ashanti Limited and a National Planning Commissioner at the official launch of the Wits90 celebrations on Wednesday, 28 March 2012.

Sbirona Patel

He spoke about the contribution of mining to South Africa and the world and the future of mining in the country. "As we plan for the future of the country, we have to determine how we continue to mine safely, sustainably and profitably in the country. We require thought leadership, new ways of thinking and new paradigms for economic success - this is where Wits can make a significant contribution to the future of South Africa," he added.

Prof. Loyiso Nongxa, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Wits University elaborated on Wits' 90 years of excellence in academia, research and thought leadership. He also announced the development of six prestigious interdisciplinary research institutes, one of which will be the Wits Mining Research Institute, due to be launched in the next few months. "This is a response to the serious decline in mining-related research in South Africa in the last two decades. We need to provide a resource to mining companies so that they do not have to go abroad to resolve local problems."

"There is an urgent need in African countries for the development of increasing numbers of university-trained postgraduates able to participate at the highest levels within the mining sector. There is also an unprecedented need for advanced research within the mining industry and, in turn, support for that research," he added.

A sculpture of the Unknown Miner by renowned sculptor Herman Wald was unveiled by Nongxa and Prof. Beatrix Lacquet, the Dean of Engineering and the Built Environment. It is erected outside the newly renovated Chamber of Mines Building, to pay tribute to the men and women, from diverse backgrounds and cultures, who laboured and sacrificed to create the mining industry and to establish Johannesburg as the 'City of Gold' from 1886.

Wits University's roots are firmly embedded in mining, having developed from the South African School of Mines, founded in Kimberley in 1896. The University of the Witwatersrand was established formally in 1922 as the first University in the City of Johannesburg.

Read more about the Wits90 activities at www.wits.ac.za/wits90.