

William Paterson award

Dr Natie Finkelstein was awarded the William Paterson award. Natie is undoubtedly one of the most well-known and influential pharmacists in South Africa. His reputation as a lecturer and mentor is legendary amongst generations of his past students and colleagues. However, Natie's influence extends far beyond this. Exercising his passion for pharmacy, superior knowledge, concern for patients, high ethical standards and insistence on both "doing the right things and doing things right" during a career which now extends well beyond 50 years, he has deservedly earned the right to be recognised by the Society as a recipient of the William Paterson Award.

Thank you from Natie himself

I acknowledge with grateful thanks receipt of your congratulatory message on my recent award by the PSSA. It is indeed a major highlight in my long career in the pharmaceutical profession and am still quite bewildered why I was fortunate enough to be so honoured. The "favour" you ask is rather more difficult. I delivered an informal and impromptu acceptance at the virtual AGM and do not have a clue what I had said, as there was no prepared written transcript. My addled memory made a supreme effort to recall the gist of what I had said that morning. I then used those thoughts and moulded them into words that would be coherent and meaningful. I therefore trust that the effort below will succeed in adequately expressing my gratitude and personal ecstasy as a recipient of the award.

In accepting the signal honour of the highest accolade awarded to a pharmacist by the PSSA, I am humbled not only by the special recognition associated with the award but am also acutely aware that I am standing on the shoulders of other prominent and worthy recipients who have preceded me. Although I am extremely grateful for this prestigious award in my twilight years, it is indeed fitting to dedicate it to the many people who contributed so selflessly to my success, i.e. my devoted spouse and daughters, parents, apprenticeship master, teachers, lecturers, professors, supervisors, students, colleagues and friends.

Over some six decades in the profession, one tends to reflect nostalgically on the many highlights and honours. In this regard, I must pay tribute to the members and staff of the CWP Branch of the PSSA in allowing me to serve in many different capacities and to gain invaluable experience and proficiency in pharmacy matters. The William Paterson Award – rarely awarded – must surely be the ultimate recognition by one's peers and the cherry on top of a fulfilling professional career in pharmacy for the recipient.

I have always been an ardent adherent of service before self and never expected any award for effort in the best interests of the profession, humanity and healthcare. When the reward does arrive somewhat unexpectedly, it does fill one with extreme gratitude and the conscious acknowledgement to our Creator, who in His abundant mercy, has blessed me with longevity and good health to serve our noble profession with dignity, honour and integrity.

Dr Natie Finkelstein