



SAALT LIFE TIME AWARD 2019

PROF. JOHANN L. VAN DER WALT

Prof. Johann van der Walt retired as Professor of English at North-West University (NWU) in 2012. During his time at the university he mainly taught Linguistics, Phonology, Subject Didactics and Applied Linguistics at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. In the course of his teaching career he won two awards for excellence in teaching, and was an NRF-rated researcher.

He matriculated at Ventersdorp High School in 1964 and then obtained the B.A., B.A. Honours and M.A. degrees at Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PU for CHE). He later obtained the Transvaal Higher Education Diploma and the B.Ed. and D.Ed. degrees. In 1982 he was awarded an Advanced Certificate in the Teaching of English at the Institute of Education, University of London.

He began his career in 1970 as journalist with the magazine *Ster*. He then taught English at Ventersdorp High School and Pretoria College for Advanced Technical Education (the present Tswane University of Technology). In 1975 he was appointed as lecturer in English at PU for CHE, where he was promoted to professor in 1991. He was Chairman of the Department of English for a time and later became Head of the Centre for Academic and Professional Language Practice, where he was responsible for the introduction of Academic Literacy courses and the management of short courses. After his retirement, he worked at NWU in various capacities until the end of 2018. This included work as postgraduate mentor for the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences. He now does language editing and some writing.

His research interests include the teaching of English as a second language, curriculum design, second language acquisition, Academic Literacy, and language testing.

Over the span of his career Prof. van der Walt has contributed to the fields of Applied Linguistics and second-language teaching in a number of ways. Students under his supervision completed 45 Master's and 15 Doctoral degrees. He also acted as external examiner and moderator for examinations, dissertations and theses of other universities and colleges. He has published 67 articles in academic journals on topics such as second language teaching, Second Language Acquisition, curriculum design, validation in language testing and New Englishes. He is also the author of several research reports, and has written and contributed to a number of study notes, courses and test series. He is the author of two books and several book chapters as well as a number of other publications. He has read papers at six international conferences abroad, and locally at 30 national conferences. He has presented a number of courses, seminars and workshops, which included work with in-service teachers of English and school learners. He also presented a course in Spoken English at the university for many years and acted as consultant on a number of in-service training projects for teachers of English.

He was external moderator of the English First Additional Language Senior Certificate examination papers in the country for 16 years. He worked for the Joint Matriculation Board, the South African Certification Council and UMALUSI in this capacity. He also acted as external moderator for English Second Language in Namibia.

Prof. van der Walt has served in a number of language associations and committees. He was chairman the National Association of Educators of Teachers of English (NAETE) and the Southern African Association for Applied Linguistics (SAALA). He served on the editorial panel of the *Journal for Language Teaching*, and was editor of *The NAETE Journal*. He was also a member of the North-West Provincial Language Committee as well as the English National Language Body.

His association with the South African Association for Language Teaching (SAALT) dates from the early 1970s when he started attending meetings of the South African Language Teaching Study Group, which later became SAALT. He served as chairman for four terms (1988-1990; 1994-1996; 1997-1998 and 2009-2010). He stepped in to assume the chairmanship for the last term at a time when the executive was experiencing some disarray, and his work ensured a revitalisation of SAALT as an association. He is the only person thus far to serve as president twice. In 1988 SAALT awarded him the ETA Prize for the advancement of language teaching in South Africa.