



Foreword

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FOREWORD

As a learned Society the Southern African Society of Aquatic Scientists (SASaQS) strives towards the advancement of research into, and management of, southern African inland, estuarine and marine waters. The Society awards medals to scientists who have made major contributions to our understanding of southern African aquatic ecosystems or who have made a significant contribution to the objectives of the Society. In the past 35 years the Society has awarded 34 medals (19 gold, nine silver and six bronze medals) to aquatic scientists from academia, government and industry. The Society has awarded five medals to estuarine scientists for contributions towards estuarine research and management, namely Prof. Brian Allanson (1988), Prof. Charles Breen (1999), Prof. Digby Cyrus (2011), Prof. Janine Adams (2015), Prof. Alan Whitfield (2015) and Prof. Guy Bate (2019). The guest editors of the first SASaQS Special Medal Issue (SMI), titled *Perspectives on Protecting African Estuarine Ecosystems in the Anthropocene*, are the two of the recent awardees honoured for their contributions to estuarine science and management on the subcontinent.

Prof. Janine Adams received the Society Silver Medal in recognition for her exceptional contribution to the management and conservation of estuarine ecosystems. Janine has published 155 articles in high impact journals and successfully graduated 34 MSc and 22 PhD students. In addition to her research outputs and student training, Janine has made a concerted effort to link science, policy and management through extensive collaboration and networking with other universities, institutes and government departments. Some examples of this included her contributions to the Resource Directed Measures (RDM) Programme of the Department of Water Affairs, research on the biodiversity of estuaries which contributed to SANBI's National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment for implementation of the Biodiversity Act in both 2004 and 2011, and her research on the structure and functioning of estuaries contributed to rehabilitation protocols as part of the activities of Working for Wetlands (Department of Environmental Affairs). Her influential and collaborative reputation has resulted in a number of leadership roles such as Chairperson of the Water Research Commission (2009–2012), President of the Southern African Society of Aquatic Scientists (2012–2014), a Fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa and as Eastern Cape Branch Representative on the RSSAf Executive. As a woman in science, Janine has been a role model to other female scientists. Her balancing of professional involvement, research and family life is legendary.

Prof. Alan Whitfield received the Society Gold Medal in recognition for his exceptional contribution to research in estuarine ecology. He has published a book (with nearly 300 citations), many book chapters, more than 190 refereed scientific papers (several with more than 100 citations), 75 reports and 70 popular articles. He has also delivered more than 100 conference presentations and referees between 40 to 50 scientific manuscripts per year. His focused research outputs have made him a highly respected scientist in the field of estuarine ecology at a global level. His early works included a classification system for different estuary types and an estuary-association classification of southern African fishes. The latter spearheaded a recent global review on the guild approach to categorise estuarine fish assemblages together with the world's most prominent estuarine ichthyologists. Alan has been the recipient of many awards, including a Special Merit Award for Museum Scientists and a JLB Smith Institute of Ichthyology Council Award. In 2007 he was inducted as a Fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa and was awarded an NRF A-rating in 2008. He was also the recipient of the Gilchrist Memorial Gold Medal for research contributions to South African marine science. These awards and many other accolades provide testimony of his international leadership in the field of estuarine ecology.

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