

Chartered accountants awarded for making a difference

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On 25 May 2023, the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (Saica) recognised 13 of its members at its annual Chairman's Difference Makers Awards for making an indelible socio-economic impact. Among those honoured were David Shapiro, chief global equity strategist and Jeff van Rooyen, chief executive of Uranus Investment Holdings.



Saica's board chairman, Vincent Motholo, says that the Chairman's Difference Makers Awards honour and recognise Saica members and associates who truly exemplify what it means to be difference makers. "These individuals that we are honouring with an award have bridged the gap between being good and being excellent. They make a valuable contribution in shaping communities, while applying the highest standards of ethics, integrity and accountability."

Saica CEO, Freeman Nomvalo, explains that Saica strongly believes that its members are the driving force behind creating a positive impact. "Through their rigorous training and commitment to upholding high ethical standards, our members and associates are not only prepared for the future but also empowered to make a meaningful impact on both business and society. Central to their role is the understanding that they have a duty and responsibility to act in the best interest of the public. They are dedicated to remaining relevant and adaptable in an ever-changing landscape, playing pivotal roles within their organisations and communities. These individuals embody the core values of integrity and are driven by a genuine desire to effect positive change that benefits everyone", said Nomvalo.

Motholo continues: "As we contemplated the categories for this event, it became clear that we needed to recognise the diverse avenues through which our members and associates are making a difference. Consequently, we have identified 13 overarching themes that we believe encapsulate the purpose and impact our profession strives to achieve. These themes include innovation, forward-thinking, leadership in business, sustainability, integrity, and promoting the national interest, among others."

The winners are as follows:

Lifetime Achiever winner: Jeff van Rooyen

Jeff van Rooyen's list of professional achievements reflects his dedication and leadership in various domains. From his

years as a sole practitioner and partner at Deloitte to his role as CEO of the Financial Services Board, he has consistently excelled in his career.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, van Rooyen has made a significant impact on society. He is the founder and president of the Advancement of Black Accountants of Southern Africa (ABASA) and through his involvement in ABASA, CA Eden Trust and various NGOs, he has championed causes to create opportunities for Black accountants, promoting financial literacy and improving the lives of marginalised communities.

His leadership style emphasises motivating and inspiring others, rallying around a shared vision and adhering to a strong set of values. Van Rooyen's commitment to ethical behaviour and upholding his values has earned him a reputation of integrity and courage.

Sustainability and SDG goals winner: Fayruz Mohamed, national chairperson at the South African National Zakah Fund (SANZAF)

A true champion of community empowerment and a beacon of change. Through her unwavering dedication, Fayruz Mohamed has made significant strides in welfare, food security, education development and financial inclusion for the underprivileged.

Her remarkable passion for women empowerment led to the establishment of a National Women Empowerment Programme, inspiring countless individuals. As the first female national Chairperson of SANZAF, her commitment to the South African community shines brightly.

Leadership in Governance: Linda de Beer, non-executive director and corporate governance specialist

Linda de Beer's commitment to governance excellence has earned her the prestigious leadership in governance award. As a seasoned professional, she has demonstrated exceptional expertise in driving effective governance practices and ensuring organisational integrity.

Her visionary leadership has elevated standards, inspiring teams to embrace transparency, accountability and ethical decision-making. Her strategic acumen and ability to navigate complex regulatory landscapes, have positioned her as a role model in the profession.

Patriotic Award: Roy Andersen, chief executive officer at Roy Pty

The recipient of this award, Roy Andersen, has had an exceptional career. With a successful background in finance and leadership, he has held influential positions in organisations such as Ernst & Young, the JSE and Liberty Group.

Through his visionary leadership and strategic expertise, he has played a pivotal role in shaping the financial landscape of South Africa. Not only has he made significant contributions to the business sector, but he has also dedicated himself to military service, rising to the rank of major general and serving as chief defence reserves for the South African National Defence Force.

Social Impact: David Shapiro, chief global equity strategist at Sasfin Securities

David Shapiro has consistently worked to improve lives and make a positive difference. Through his philanthropic initiatives, Shapiro has addressed key societal issues, including poverty, education and healthcare. His innovative approaches created sustainable solutions, transforming the lives of countless individuals and communities.

His leadership and advocacy have raised awareness and inspired action, amplifying the impact of his endeavours. This passion for social change and his ability to mobilise others makes him an exceptional recipient of this award.

Academia and Education: Prof Amanda Dempsey, senior director at the UJ School of Accounting

Prof Amanda Dempsey has excelled as a professor, inspiring and mentoring countless students. Her ground-breaking research has pushed the boundaries of knowledge and shaped academic discourse. Her leadership roles and active engagement with the academic community have further enriched the field. Moreover, she has demonstrated a strong commitment to societal impact through her involvement in community outreach and advocacy initiatives.

Finance Leader: Nolwazi Mamorare, chief financial officer at UJ

Despite many challenges, Nolwazi Mamorare continues to excel. A true Difference Maker, Mamorare is managing revenue in excess of R6bn, and has increased her employer's reserves base from R1,65bn in 2018 to R3,17bn in 2023 to provide a solid and stable financial environment.

She achieved this through innovative revenue growth and cost reduction, whilst not cutting back on investments in infrastructure and still providing incentives. Her impact on transforming lives through accessible education and her dedication to financial excellence is exemplary.

CEO Award: Victor Sekese, chief executive at SNG Grant Thornton

Victor Sekese has spearheaded initiatives that propelled the accountancy industry forward, leaving an enduring legacy that will continue to inspire generations to come. His ability to innovate, adapt and overcome challenges has fortified his position as a true pioneer, setting new benchmarks of excellence for his peers.

Training Office: Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA)

Saica Training offices are key to educating and training future chartered accountants. The AGSA is overseeing 15 training offices spread over all nine provinces, managing learnerships for 1,100 SAICA trainees. Putting diversity at the forefront with 60% of the trainees in the current year being female, the AGSA is a leader in transforming and professionalising the industry and profession as one of the biggest contributors of 1,534 CAs(SA).

Retaining over 500 young professionals over the past two years, they contribute to the international community, private and public sectors with their professionals leaving the organisation to continue making an impact.

Public Sector: Mabatho Sedikela, head of audit at the AGSA

Mabatho Sedikela is serving the country through her unwavering commitment to public service excellence and her transformative contributions to the sector. As Head of Audit Provincial, leading local government at the AGSA, Mabatho has served the public sector with distinction in various capacities, including the Accounting Standards Board, the South African Development Community Audit Committee, and the Board of External Auditors for the African Union, to mention a few.

She was recognised by ABASA as Public Sector Woman Executive of the Year in 2021; and awarded for Outstanding Leadership Commitment by the AGSA in 2019.

Excellence in Economic Development: Makole Mupita, founder and executive director: Mahlako a Phahla Investments

Makole Mupita is making a significant impact on the South African economy in the vital domains of infrastructure and energy. As founder and executive director of a ground-breaking R1,5bn fund, she is committed to investing in businesses and energy projects with immense growth potential throughout the value chain.

Embracing the transformative power of energy, Mupita champions a future where women play pivotal roles in the sector, reshaping the energy landscape. Through the Mahlako energy fund, they steadfastly work towards achieving the SDG

goals.

Future Focused: Stuart van der Veen, partner at Platform Investments

Stuart van der Veen is a trailblazer who is unafraid to venture into uncharted technology territories. From the inception of a ground-breaking capital vehicle focusing on tech advancements, to his pivotal role as chief platform officer at Aerobotics, Stuart's commitment to exciting ventures that serve humanity illuminates the path towards a brighter tomorrow. Through his roles, he has harnessed innovation to revolutionise the crop industry.

Today, he sits on the boards of Open Fiber USA and HyperFiber, actively deploying fibre to homes in America. He focuses his energy on projects that both excite him and also serve the world around him.

Small or medium practice: Erick Liebenberg, managing director at The Core Group

The Core Group has had an impact on the way that more than 90 accounting branches nationwide are running their audit and accounting practices. The association enables small practitioners to compete with larger businesses by providing a trusted environment for sharing knowledge and resources. It is represented in 91 cities, including about 1,200 employees and 200 practitioners and senior managers. Many of these branches play a material role in their local communities in the areas of schools, orphanages, shelters and career guidance.

Motholo concluded: "Each of the nominees of the Difference Makers Awards has exemplified the values of integrity, excellence and leadership that define our profession. There is no doubt in my mind that together, we can shape a future that transcends boundaries, unlocks opportunities, and positively impacts our society. Congratulations again to all the nominees and deserving recipients of the Saica Chairman Difference Makers Awards."

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