

# **THE HUMAN HEART OF LEADERSHIP**

An anthology of poems written by the Executive Leadership Group of the University of Johannesburg and illustrated by staff and students from the Graphic Design Department in the Faculty of Art, Design & Architecture

Edited by Professor Federico Freschi with a foreword by Professor Letlhokwa Mpedi,  
Vice-Chancellor & Principal of the University of Johannesburg

*The Human Heart of Leadership*  
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Proofreading: Federico Freschi  
Design and Layout: Christa van Zyl  
Cover design: Christa van Zyl  
Illustrations by Christa van Zyl, Neil Badenhorst, Zinhle Zulu, Ilhaam Khan,  
Reshma Maharajh, Deirdre Pretorius, Laaiqah Rahimtula, Alyssa Dayanand,  
Thapelo Kanjane, Danai Goto, Samantha Rance, Sukainah Sallie and Yannick  
van Dorp  
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# Foreword

## Professor Letlhokwa Mpedi

Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Johannesburg

In a world undergoing seismic changes, we are fast seeing the value and impact of merging creativity, innovation and leadership. In July 2024, over the course of a couple of days, the University of Johannesburg's (UJ) Executive Leadership Group (ELG) convened at the scenic Kloofzicht Lodge in the Cradle of Humankind. Gazing at the tranquil backdrop of the foothills of the Zwartkops Mountains, we pondered difficult questions about higher education and leadership. These two days together were intended to ensure that this high aspiration from the UJ Strategic plan became a lived reality, but we also knew we needed to rethink some traditional and, frankly, outdated ideas about leadership.

It was in the lead-up to this breakaway session that we agreed that day one would focus on how 'I' can perform at the highest level and day two on how 'we' perform at the highest level. This shift would require a fundamental recalibration of our thinking. We appropriately asked the team: What would it be like to bring all parts of ourselves to the table – body, heart, mind and soul in a coherence that activates 'whole-self intelligence'? We then asked: What would it be like to create a culture of deep, authentic, high-impact presence together?

In contemplating these powerful questions, we asked the ELG team to dig deep down and compose poems. The resulting poems are as much a response to these very questions as they are reflections on the state of the world, higher education and leadership. This was an exercise in stepping out of our comfort zone as leaders. It represented innovation in practice. As we phrased it at the time, it meant disrupting the chronically imbalanced ways of thinking and functioning that have become the norm in so many organisational cultures, where 'doing' eclipses 'being,' and hyper-rational, analytical thinking relegates feeling, sensing, intuiting and the transpersonal to the outer fringes of life.

The great poet Robert Frost once said, "Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words."

And so, this anthology has emerged as an answer to these overarching questions that sought to reconceptualise our ideas around leadership. It was instead an impressive feat to see these formidable managers and academics, often so rigid in their writing, really take to this task. The result is a collection of insightful, often quite raw and impactful ideas that not only speak to the essence of leadership but really provide a glimpse into the UJ ELG team.

It is perhaps in the words of John F. Kennedy that we really grasp the value of this contribution: “When power leads man toward arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations. When power narrows the area of man’s concern, poetry reminds him of the richness and diversity of existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses.”

This work has thus emerged as a fundamental reimagining of leadership approaches – in an era desperately crying out for strong leaders. It is a stark reminder that creativity and innovation belong at the fore of our leadership journeys.

# Introduction: The Human Heart of Leadership

**Professor Federico Freschi**

Executive Dean | Faculty of Art, Design & Architecture

*The Human Heart of Leadership* is an anthology of poems written by members of the University of Johannesburg's Executive Leadership Group as it was constituted in July 2024. As some members of the ELG were serving in acting executive roles at the time of writing and others have since retired or moved on, some authors may no longer hold those positions or may no longer be employed by the University of Johannesburg. Nonetheless, even if they are no longer members of the ELG, at the time when these poems were written they were actively thinking and operating within the space of executive leadership.

As members of the highest level of leadership in the institution, individuals in the ELG are more often associated with strategic plans, performance targets and institutional responsibility than with personal reflection and poetic expression. Yet, through these poems – at times intensely intimate and courageous – a surprisingly different picture emerges: one of vulnerability, introspection, connection and care. From 'A Sturdy Wall' through 'Silence' to 'A Labour of Love' and 'My Family', these titles trace a compelling arc – from the structured demands of duty and protection, to the deeply personal terrain of solitude, endurance, relationships, place and identity. In addition to the perhaps more obvious themes of leadership, work and duty that run through some of the poems, themes of belonging, gratitude, resilience and hope recur, suggesting that behind every decision made by executives lies a deep well of lived experience, human values and quiet aspiration.

The anthology has been structured around thematic groupings that reflect both the personal and professional concepts that inform the poems. The first group, 'Origins and Reflections,' explores early experiences, family, place and the formation of identity. Informed by the personal experiences of the authors – stories of childhood, family bonds, identity and belonging – these poems reveal the ways in which personal history continues to shape professional purpose. Through memories of home, the warmth of kinship and reflections on place, the authors remind us that leadership is always grounded in the experiences that formed us and the places from which we come.

In the second group, ‘The Inner Life of Leadership,’ the poems turn inward, reflecting a deep engagement with the emotional and psychological landscape of those who lead. Through meditations on solitude, stillness, vulnerability and resilience, this section reveals that inner strength is not born of detachment, but of the courage to feel, reflect and be fully present.

The third section, ‘Journeys and Horizons’ captures notions of growth, exploration and personal development, charting both literal and metaphorical journeys – across geographies, through time and into the unknown. Whether running through pre-dawn streets or diving into deep ocean caves, the poets invite us to embrace the thrill of discovery and the determination to keep moving forward. The poems in this section speak to leadership shaped by motion, transformation and lifelong learning.

Section four, ‘Relationships and Connection’, focuses on interpersonal bonds, mentoring and emotional support and remind us that leadership is never a solitary pursuit. Rather, it is nurtured through connection, sustained by care and enriched by family and community. This section pays tribute to the colleagues, students, mentors and loved ones who sustain the leaders and make the task of leadership meaningful.

The final section, ‘Leadership and Legacy’ engages directly with leadership, vision, values and institutional commitment. Turning its gaze outward, toward the responsibilities and possibilities of leadership itself, the poems in this section articulate vision, values and the tensions of holding a position of influence. They acknowledge both the burden and the privilege of leadership and affirm its potential to inspire, protect, innovate and serve.

To complement the poems, a series of original illustrations were created by staff and BA Honours students from the Department of Graphic Design at the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture (FADA). Working with a variety of materials, including collage, painting, digital design and inks, each illustrator responded creatively to the themes and emotions embedded in the poetry, lending a compelling visual dimension to the anthology. In keeping with UJ’s strategic focus on 4IR, Head of Department Christa van Zyl and Professor Deirdre Pretorius, who are both researching AI in design, created some images using AI prompts and refining their designs in Photoshop afterwards.

Striking and eclectic, the illustrations both accompany and extend the poems, offering interpretive layers that evoke, question and amplify the written narratives. In doing so, they demonstrate the power of interdisciplinary collaboration and underscore FADA's ongoing commitment to creativity, responsiveness and meaningful engagement.

In a time when leadership is often driven and judged by hard metrics and non-negotiable outcomes, this anthology serves as a powerful reminder that effective leadership is, at its core, human-centred. It is shaped by memory and meaning, by moments of stillness and surges of inspiration, by the complexities of personal relationships and the long reach of formative experiences. Whether writing of a twin sister, a silent moment, a favourite song, or the spirit of an institution, the authors reveal the interconnectedness of their inner and professional lives.

Together, the words and images in this anthology offer a rich, multifaceted portrait of the Executive Leadership Group of the university – one that is as thoughtful as it is courageous, and as human as it is visionary. They invite us to rethink leadership not just as a position of authority, but as a continual act of presence, humility and empathy. In bearing witness to the hopes, fears, and joys of those who lead the institution, we see not just their responsibilities but also their humanity. And it is in this human heart of leadership that their true strength lies.



# 1 | Origins and Foundations

## **Song**

Vast heavy flint flecked with pink  
Dips and streaks across a textured plain,  
Smooth it, mix it, dab and think,  
Hot dust in the throat conjured again.

Strokes and daubs join to stretch ahead,  
Edged with sun-tinted rocks and bleached lines of grass,  
A remembered road with hints of red  
Emerges from the colour to reimagine a journey past.

I paint the sound of the woodland kingfisher,  
The smell of elephant dung.  
I feel serene, at peace, richer  
The paint blending to form an image that is sung.

*Dr Denyse Webbstock*

*Senior Director | Institutional Planning, Evaluation & Monitoring*



*Illustration: Zinhle Zulu, Lecturer, UJ Department of Graphic Design*

## Whenua

The thought came unbidden

Urgent

Summoned by the pervasive damp of an Otago summer's evening

The lush green scent of farm and loam redolent on the chill air

Awoken by conversations that day of whenua, whare and whakapapa –

Land, place, placenta, ancestors, home

Where, who, why and how we are

And where we return to.

The words came unbidden

Powerful

Upsetting the quotidian comfort of weekday television

Shattering the safe domesticity of snug sofa and soporific felines

Too urgent to wait for the end of the sentence uttered by the flickering actor on the screen

Too important to dwell in the companionable silence belying things always left unsaid:

*If I should die*

*Promise me you won't bury me here*

*Promise me you'll take me back*

*Promise me*

*Promise me*

*For my soul will know no peace in this calm, cool, green quiet.*

*Unshriven, unrequited, haunted it will yearn*

*For the brilliant brittle dryness of a Highveld winter*

*the savage splendour of a Highveld thunderstorm*

*the smog-soaked sunsets behind the Hillbrow tower*

*For the popping purple October carpet of fallen jacaranda blossoms*

*the clamouring cacophony of taxis and traffic*

*the daily gift of easy smiles unbidden and unearned*

*For the tawdry splendid glamour of a city of greed and guilt and generosity.*

Where, who, why and how I am

Where I must return to

Home.



*Illustration: Christa van Zyl, Lecturer, UJ Department of Graphic Design*



twin

sister

## My Twin Sister

- M** is for...my safe space (because that is what she has always been).
- Y** is for... “you’re not seeing double, don’t worry!” (our standard response to quizzical looks).
- T** is for...the trillions of rands we have saved by wearing each other’s clothes.
- W** is for... the womb – our first home together.
- I** is for... the intellectual academic that she is (something I have always admired).
- N** is for... the new places we have travelled to, and will travel to, together.
- S** is for... the support she has always provided me.
- I** is for the irritating way that she knows all my faults, but loves me unconditionally.
- S** is for... the sorrows we have shared and survived together.
- T** is for... “two for one special!” (we hear it all the time).
- E** is for... Elvis Presley – our favourite singer.
- R** is for... the richness of our life’s journey together, as twins.

*Professor Victoria Graham*

*Senior Director | Strategic Initiatives & Administration*

## **Relationships, my Family Tree**

Relationships – my family tree,  
This is what matters most to me.  
I don't have children of my own,  
But my five nieces and nephews make me feel at home.  
My brothers, whose career talents of building and graphic design,  
Match their humour and love of cooking – potjie recipes are divine!  
Shaun and Nduduzo, my 'adopted UJ sons',  
We visit, share lunch and talk of times to come.  
I miss the kindest person I have known in so long,  
Uncle Jimmy, we called him 'Bean' after a 1950s song.  
I miss my dad, who despite his strict metallurgist brain,  
Would make us laugh ... 5 November ... sparklers ... the rain.  
My safest space – my mom, my twin sister and myself,  
These are the family pictures atop my mental shelf.

*Professor Suzy Graham*  
*Senior Director | Academic Development & Support*



## **This Day: (26 July)**

Thirty-three days is just over a month  
But you and I have been together for over 33 years  
It really does not feel like it has been years, but just days

We still have so much to learn  
To learn together  
What a blessing it has been  
For this Day  
It was punctuated by the birth of our son two years later

We can never forget what the Lord has done for us  
His goodness and mercy shall follow us for the days of our lives  
We shall ask for the next 33 this day

*Professor Daniel Mashao*  
*Executive Dean | Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment*

1991.07.

26

33



Illustration: Christa van Zyl, Lecturer, UJ Department of Graphic Design

## **My Family**

In the fabric of my existence, family weaves the strands.  
A circle of love, where we all hold hands.  
My mom, my husband, the pillars of grace,  
In their wisdom and care, I find my safe place.

Four children, my joys, three sons and a daughter,  
Each one a blessing, as life's gentle laughter.  
A guiding light as if from above,  
Their hearts filled with wisdom and endless love.

Three grandchildren, the twins and their kin,  
Their laughter, a symphony where life begins.  
A boy, a girl, and their little sister,  
Their smiles fill my heart, making life so much richer.

My son-in-law, with his kindness and might,  
Brings warmth and peace in the darkest night.  
A family bound not just by blood, but by love,  
A gift from the heavens, a blessing from above.

When anger or sadness clouds my way,  
I think of them, and the clouds fade away.  
For they are my purpose, my reason to strive,  
In their presence, I truly come alive.

I pray for their health, their safety, their cheer,  
In every moment, I hold them dear.  
For in their smiles, their love, I see,  
The true essence of life, the joy it can be.

Through life's ups and downs, together we stand,  
A bond unbreakable, a love so grand.  
My family, my anchor, my heart's true song,  
With them by my side, I'll always belong.

*Professor Annah Moteetee*  
*Executive Dean | Faculty of Science*

### **They Who Matter (to Me)**

When Coach Nicholas said  
 Homework: a poem you shall write!  
 My initial thought was  
 Wait ... did I hear right???

Fortunately, the solution formed quickly  
 As the 'wise' Dominic Toretto oft says: "it's about family!"

So, for the rest of this poem  
 I shall make mention of three:  
 My nephew and niece, ages five and one  
 And a rescue pup behaving most mischievously

My nephew insisting I wear his favourite Iron Man gear during role-playing  
 My niece stuffing my face with her food while eating  
 My pup constantly reminding me of parks that need a-walking

The way their moods shift  
 When I arrive (or get home)  
 Is so heartwarming  
 That I am crestfallen when they are left alone

From this trio  
 I have learnt to truly make time  
 And not just to be there, but to be THERE  
 And present. Anchored. For me and mine

Shakespeare, Frost – this was not  
 But given the time ... this is all I've got  
 In my defence, I did not use ChatGPT  
 So, thank you, for listening to me

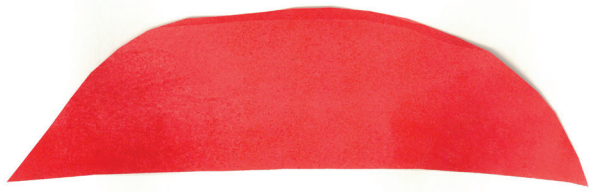
*Professor Wai Sze Leung*  
 Senior Director | UJ Postgraduate School



*Illustration: Sukainah Sallie, Honours 2024, UJ Department of Graphic Design*



## **2 | The Inner Life of Leadership**



*Illustration: Neil Badenhorst, Lecturer, UJ Department of Graphic Design*

**Present**

Softly, gently  
I feel my body  
I become grounded  
I become rooted, centered,  
In the place I need to be.  
Light flows into me  
Into every part of me.

I am Awakened.  
I know, I see, I feel.

I am Present.

Present to give  
Present to receive  
Present to Be.

*Professor Maria Frahm-Arp*  
*Executive Director | Library and Information Centre*



*Illustration: Christa van Zyl, Lecturer, UJ Department of Graphic Design*

**Silence**

Silence the noise in my head  
Silence the noise in the world  
The World is a noisy and constantly humming place  
Yearning for a Blank Canvas where my thoughts take flight with no limits  
No sounds, no World to see, nothing just Silence  
Just Stillness, deeply embracing me

Silence the noise in my head  
Silence the noise in the world  
A peaceful refuge for the mind Silence  
In the pause, the world's true art  
Silence, my sacred space, where my healing whispers to the heart

Silence the noise in my head  
Silence the noise in the world  
In the Silent depth where spirits reflect  
Silence a refuge from life's stormy rough sea  
In stillness deep, the soul finds rest, a sacred space divinely blessed  
Quietude, a silent plea for Silence

*Nomsa Mahlangu*  
*Senior Director | Sport*

**Breathe**

I lie still, I breathe, I listen  
I repeat  
I want to understand  
What this all means  
It cannot all be coincidence

I lie still, I breathe, I listen  
I repeat  
What is the meaning of all this?  
One day it will come

For now,  
Slow down and pay attention  
To what matters the most:

Be kind  
Do better

*Nolwazi Mamorare*  
*Chief Financial Officer*





fright. Now I am the old curiosity shop -

A Poem a Poem - Where do I Start - Without using a flip chart - Cutters of words fill paper - My words waft like vapour - I found my passion - Maybe I must start

ugly  
can be an  
living can  
light -  
the sea with  
to hold  
to pay  
darkness and  
Perhaps

years - with seasonal  
fingers it is  
spread - The idea of ideas  
like vapour - I found my passion - Maybe I must start

Palmate

I Found my passion - Maybe I must start

## **A Ballad of Me (with apologies to all the poets)**

A poem a poem  
 Where do I start?  
 Without using a flipchart.  
 Clutters of words fill paper  
 My words waft now like vapour.

I found my passion  
 I found my dreams  
 I found the way to weave more dreams.  
 Midst darkneses and light  
 Living can be an ugly fright.

Now I am the old curiosity shop (apologies to Dickens)  
 Soon maybe an unused prop  
 Yellowed oft turned pages read  
 With seasonal tinges, it is a spread  
 The idea of ideas continues humming  
 Maybe I must take up drumming.  
 I grow old I grow old  
 Perhaps to play at the sea with my trousers rolled. (Apologies to T S Eliot)

*Professor Kirti Menon*  
 Senior Director | Teaching Excellence

## Embracing Solitude to have Valuable Connections

I value people.

AND People are important to me.

BUT, for my own sanity and my ability to continue, I treasure and fiercely guard my solitude.

During the week, I truly enjoy engaging with you.

I enjoy our conversations, and value even difficult conversations.

I enjoy listening to you.

I enjoy laughing with you.

I enjoy learning from you.

Your presence enriches my days and brings joy to my work.

Our interactions are meaningful and inspire me to grow.

I appreciate you.

BUT at the end of that week, I need solitude.

I need limited human contact.

I need to speak to myself.

I need to do mundane tasks.

And even when I work, I need to NOT engage in conversation.

I need this time to reflect and recharge.

It's my way of finding balance.

See, I am an introvert. A highly functional introvert.

And while I function very comfortably engaging and being surrounded by others,

I need my solitude to recharge and continue.

This is important to me.

You may not understand this need and behaviour.

Maybe you cannot relate.

But by embracing my solitude, I can be my best self for you each week ...

Because you are important to me.

*Professor Sehaam Khan*

*Deputy Vice-Chancellor | Academic*



## **A Labour of Love**

A labour of love

A topic that matters, a topic of heart and mind

A love of being, and a love letter to self

A love of being

A heart that beats, sometimes fast, sometimes slow

A letter to self about life, loss and challenge

A labour of love

A topic that matters, a love of being and doing

A love of self, and the work of mind and heart

A true labour of love

*Professor Ylva Rodny-Gumede*

*Senior Director | Global Engagement*



**It REALLY is okay**

It is okay for me to feel angry

It is okay for me to feel misunderstood

It is okay for me to feel disappointed

It is okay for me to feel overwhelmed

It is okay for me to feel exhausted

How I feel does not define who I truly am

I am amazing

I am strong

I am resilient

I am dependable

It REALLY is okay that I am all these things!


*Dr Ndivhuwo Luruli*

*Executive Director | Research Development & Support*





Illustration: Christa van Zyl, Lecturer, UJ Department of Graphic Design



**Grateful**

Impossible decisions at a difficult time  
Do I have a choice; can I really choose?  
At every step of the way, someone helped me  
Someone offered me a meal  
Someone stood next to me in my darkest moment  
Someone gave me a chance; someone believed in me  
Hard work, determination, a will to succeed  
Now, important to do the same for someone else  
Now, pay it forward for someone else.

*Professor Bettine Jansen van Vuuren*  
*Registrar*

Illustration: Christa van Zyl, Lecturer, UJ Department of Graphic Design with Bing AI assistance



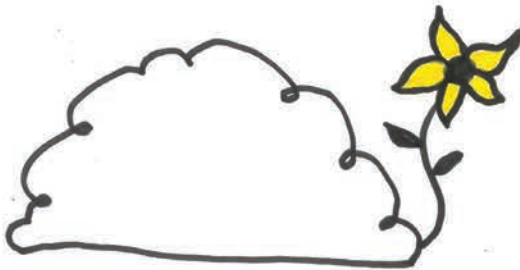


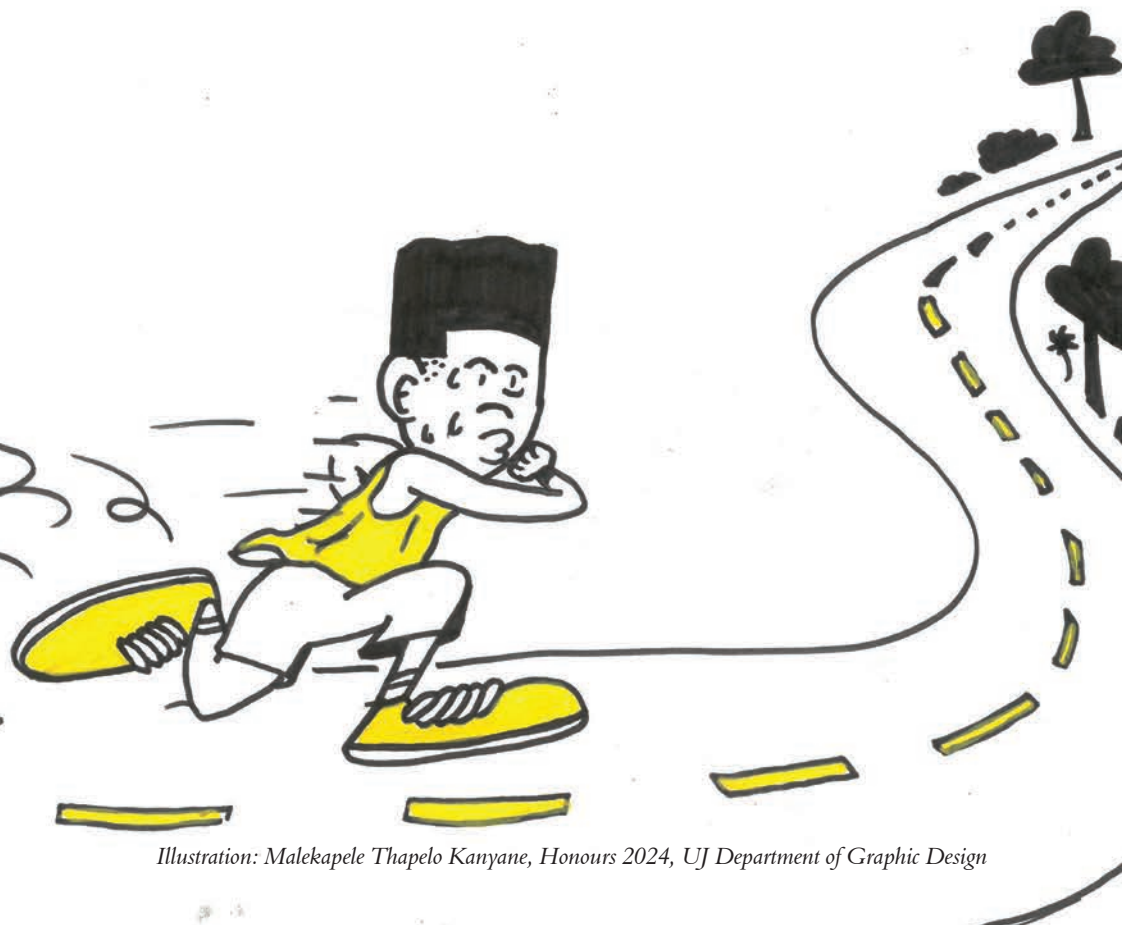
## **3 | Journeys and Horizons**

## Life and Times of an Endurance Runner

I wake up at 4 am, getting ready for the road,  
leaving behind family and a comfortable bed.  
Running the streets along the frozen grass.  
Why the torture? What are you chasing? they ask ...  
Running can unleash your potential you didn't know about  
As I listen to the sound of my feet hitting the road,  
I find rhythm, and I get into the mode  
When I run, I'm always switched on  
Runners find it easy to understand their inner being  
That sweat becomes a symbol of all my goals  
Runners' threshold for pain and difficulties is extremely high

*Mzwakhe Matukane*  
Senior Director | Revenue Administration





*Illustration: Malekapele Thapelo Kanyane, Honours 2024, UJ Department of Graphic Design*

## Traversing new landscapes and horizons (An ode to travel)

To traverse new landscapes and horizons, both outer and inner  
Is to embrace anew the world and the self.

In Norway, beneath snowcapped peaks  
Breathtaking waterfalls cascade  
Nature's raw power against serene beauty  
Here, I feel my spirit expand  
Reflecting vibrancy and tranquillity.

In Siena, in the summer sun  
Licking my fingers smeared with chocolate ice cream melting  
At the Piazza del Campo  
Laughter fills the air, infusing my soul  
With joy and delight  
A reminder of life's simple pleasures.

Berlin speaks to me of history's weight  
At the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtniskirche  
I witness destruction and resurrection  
Hope for the future next to scars of the past  
A testament to resilience  
In the blue light of the church  
I find reflections of my own battles and renewals.

Iceland offers a dance of giants  
Whales frolicking in the frigid sea  
Grace and power in perfect harmony  
A reflection of life's duality

Where playfulness and strength coexist  
Guiding me to find balance within.

Along the Rhine  
A glass of wine in hand  
I glide through time and tradition  
The river's flow a metaphor for my journey  
Constant and evolving  
Each sip a celebration of the present moment.

In Oslo's Vigeland Park  
I stand in awe of Gustav Vigeland's lifework  
Sculptures capturing every aspect of human existence  
From birth to death  
From joy to sorrow  
A visual opus of the human condition  
A reminder of our shared journey.

These experiences, etched in my memory  
Are fragments of a greater whole  
Each one broadening my horizons  
Each one a step in traversing new inner landscapes.

For this, I am profoundly grateful  
For the privilege to wander  
To witness, and to grow.

*Professor Sarah Gravett*  
*Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor | Research & Innovation*





Illustration: Laaiqah Rahimtula, Honours 2024, UJ Department of Graphic Design



Illustration: Neil Badenhorst, Lecturer, UJ Department of Graphic Design

## **My Refuge**

Universal language, transcending borders  
Coded in black and white  
Structure, pitch, rhythm, texture  
Limitless potential  
Unlocked into phrases of sound and silence  
Soaring melodies, resonant harmonies  
Serene me-time, immersive us-time  
Transcending me and us  
Kaleidoscope of the should  
Receptacle and vehicle of emotions  
Transformational force  
Music: my refuge, my life's song

*Professor Kathleen van der Linde  
Acting Executive Dean | Faculty of Law*

### **What Matters to Me**

What matters to me is life  
 Life is a house full of love  
 A house with smiling faces  
 Life is a village of family  
 A land of friendly faces  
 Life is a child that grows and never stops  
 And countless moments of excitement and wonder

What matters to me is life  
 Life is a world of unspoiled nature  
 And an environment that natures  
 Life is when nothing becomes something  
 And a fruitful passion  
 Life is a stranger's kindness  
 A wanderer's heart that feels for another

What matters to me is life  
 Life is a heart that beats on time  
 And feet that run to love  
 Life is eternal memories we share  
 And unforgettable moments we long for

Life is a heart after its God  
 What matters to me is life

*Dr Mpoti Ralephata*  
*Chief Operating Officer*



*Illustration: Zinhle Zulu, Lecturer, UJ Department of Graphic Design*

## Life

Life matters in one's "life",  
 Health, good health matter to me in life,  
 Being happy and energetic matter to me,  
 Being me, emotional sometimes and ecstatic matter to me,  
 The joy of life, the joy of spiritual life matter to me,  
 The sense of waking up, heading and facing to my day matter to me,  
 This (it) fulfills me in life,  
 It brings to me joy and an aesthetic feeling,  
 It makes me feel great in life,  
 Being alive always makes me listen to my inner being,  
 Listen to my inner being to check what my senses say.

Life is like lonely runner alone at dusk, listening to his footsteps,  
 The steps that would make him feel as if there is a companion along,  
 Life fills me with strength to live and to dwell on my inner being,  
 It is a raising to my being,  
 Life is good and it enhances my being,  
 It is blessing that I am alive, happy and being me,  
 Let me live today as if there no tomorrow,

It is life, live it.  
 It is life, enjoy it.  
 It is life, celebrate, it.  
 It is life, nurture it.  
 It is life, take care of it.

*Dr Joe Manyaka*  
*Senior Director | Facilities Management*





Illustration: Laaiqah Rahtimulla, Honours 2024, UJ Department of Graphic Design

### **A Life Not Lived is a Wasted Resource**

Live, live, for you were created to live.

Live, for your life has a purpose.

Live to impact the lives of others, positively or negatively, make your mark.

Live and experience all the emotions life offers - Live in joy, live in anger, live through sadness, and live through sorrow.

Live for life is short; it comes and goes.

From birth to life, there's a dash – that dash represents your life.

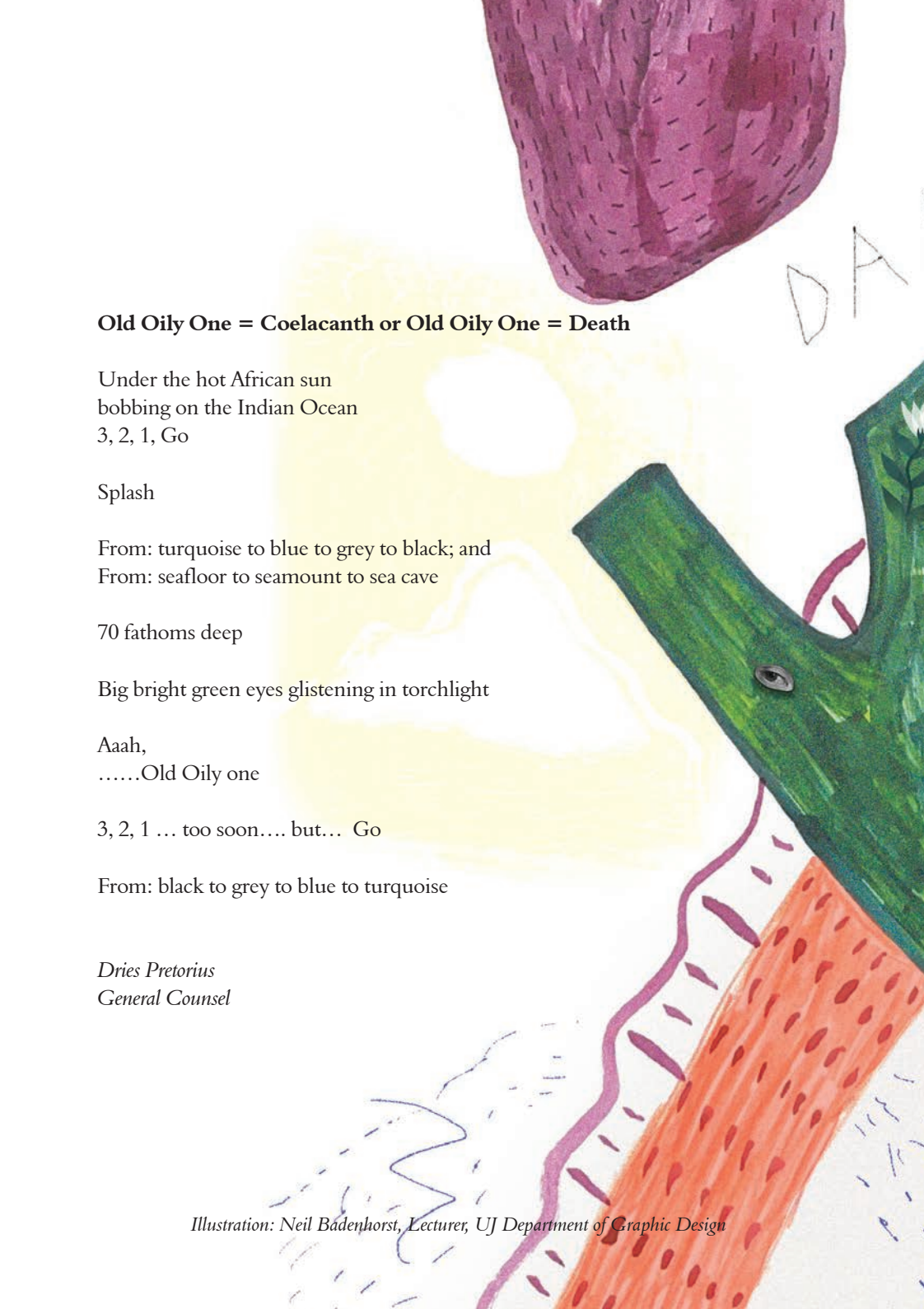
Live life fully, for it needs to be lived.

Live to touch the lives of others.

Live purposefully for a life not lived is a wasted resource.

*Tokoza Kwinana*

*Executive Director | Human Capital Management*



**Old Oily One = Coelacanth or Old Oily One = Death**

Under the hot African sun  
bobbing on the Indian Ocean  
3, 2, 1, Go

Splash

From: turquoise to blue to grey to black; and  
From: seafloor to seamount to sea cave

70 fathoms deep

Big bright green eyes glistening in torchlight

Aaah,  
.....Old Oily one

3, 2, 1 ... too soon.... but... Go

From: black to grey to blue to turquoise

*Dries Pretorius*  
*General Counsel*

*Illustration: Neil Badenhorst, Lecturer, UJ Department of Graphic Design*





## **4 | Relationships and Connection**

## **The Angry Child**

Meandering the violent streets  
The child is angry.

Fleeing the flooded shack  
The child is sad.

Freezing in the collapsing classroom fearing the latrine toilet  
The child is anxious.

Finding no joy the child is a stranger in his own country  
The child is angry.

Who is going to do the right thing  
To make sure the child's life is fulfilling?

It is up to us to end this despair.  
It will have to be us to make the squalor disappear.

We have no choice because the child belong to all of us.

*Dr Randall Carolissen*  
*Dean | Johannesburg Business School*



## Academic Sisterhood

A long and winding road ...

*Who will show the way?*

Managing tensions of work, family, career and community ...

*Who will resolve?*

Navigating a world of hidden practices ...

*Who will clarify?*

Overcoming patriarchy ...

*Who will break the structures?*

Ascending the leadership ladder ...

*Who will hold it steady?*

One strong fearless woman will ... Guiding, holding, caring. A buffer against the onslaught.

Lifting up her academic sisters until there are many more!

*Professor Nadine Petersen*

*Executive Dean | Faculty of Education*





Illustration: Dr. Reshma Maharajit, Senior Lecturer, UJ Department of Graphic Design

### **What gives me Meaning**

I might not be a poet

I might not be a person that masters big words

But I know what gives me purpose in life:

Being honest, sincere and living a life of meaning

Caring for my loved ones, my friends, colleagues and students

But also those crossing my path whom I do not know

Making a difference in people's lives and helping others to be

Is the greatest gift I can give

And I am so lucky and blessed – being in academia and UJ is a life to be

At the great University of Johannesburg

*Professor Benjamin Marx*

*Acting Executive Dean | College of Business & Economics*

## Education

If you were a person  
I would like to have a conversation with you face to face  
But since you're not  
Let me say this:

Thank you.

Thank you to the possibilities of learning;

Thank you to the possibilities of gaining knowledge;

Thank you to the possibilities of teaching others;

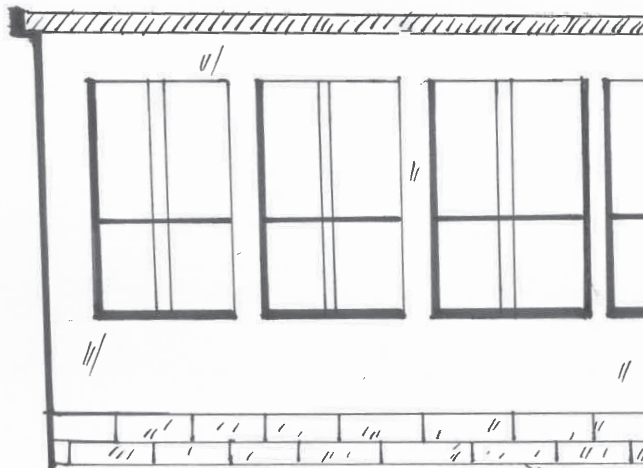
Thank you to the wealth of wisdom.

I am grateful to you

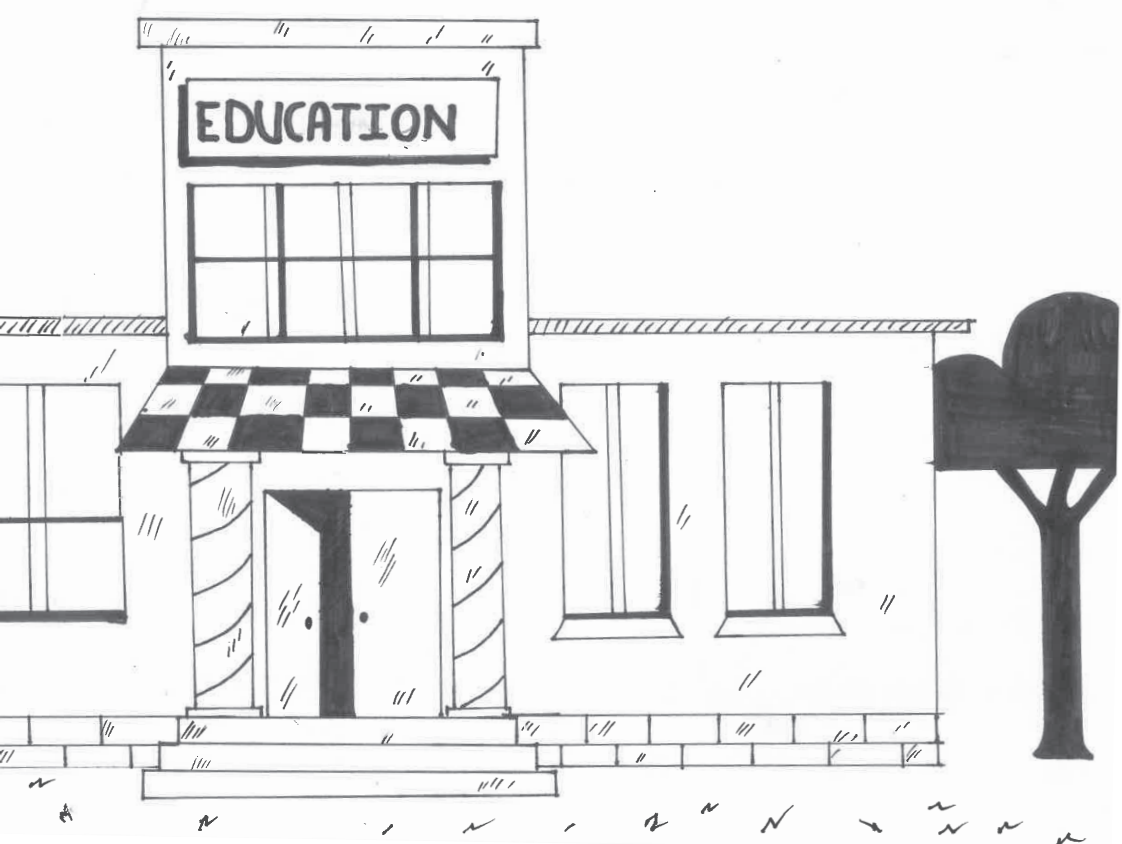
Thank you to the possibilities

I am open to possibilities.

*Professor Annie Temane*  
*Executive Dean | Health Sciences*



*Illustration: Malekapele Thapelo Kanyane, Honours 2024, UJ Department of Graphic Design*





*Illustration: Samantha Rance, Honours 2024,  
UJ Department of Graphic Design*



**Your Graduation  
(For my students)**

In gown and cap you stand with pride and joy  
A journey shared brought this about  
Through hard work and persistence you explored  
With guiding hands I saw you grow  
Moments of doubt became wings to soar  
In your success I find my own pride and joy.

*Professor Sarah Gravett  
Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor |  
Research & Innovation*



## **A Moment of Reflection**

I cannot begin to express my excitement at the prospect of being coached. The day finally came and oh my, did it deliver!

There he was, starting with DOING & BEING for peak performance.

I got it, the proximity of being and doing would get us closer to peak performance!

I could not believe, learning that I have been very proactive at the expense of being reflective.

You can imagine my excitement at the affirmation that a walk and even exercise or sleeping on it generates solutions.

Being uber-doers, extremely busy, I wanted this for the love of my life too.

The call went: Love, we are going to be intentional about our reflective time...!

*Kenny Nkwana*

*Executive Director | Facilities Management*





## **5 | Leadership and Legacy**

## Leadership

Leaders,  
 Those who are perched at the top and yet expected to be part of the people  
 Be humble, they say  
 Don't blow your horn,  
 Speak softly and carry a big stick.

Yet, a little bird whispers in your ear:  
 'Familiarity breeds contempt'!

Have a vision,  
 See far, wide, and beyond!  
 Set a tone,  
 Be a good example  
 Like Martin Luther King, Jr:  
 You must climb a mountain and see the promised land!

See deep, do a deep dive

It is lonely up there!  
 Always think of those who supported you and you moved up  
 Because you may need them on your way down, they warn you!

What is the leader to do?  
 Which messages should they listen to?

Leaders should listen to the whispers and the loud bangs of humanity

*Professor Bongani Ngqulunga*  
*Senior Executive Director*



*Illustration: Zinhle Zulu, Lecturer, UJ Department of Graphic Design*

## **IT's Silent Voice**

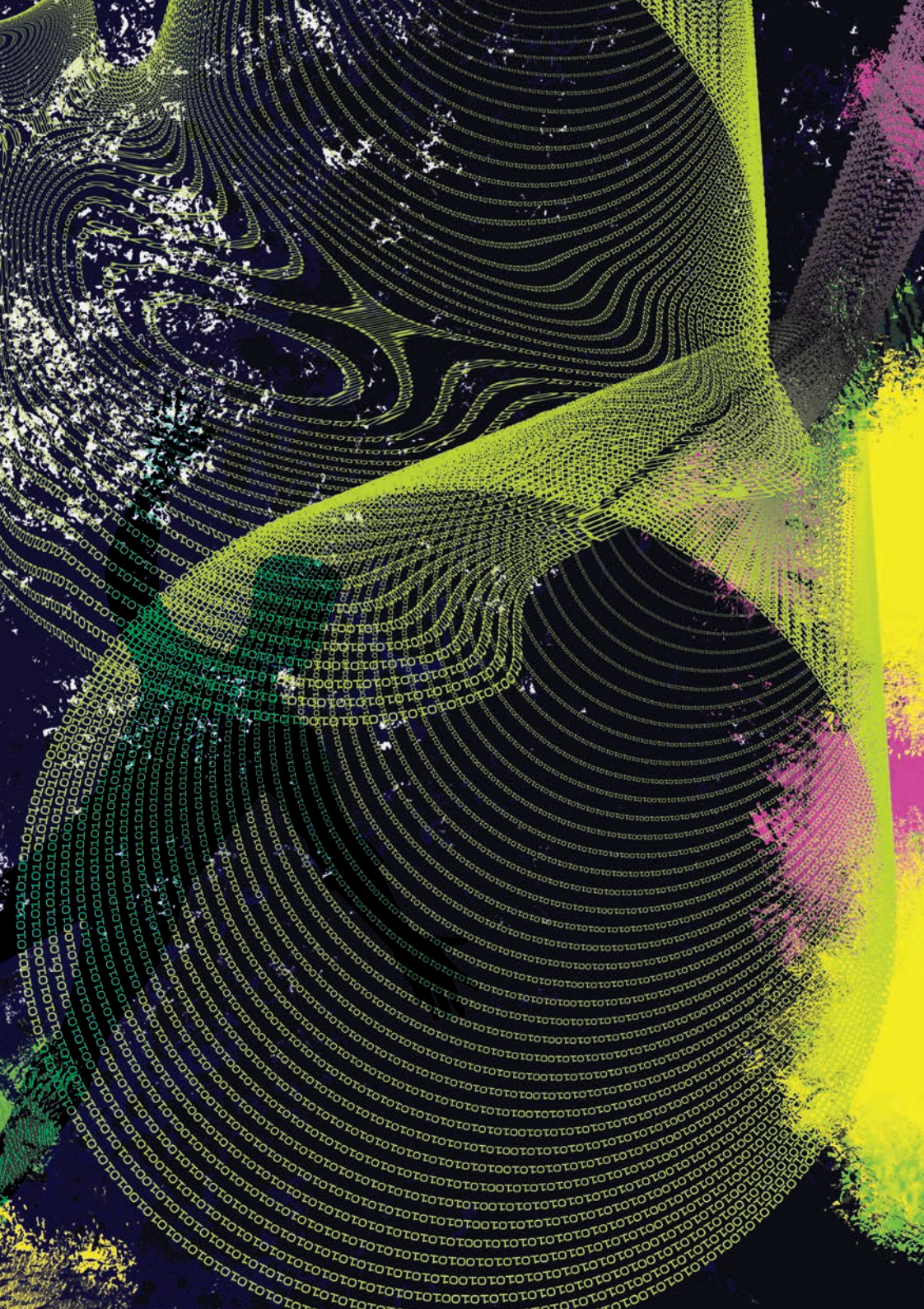
An IT manager stands, a silent whisperer.  
Where switches hum and servers whirr,  
In data's kingdom stands a knight so bright,  
Firewalls guarding realms of code, both day and night.

I navigate the paths of digital haze.  
Through tangled wires and code's sophisticated maze,  
Here, the heartbeats sync with binary beat,  
Creating harmony, a rhythm so sweet.

From guarding secrets to managing the load,  
I tread a fine line, a secure, steady road.  
In this digital age, where data is gold,  
An IT manager's role is vital and bold.

Innovation explodes from minds and machines,  
A creation of potential, in empires unknown.  
In this merging of life and digital art,  
Technology and humans are never far apart.

*Chelma Sliep*  
*Acting Chief Information Officer*



## A Sturdy Wall

In a city where danger lurks, there we stand, a sturdy wall.  
Guardians of the young and bright, shielding their dreams day and night.

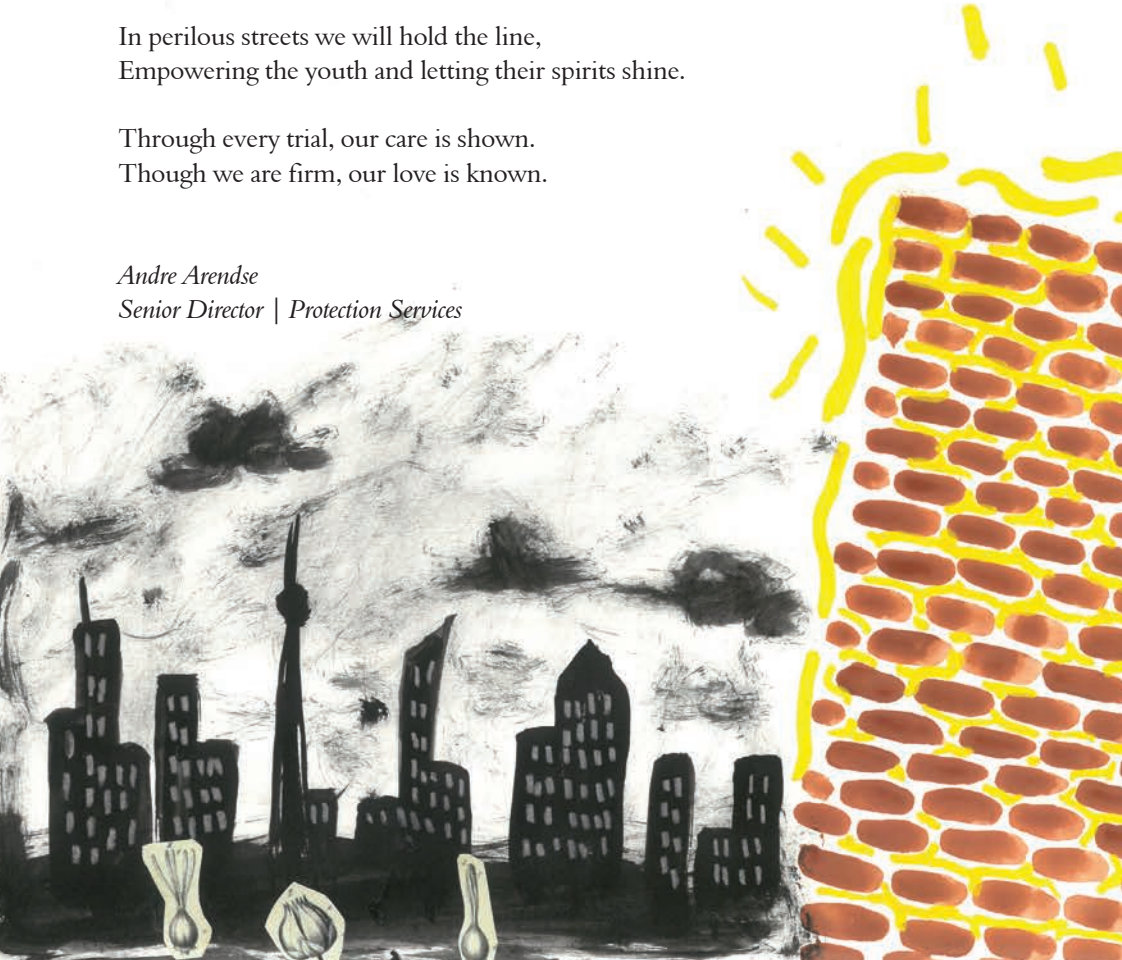
With wisdom deep and hearts sincere, we guide and we teach, always near.  
We become parents, brothers and sisters, where they stay,  
A guiding light in every way.

My vision is clear, inspiring and encouraging, dispelling fear.  
Passion strong and duty true, to our students, old and new.

In perilous streets we will hold the line,  
Empowering the youth and letting their spirits shine.

Through every trial, our care is shown.  
Though we are firm, our love is known.

*Andre Arendse*  
*Senior Director | Protection Services*





*Illustration: Laaiqah Rahimtulla, Honours  
2024, UJ Department of Graphic Design*

## **My Everyday**

My work is my purpose and my passion  
Educator, manager, supervisor  
Very little time for messing around  
Very little time for missing deadlines

Within the day-to-day is a drive to be radically spirited  
To initiate  
To instigate  
To innovate

My work is my purpose and my passion  
Breathe in, breathe out  
How do you feel at this moment?  
What inspires and moves you?

My work is my purpose and my passion  
It makes me whole  
It fills me with joy  
I am grounded

*Professor Kammila Naidoo*  
*Executive Dean | Faculty of Humanities*



*Illustration: Zinhle Zulu, Lecturer, UJ Department of Graphic Design*



## **The Orange Army**

We're the Orange Army,  
Our blood is Orange,  
UJ,  
All the way!

We're marching forwards,  
Backwards, never,  
All the way,  
UJ!

We're not afraid of the future,  
'Cause we're designing it,  
UJ,  
All the way!

Our future, Reimagined,  
All the way,  
UJ!

*Professor Letlhokwa Mpedi  
Vice-Chancellor & Principal*

