

Nomination of
Petrus Johannes (Hannes) Robbertse
for
The International Award of Honour- 2014
from
Southern Africa Region
of the
International Plant Propagator's Society



Personal and Professional Background

Hannes Robbertse was born on the 9th of October 1932 on a farm near Rustenburg in the old Transvaal (South Africa) where he was raised and where he matriculated at the Rustenburg High School in 1951. From 1952-1954 he enrolled as a B.Sc. student, majoring in Botany and Zoology at the University of Pretoria. He also simultaneously enrolled as a student at the Pretoria Teachers' Training College. From 1955-1956 he was appointed as Technical Assistant in the Department of Botany, University of Pretoria, while enrolled as an M.Sc. student. From 1957-1963 he was appointed as Professional Officer in the Department of Agriculture where he was in charge of the seed purity laboratory, as well as the seed germination laboratory in South Africa.

As for Hannes Robbertse's passion and love for South Africa's indigenous plants, he assisted with the planning, construction and maintenance of the botanical garden of the University of Pretoria (1966-1968 and 1972-1993) and the campus garden of the University of Port Elizabeth (1970-1972). He also consulted and gave physical assistance with the planning and construction of the botanical garden of Sasolburg in 1968.

From 1964-1968 he was appointed as Lecturer in the Botany Dept. at the University of Pretoria, where he simultaneously enrolled as a DSc student. From 1969-1970 he was appointed as Senior Lecturer in the Dept. of Botany at the University of Fort Hare and from 1971-1972 appointed as Senior Lecturer in the Dept. of Botany, University of Port Elizabeth where he obtained a DSc degree in 1971.

From 1972-1993 he was Professor in the Dept. of Botany at the University of Pretoria, occupying the Louis Botha Chair of Botany. He became Director of the Margaretha Mes Institute for Seed Research in 1980, resigned as Director of the Institute in 1987, but stayed on as Deputy Director when he retired in December 1993. From 1994-2003 he stayed on as Professor in the Department of Plant Production and Soil Science, lecturing undergraduate and post graduate students in Tropical and Subtropical Fruit Production and Plant Propagation.

Hannes Robbertse has been actively involved in teaching students throughout his whole career. Even after retiring, from 2003-2005, Hannes Robbertse lectured tunnel production and open field production of vegetables to disadvantaged students for 17 Shaft Co. close to Soweto, using "Agriset" governmental programmes. He was also actively involved in writing modules on plant production for Agriset and continued with guiding post graduate students in Horticulture.

From 2006 to present, Hannes Robbertse, is an Emeritus Professor, supervising post graduate students and performing research on a contract basis in the Department of Plant Production and Soil Science, University of Pretoria. He has graduated 38 MSc and 16 PhD students successfully and with his inquisitive mind he still has post graduate students under his co-supervision. He is also supervising the Tissue Culture laboratory on a temporary basis. His main fields of research at present are reproductive biology of flowering plants (structure and

functioning of reproductive parts, pollination, fruit set and fruit development); general plant structure and function; and “Tissue culture”.

Hannes Robbertse was elected as President of the International Plant Propagator’s Society, South African Potential Region from 1999-2001. In 1999 he was one of the South African representatives at IPPS tour/conference in USA from 21 September - 6 October 1999. During that year he was a key role player in establishing and creating the awareness of this Society in Southern Africa. He served as Past President from 2000-2002. Hannes Robbertse was also a committee member from 1998-2004, with several papers published in the IPPS Combined Proceedings. He is now an active member, attending conferences and supporting students, where students take part in presenting papers and attending workshops. Previously, he was also President of the Cycad Society of South Africa from 1994-1997.

During his career he has been actively involved in promoting plant propagation, sharing his passion for the reproductive biology of plants. He has given numerous popular talks about 'trees for the garden' to horticultural clubs, botanical clubs and schools and he lectured part of a special Ecology course for 10 years to students majoring in Landscape Architecture.

During Hannes Robbertse’s academic career, he presented 140 papers at conferences, is author or co-author of 116 papers published in subsidised, scientific journals, author or co-author of 56 papers published in scientific periodicals and 29 popular scientific papers. In terms of books, he is co-author of, ‘Plantkunde: Anatomie en Fisiologie’; author in 2 chapters in books on “Production of Avocados” and “Production of Mangoes”, co-author of one chapter in the book on “Flower Development” and co-author of “Cultivation of Clivias”.

He also contributed to the reading of, and suggesting alterations to, manuscripts of the following books: "Bome Struik en Rankplante" by T.J.Kruger (1973); "Cycads of southern Africa" by Cynthea Giddy (1974); "Trees of the Kruger National Park" by P. van Wyk (1974); "Die Broodboomtuin van Unisa" by B.P.Barkhuizen (1975).

For his longstanding dedication to the field of Botany and Horticultural Science, including plant propagation, for his altruistic mentorship to generations of plant propagationists in South Africa, as well as his leadership and dedicated service to the IPPS Southern Africa Region, we nominate Petrus Johannes (Hannes) Robbertse for the International Award of Honour from the International Plant Propagator’s Society.

Executive Committee

Southern Africa Region

International Plant Propagator’s Society

15 August 2013

TESTIMONIAL LETTERS

Sappi Shaw Research Centre

Tissue culture laboratory

Tweedie

Howick

South Africa

28 August 2013

RE: Nomination of Petrus Johannes (Hannes) Robbertse for The International Award of Honour- 2014 from Southern Africa Region of the International Plant Propagator's Society

To whom it may concern

I started working with Prof. Hannes Robbertse in 1994 when I did my MSc in Horticulture at the Department of Plant Production and Soil Science, University of Pretoria. Unfortunately he was not able to supervise me as he already had too many other students, but even that did not stop him assisting me with any help I needed with the completion of my studies. He was instrumental in me joining IPPS in 2004 and has remained an icon to me regarding plant propagation through the years. His door has always been open for discussions on any type of plant propagation and especially plant tissue culture.

Prof. Robbertse's knowledge and passion in almost any subject regarding plants and the propagation thereof has astounded me for years and I cannot think of any other person more deserving for this prestigious award.

Regards



Annemarie van der Westhuizen

Senior Research Officer

Sappi Forests, South Africa

19 August 2013

Testimonial: Prof. PJ Robbertse

It is an honour and privilege for me to write a testimonial letter on the nomination of Prof. PJ Robbertse for the International Award of Honour 2014 from the Southern African Region of the International Plant Propagator's Society.

I was fortunate to study BSc (agric) in Horticulture at the University of Pretoria from 2000 – 2003. My degree was presented by the Department of Soil Science and Plant Production where Prof. Robbertse was one of the senior lecturers and I had various subjects throughout my studies presented by him, such as Subtropical fruit production and Plant Propagation.

Prof. Robbertse's courses were always thoroughly enjoyable, and he had a great ability for teaching and inspiring students to take plant propagation up in their professional careers. Prof. Robbertse was always a patient and attentive lecturer, always ready to answer questions and assist with problems, allowing students to appreciate the value of the seeking and sharing of knowledge.

After he resigned from the University he stayed active in teaching others and always exhibiting a willingness to share his vast knowledge in this field. In a country such as South Africa where there is a big educational gap between people of privileged and previously disadvantaged walks of life, he has had and still has a very important role to play in closing this gap in a very important field of study, where people can learn to become self-reliant.

As a member of IPPS since 2007, I was able to keep contact with Prof. Robbertse and still find he has a real passion for this field and a lot to offer the society and other interested persons that he has contact with.

For me, it has been a privilege to have known and learned from Prof. Robbertse. I would like to recommend him for this award of honour, to recognise all the work he has done in the field of horticulture and plant propagation, especially his willingness to share in all the valuable knowledge that he has gained through his career.

Marieke Mendes
Senior Manager: Tissue Culture
AgriLab, Dube Tradeport

16 August 2013

The nomination of Prof Hannes Robbertse.

Over the past decade I had the pleasure of getting to know and work with Prof Hannes within the IPPS organisation.

He was and still is always ready to share his fantastic knowledge about our indigenous flora with any person, especially IPPS members.

As past president and currently treasurer of IPPS Southern Africa region I fully support the nomination of Prof. Petrus Johannes Robbertse.

Jac Duif