

# *The Dean's Award*

*to*

*Lynette Marais, PhD (h.c.)*



The Dean's Award was established to recognise outstanding service to the Grahamstown/Makhanda community by members of that community. The award can be offered to anyone, not necessarily from the Anglican Church or the Cathedral, who has contributed significantly to the Grahamstown community. The first award was in 2016, to the Vice Chancellor of Rhodes University, Dr Sizwe Mabizela. This year, however, the Award is for one of our own.

The Dean's Award for 2020 is given to Lynette Marais.

In making this award to Lynette, we are honouring someone who has, through her leadership of the National Festival of the Arts for 20 years, served the whole of South Africa and its artistic and diverse cultural communities with dedication and distinction. Her service in the role of Festival Director brought both the tangible benefit of increased income to this city, and, more importantly, the intangible benefits of cultural wealth to the country as a whole. Her particular contribution to the Festival was summed up by Professor Paul Maylam, when he presented her for the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*:

Lynette Marais took over the directorship of the Festival in 1989 at a challenging time of significant political transition in South Africa. The hard-line PW Botha era was about to end, and the path to democracy to begin – a transition that would inevitably have an impact on the Festival and pose an enormous challenge for its director. She responded proactively and imaginatively. A first step was to invite Barbara Masekela to speak at the 1990 Festival – a key figure who had long headed the ANC's arts and culture desk in exile. At that same Festival three to four thousand complimentary tickets were distributed to local communities lacking the means to attend events. Lynette moved to have alternative protest theatre, art and music showcased. From 1991 the Festival Committee became more culturally diverse in its composition. The critique that the Festival was overly Eurocentric, geared towards the promotion of western high culture, became harder to sustain."

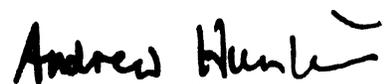
But perhaps as important was the quiet way in which, after her formal retirement, continued to work for the Festival, supporting and enabling a younger generation though a time of transition.

She has also served the local community with great distinction through Rotary and Soroptimists.

But it is her faithful service as a Lay Minister and trainer of new Lay Ministers which has specially endeared her to her fellow worshippers at the Cathedral. Here she brought her early training in drama to bear, always speaking and reading with memorable clarity and audibility. The prayers she chose and sometimes wrote enriched many a Eucharist with their relevance to the season and their depth of spiritual insight. She has been one of our absolute stalwarts, always superbly and carefully prepared for duty; an Altar Server at the 7.30 a.m. service; a wonderfully faithful LM at Fort England; someone who always had a laugh, a joke, a wise crack; and above all, a person of strength and humour and wisdom and courage. Deep faith. Immense loyalty. Utter reliability. Integrity. Her word was and is gold. Her ministry and witness both within and beyond the walls of the Cathedral have been a great blessing to us all, and to many, many others in the wider community.

Those of us who shared altar duty with Lynette remember with much affection her vestry wisecracks and quips, with her making some or other comment which would leave us in quiet fits of laughter and relax us all before the service, in such a special way. It never felt irreverent, but rather, simply, great fun. So joyful. So happy. Lynette has this wonderful gift of bringing laughter and energy wherever she goes, in whatever context. And we wish we could have seen the production of *The Crucible* in which she took the lead female role, at short notice, with distinction and with great aplomb!

It is an honour to affirm a lifetime of service to her fellow citizens and especially to her brothers and sisters in the faith with this Dean's Award.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a flourish at the end.

The Very Reverend Dr Andrew Hunter  
Dean of Grahamstown  
20<sup>th</sup> August 2020