

THE ROBERT GRAY MEDAL AWARD – 2020 – DR ROBERT ADAM

Robert Martin Adam matriculated from Bishops in 1972 with distinctions in English and Physical Science. In his Matric year he was a member of the school society called the Ten Club, which is made up of ten top academics, with its teacher-in-charge, the Principal. During the year, each of the members delivers his paper, in the case of Rob Adam, he spoke on the continent of Africa, its physical and emotive features, mystery, and attitudes forming a common thread throughout it. After school, he proceeded to the University of Cape Town, where he graduated with a B.Sc. Honours degree in Chemistry with distinction, earning the Gordon Percy Memorial Prize for the top Honours student in 1978.

Between 1978 and 1980, Dr Adam worked as a Scientific Officer at Surrey University to undertake research for the Royal Aircraft Establishment and the UK Ministry of Defence in carbon fibre technology. He then joined the South African Council for Higher Education to head a team developing distance learning material in Physical Science and Mathematics. He was detained and convicted as a political prisoner in 1981, for joining the battle to defeat the then government's policy of apartheid.

He earned an MSc in Physics with distinction from UNISA in 1987 and was awarded the UNISA National Scholarship, given each year to the top Masters student at the University, considered over all faculties. He became a Research Associate in the Department of Physics at UNISA where he was awarded a Doctorate in Nuclear Physics in 1991, working on a Science and Technology policy for a post-apartheid South Africa. He proceeded to the Faculty of Physics and Astronomy at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam where he worked until 1993 when he returned to the country and became a lecturer in the Department of Physics at the University of Natal.

In 1995, after the first democratically elected South Africa was proclaimed, Dr Adam joined government. He was appointed Director-General of the Department of Science and Technology in 1999 holding this position until 2006, when he was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the South African Nuclear Energy Corporation (Necsa), South Africa's statutory nuclear technology company. Dr Adam joined the private sector and

became Group Executive: Nuclear, at Aveng in 2012, a publicly listed multinational infrastructure company, from where he moved to his current positions at SARAO (South African Radio Astronomy Observatory) and the SKA (Square Kilometre Array). He is a member of the Council of the SKA Observatory (representing South Africa) and has chaired or served on numerous other boards and councils.

In the Nuclear industry, he established the National Nuclear Manufacturing Centre at Necsa, to manufacture components and subsystems for major nuclear reactor vendors. In Radio Astronomy, Dr Adam chaired the Steering Committee for the bid that South Africa won to host the SKA Radio Telescope; guided the establishment of SARAO; successfully completed construction of the MeerKAT radio telescope on the SKA site near Carnarvon (MeerKAT is the most powerful radio telescope in the world); drove the Agreement with the Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy on the construction of MeerKAT; and guided South Africa's accession to the SKA Convention, leading to the establishment in 2021 of the SKA Observatory.

Dr Adam was knighted 'Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite' by the President of the Republic of France, for outstanding achievement in fostering scientific collaboration between France and South Africa.

Dr Adam has a partner, Karin, and two children, Sarah (27) and James (24). Sarah currently works in Dubai for a strategy consultancy company and James is completing his Masters in Applied Mathematics at UCT. Dr Adam's favourite hobbies include hiking, especially the myriad routes in Table Mountain National Park, and cooking, a skill he learned at a young age, having been given responsibility for the family braai from the age of ten.



THE ROBERT GRAY MEDAL AWARD – 2020 – BISHOP GEOFF DAVIES

Bishop Geoff Davies has been awarded the Bishop Robert Gray Medal in recognition of his lifelong concern for the wellbeing of life on this planet and his conviction that his Church, and all Faith Communities, should recognise their responsibility to care for the earth. It is also given in the hope that his example will inspire and encourage others to build the movement to care for creation.

His passion to care for all of God's creation is founded on his Christian faith and commitment. He believes that knowing that *'The Earth is the Lord's'* (Psalm 24) and that everything God brought into being is *'very good'* (Genesis 1) should provide the basis for all believers to express gratitude for life and its sanctity.

From his time at Bishops and with the influence of his father who was an Anglican priest, he developed a strong understanding of the need for justice, standing against the injustices of Apartheid. Following his ordination to the priesthood in London, this broadened to seek justice for all life.

As a mission priest in Botswana in a time of drought, he experienced the fragility of life. He saw that it is we humans who are tipping the balance of survival. As a parish priest, as Director of the Department of Mission for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa and finally as the Bishop of Mzimvubu in the Eastern Cape, a hallmark of Bishop Geoff's ministry has been his persistent call for the Church to include and embrace environmental responsibility as a Christian obligation.

In those early years, he was often a lone voice in church circles, but that did not deter him. The world-wide Anglican Communion Environment Network and *Green Anglican* movement has grown out of seeds sown by Bishop Geoff and a small band of activists who spoke out when it was not fashionable. *In 1995 he initiated a campaign entitled 'Save Our Future', with guidelines to set the Church and the new democratic South Africa on a sustainable path. What the world was not ready to receive then has now become critically important.*

Following his retirement as Bishop of Mzimvubu, with a small passionate team, he established the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI), a multi-faith environmental NGO. Its purpose is to challenge, encourage and inspire people of all faiths, and political leaders, to become involved in eco-justice action.

In 2011 Bishop Geoff Davies coordinated the faith-based witness at the COP 17 climate talks in Durban. Since then, faith communities have become a significant voice at the global climate talks. This movement has now been taken up by faith leaders around the world. Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Churches, and the World Council of Churches now universally recognise that the health of the planet is crucial for human survival and well-being.

SAFCEI works at the local level in congregations training faith leaders and encouraging them to act boldly against environmental injustices. In a "David and Goliath" struggle, SAFCEI took the Government to court to stop ex-President Zuma's controversial nuclear power deal which could have been financially and environmentally disastrous.

The environmental challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, food sovereignty, human population dominance, economic injustice and ecological collapse are all issues of critical importance, but Bishop Geoff is no longer a lone voice in the struggle.

This Medal is given in the hope that it will be an inspiration and encouragement to others to join the campaign to care for and love this planet, our only home.

