

Incoming President (2023/2024) Prof Stephen McCourt

The GSSA would like to welcome Prof Steve McCourt as the incoming President of the Geological Society of South Africa for 2023/2024.



Prof. McCourt is an experienced and respected geological scientist and academic (now retired) who immigrated to South Africa in early 1976 following completion of a PhD in Geology at the University of Exeter (UK). Between 1976 and early 1983, Steve was a field geologist with the erstwhile Geological Survey of South Africa and then with Mining Corporation. During this period, he was based in Pietersburg (Polokwane) and tasked with regional mapping in the basement terranes of northern South Africa (Kaapvaal craton, Limpopo belt), the Karoo Supergroup within the northern part of the KNP (1976-1981) and, following his move to Mining Corporation, supervision of an exploration programme for gold and base metals in the Mesoarchaeon Giyani Greenstone Belt.

Steve moved into academia in 1983, initially as Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor in structural geology and tectonics at the University of Pretoria (1983 to 1995) and then as HOD at the University of Durban Westville, now part of the University of KwaZulu Natal (1995 to 2016).

Steve's research interests are in Precambrian orogeny with a focus on the Archaean Limpopo belt and adjacent cratons, the Palaeoproterozoic Angolan Shield and the Mesoproterozoic Natal belt. His research interests have taken him to field areas across southern Africa, and to conference platforms throughout the world.

Whilst in academia Steve served as an external examiner, at various levels, for a number of Universities throughout southern Africa, as a reviewer for several ISI listed geoscience journals, as a member of the adjudication panels of national research and scientific organisations (NRF and SANAP) and on the review panels for geoscience departments in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia.



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Steve has been married to Liz for 52 years and they have been blessed with 3 children (based in Pretoria, London and Melbourne) and 2 granddaughters.

Career highlights

- Founding member of the Tectonics Division of the Geological Society of South Africa (T'DOGS) and in this capacity identified and organized a number of short courses and workshops for academia and industry based, geologists and post-graduate students (1987-1995)
- Between 1995 and 1999 served as Honorary Scientific Editor of the South African Journal of Geology. Prior to his appointment, publication of the SAJG was 2 years behind schedule. By 1997 publication was back on schedule and the journal was attracting quality manuscripts from local and international researchers. As a result of Steve's management, the SAJG was listed on the Science Citation Index in 1998. He was head-hunted for a 2nd term 2015-2019
- In 1995, he was appointed as Head of Department (Geology) at the University of Durban-Westville. During his tenure there was a marked improvement in the local and national profile of UDW Geology and an increase in research productivity, including post-graduate training, by the academic staff.
- In 2006 following the merger between UDW and UN, Steve was appointed Head, School of Geological Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal; reappointed for a 2nd term 2009-2011
- Appointed Professor Emeritus in Geology at UKZN from 01-2015

Steve served as a GSSA Council Member between 1991 and 1998 and again from 2015 following his appointment as Managing Editor of the SAJG. He has been on Manco since 2018, as VP of the Academic Affairs Portfolio