

# “Yster” Rassie Erasmus receives honorary doctorate

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On Thursday, 2 May, the North-West University (NWU) bestowed an honorary doctorate on Springbok coach and SA Rugby's former director of rugby, Rassie Erasmus.



Rassie received his honorary doctorate on the NWU's Potchefstroom Campus, and was joined by inspirational national captain, Siya Kolisi and the president of SA Rugby, Mark Alexander, amongst others. It was a day that will long be remembered.

Prof Bismark Tyobeka, principal and vice-chancellor of the NWU said: “Rassie is here today not because of his popularity – although I think many politicians are grateful he will not be standing as a candidate during the upcoming elections. He is here because of the impact he has made on our country that will last a lifetime.

He has always been part of winning teams, and now he is part of a winning university.

Rassie, the world has had its eye on you for many years now, but so have we at the North-West University. We saw how you made big differences, and small ones.

We saw your unselfish dedication as you turned a struggling team into the most successful one in the country's history. We watched as you showed that if diversity is embraced in the right way, the results will speak for themselves.

We looked on as you and your Springboks made South Africa a global brand characterised by resilience, grit and determination.

Rassie, today an honorary doctorate will be bestowed on you in recognition of your innovative and exceptional management of the Springboks during your victorious 2019 and 2023 Rugby World Cup campaigns, of your significant standing in the international rugby coaching arena, of your strong drive and focus on diversity and inclusion, and of your commitment to

social responsibility.

This honorary doctorate is for all that, and more. Because: Rassie, jy is 'n yster.”

An overjoyed and somewhat emotional Rassie said that receiving the honorary doctorate was a huge honour and a moment he will cherish forever.

He also thanked Bert Sorgdraer, NWU Council chairman, Prof Tyobeka, Prof Awie Kotzé, executive dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences and Bertus le Roux from the NWU's Centre for Human Health Performance, for the role they played in him being awarded an honorary doctorate.

“I was really out of my comfort zone, and was more nervous than playing a test in front of 80 000 people,” he joked.

“I now really feel part of the North-West University. They are my kind of people.”

Siya Kolisi also commended his coach on his latest achievement as well as for the mentoring role Rassie has played throughout his career.

“I want to say congratulations to coach Rassie, he really deserves it. He gave me my first contract when I was 18, so I have experienced everything that he has done. I was very naughty, and he guided me. For some reason he stuck with me, but said I can do so much more with my talent, but that I aren't using it. I wouldn't be where I am without him, my family wouldn't be where they are without him and my community wouldn't be where they are without him. As a coach he made us play for South Africa, and not for ourselves. We are such a diverse country, but he made every single person in our group feel safe and heard. We are all indebted to him.”

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