

Monthly Newsletter

OLD UNIONITE ASSOCIATION

30 June 2024



AN UNBEATABLE VIEW...
PHOTO BY OLD UNIONITE JENNIFER HOPE

A Word from the Chairman

Dear Old Unionites,

I am incredibly happy to report the overwhelmingly positive response we received to last month's newsletter.

Your support and enthusiasm is greatly appreciated and truly encouraging.

With that being said, I am pleased to present to you this month's edition of the Old Unionite Association newsletter.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to making this edition possible.

Your dedication and contributions are what make this newsletter a success.

If you would like to include any news, achievements, or stories in next month's newsletter, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at oldunionites@unionschools.co.za.

We welcome and value your input.

We hope you enjoy this edition, which is filled with the latest Interschools news, Old Unionite achievements, and much more.

Rhett Newton

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Union High School,
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Did you know?



Union High School's 1951 1st XV was the first team to play an Interschools on the Botanics ground, though this was not a permanent arrangement until 1972, and were the last side to play in the old traditional striped jersey. *Hoffie Hofmeyr introduced the present white 1st team jersey in 1952.*

1st XV 1951: BACK: E. Outram, W. Barratt, J. Rautenbach, A. Schoeman, J. de Villiers, P. van Antwerp, C. Maasdorp, R. Slater. MIDDLE: C. Edelsen, G. Smith, Mr H. Le Roux, G. Labuschagne (Capt.), Mr W. Hofmeyr, T. Spence, H. Steynberg. FRONT: J. Joubert, H. Smit.

Union High School: A legacy of generations and dreams

Union High School has long been recognized as a school of many generations, a place where the tradition of excellence and community is passed down from parents to children. ***This year, the enduring legacy of Union is more evident than ever, with numerous children of Old Unionites currently enrolled at the school.***

It's truly remarkable to note that among the nine parent representatives on the Union High School governing body, five are Old Unionites themselves. **These dedicated individuals include** George Hope (Class of 1998) and Jennifer Hope (Class of 2000), Rhett Newton (Class of 1992), Euan Hector (Class of 1998) and Justin Kingwill (Class of 1997). *Their active involvement in the school's governance is a testament to their commitment to ensuring that their children enjoy the same wonderful experiences they had during their time at Union.*

This deep-rooted connection between past and present learners highlights the school's unique spirit and the strong bonds that are formed here.

The participation of alumni in the school's activities and governance underscores the character of Union High School, **reflecting a community that not only values its history but is also invested in its future.**

Anatole France once said, "To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe." This quote beautifully encapsulates the spirit of Union High School.

The school's success is built not just on actions and plans, but on the dreams and beliefs of its learners, parents and alumni.

As these Old Unionites plow back into the school, they are helping to cultivate an environment where new generations can dream, believe and achieve.

Their involvement is a powerful reminder of the lasting impact a school can have on its community, and how that community, in turn, sustains the school's legacy.

Old Unionites in the news



Mike Morgan

Well done to Old Unionite Mike Morgan (Class of 1983) who has achieved the remarkable feat of completing 16 Comrades Marathons.

Mike's first successful attempt at the Ultimate Human Race was in 1985, shortly after matriculating from Union High School. He has since successfully finished another 15 races, with his last one being in 2018. His dedication and perseverance over the years are truly commendable.

What makes Mike's accomplishment even more remarkable is that his passion for the Comrades Marathon has become a family tradition. In 1985, Mike ran his first Comrades alongside his father, Stan, who was completing his 10th run that year.

Recently, Mike's sister Julie completed her 12th Comrades, securing her own Green Number. *Having three family members in the Green Number Club is a testament to the Morgan family's extraordinary commitment to long-distance running.*

Mike's achievements and those of his family highlight the enduring spirit of Unionites, proving that with determination and hard work, great milestones can be reached. **What an achievement!**



Gavin Opperman

Well done to Old Unionite **Gavin Opperman** (Class of 1983), who this year successfully completed both the Two Oceans Marathon and the Comrades Marathon in impressive times of 5:17 and 9:46, respectively.

Gavin's achievements in these grueling races are just the latest highlights in a fascinating and accomplished life since his days at Union.

Although he often visits South Africa, Gavin currently resides in London, where he has carved out a highly successful career in banking. With nearly 40 years of experience, he has held senior executive roles across key financial disciplines, from retail to commercial, corporate and investment banking. His global experience as a Chief Executive and Bank Director at international banks underscores his prowess and versatility in the financial sector.

When he's not making strides in the banking world, Gavin's passion for physical challenges takes center stage.



An avid runner, cyclist, swimmer, hiker and kite surfer, he remains an active athlete even three decades after his competitive debut.

His commitment to fitness and adventure began early, likely honed during his service as a Lieutenant in the parachute battalion of the South African Army, where he learned to excel in multiple fields.

His dedication to running is particularly remarkable; he has completed over 350 official standard and ultra-marathons across 37 countries.

He has achieved the extraordinary feat of running on all seven continents and has completed the six World Marathon Majors.

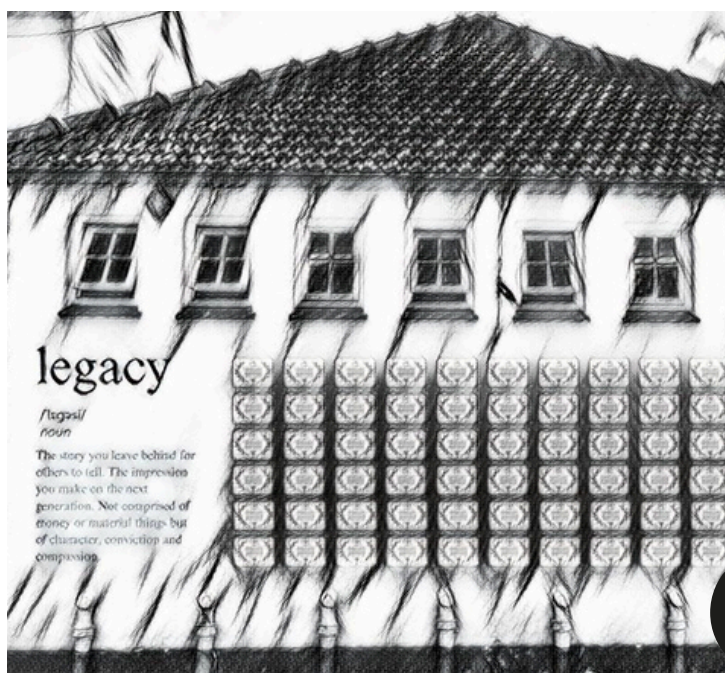
Gavin's story is a testament to the incredible heights that Unionites can reach. His continued achievements inspire us all, demonstrating the power of determination, resilience and a passion for excellence.

Congratulations, Gavin! We look forward to seeing what new milestones you will achieve next.

Spotlight on current projects

A legacy written on the walls

Please take note that the deadline for phase 1 of Union High School's new **LEGACY PROJECT** (as featured in last month's newsletter) is Monday, 8 July.



To purchase your 15x15cm plaque at a cost of R500:

Make an EFT payment to the following account (please send a POP and inscription through to uhsmarketing@unionschools.co.za)

BANK DETAILS FOR EFT:

U.H.S. Clearing Account
Standard Bank, Graaff-Reinet
Acc no. 082528330
Branch code 050116
REF: Name & Legacy

Remember friends and loved ones, say thank you, or simply share a memory or leave a message - by doing so you will be helping to support future generations of learners at Union.

PLEASE NOTE: The Legacy Project will be unveiled during this year's Interschools.

Contact uhsmarketing@unionschools.co.za with any queries.

CLICK HERE



RAFFLE

Union High School's Primary Department recently launched an exciting **RAFFLE** in collaboration with Union Preparatory School, featuring incredible prizes up for grabs!

Imagine cruising the streets on a brand new Suzuki V-Strom 250! It's just one of the incredible prizes awaiting the lucky winners!

(The main prize can be exchanged for R50 000 in cash if you are unable to claim the motorcycle.)

Second prize offers the ultimate shopping spree with a Pick n Pay trolley dash, while third prize takes you soaring above Graaff-Reinet on a scenic flight!

But that's not all! Accommodation packages and a hampers are also up for grabs! Grab your ticket for just R50 and be in the running for these incredible prizes. And remember, the more tickets you buy, the greater your chances of winning!

The draw will take place at this year's Tri The Karoo event on Saturday, October 12th. Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity to win big and support our schools!

PLEASE SUPPORT Union's Grade 1 to 7 learners learners by grabbing your raffle tickets today! Grab your ticket by clicking on the following link:

CLICK HERE



Giving Back

The Old Unionite Association is dedicated to the betterment of the Union Schools through various initiatives that support both the learners and staff.

One such recent initiative includes the funding of Union coaches, Mr. Mpilo Njoloza and Mr. Edorique Gouws, to complete a Level 3 cricket coaching course.

According to Mr. Njoloza, who coaches the U/13A team and serves as the school's Head of Junior Sport, **the course has been a transformative experience for his coaching journey.**

"The course significantly impacted my coaching techniques and broadened my understanding of various coaching dynamics," Mr. Njoloza shared. "One of the highlights was the opportunity to chat with Gary Kirsten during the Google Meet calls. His insights and experiences were invaluable and offered a unique perspective on coaching at the highest level. This interaction alone provided a wealth of knowledge that I could immediately apply to my coaching practice."

The course has put me a step ahead, enabling me to transfer the knowledge gained not only to cricket but also to rugby. It taught me to develop holistically self-reliant players, focusing on their overall growth and independence both on and off the field. This holistic approach has been instrumental in shaping my coaching philosophy."

Moreover, the course allowed me to learn more about myself as a coach. It pushed me to reflect on my methods, adapt my strategies, and continually strive for improvement."

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Old Unionite Association for equipping me with this great opportunity. I look forward to using the knowledge gained to further enhance the cricket program at Union Schools and contribute to the development of our players."

The Old Unionite Association is proud to support initiatives like this that contribute to the overall development of Union Schools' sports programmes and help our coaches grow in their professional journeys.



Mr Mpilo Njoloza



Mr Edorique Gouws.

Old Unionite Association's Involvement in the Anne Beagley Junior Rugby & Hockey Festival

The committee members of the Old Unionite Association were once again privileged to be involved in Union High School's **23rd annual Anne Beagley Junior Rugby & Hockey Festival.**

This festival serves as a valuable fundraising opportunity for the Association, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to the Old Boys and Girls who helped throughout the weekend.

Whether it was serving steak to the hundreds of coaches, parents and visitors during the traditional Old Unionite steak evening or working behind the bar in the Tony Burrell Union until the early hours of the morning, your support was invaluable and greatly appreciated.

If you would like to get involved in these events in the future, please reach out to us!

Your participation helps make these events successful and supports the ongoing efforts of the Old Unionite Association.





1st XV Locker Room Plaques

Union High School recently had the distinct honour of affixing **new plaques in the 1st XV locker room**, commemorating the legacy and contributions of our distinguished rugby-playing Old Unionites.

Union's u/13A rugby captain, Jordan Maritz, had the privilege of placing the plaque of his grandfather, the legendary **Rory Sullivan**. This heartfelt gesture underscored the deep ties and lasting legacy of the Sullivan family within our rugby community.

Following this, the plaque of his uncle, **Gary Sullivan**, was also proudly put up, celebrating another chapter in the family's storied rugby history.

Additionally, we were grateful to honour our Old Unionite Association Chairman, **Rhett Newton**, by affixing his plaque.

For those interested in learning more about this meaningful fundraising initiative, please contact us at uhsmarketing@unionschools.co.za.

Your support helps us continue to celebrate and preserve the legacy of our rugby greats for future generations.

Down Memory Lane

Union High School has a rich rugby tradition, and at the heart of its early days stands a remarkable figure: **Ted Slater**.

A passionate rugby enthusiast, Ted played in the school's 1st XV until 1924 and holds the distinguished title of being **Union High School's first official rugby captain**.

Union's first recorded rugby match was played on 15 April 1922 against Aberdeen, with Ted leading the team as captain. Ted's leadership on the field set a precedent for future generations of rugby players at Union. *His dedication to the sport and his team was evident in his performance and the respect he garnered from teammates and opponents alike.*

The Slater family's contributions to rugby and education extend beyond Ted's achievements. Ted's brother, Jack Slater, achieved national recognition as a Springbok and later contributed to education as the Headmaster of Kingswood College in Grahamstown.

Their father, WP Slater, was one of the founders of Union High School, demonstrating a strong commitment to education and community. Additionally, their grandfather, Josiah Slater, was a foundational member of both Kingswood College and Rhodes University, cementing the family's legacy in South African education.

The Slater family exemplifies a legacy of dedication, leadership and service to both education and sport. ***Ted Slater's role as the first official rugby captain of Union High School is a proud chapter in this legacy, illustrating the impact one family can have on multiple facets of community and national life.***

📷 Pictured here is Union's 1st XV 1922:

BACK: F. Joseph, H. Whitlock, W. Botha, L. Light, G. MacCrae, G. Corser, H. Light, Mr A.E. Puttick.
MIDDLE: S. Lane, H. Muller, Mr B. Laing, E. Bekker, A. Murray.
FRONT: W. Willows, M. Smit.
INSET: T. Slater (Capt.).



In Memorium



Stephen Bezuidenhout

It is with profound sadness that we learned of the passing of **Mr Stephen Bezuidenhout** a cherished member of the Union Schools community today.

Mr Bez, as he was fondly known, was not only a dedicated teacher and coach, but also a devoted parent of our school. *His warmth, humour and genuine care touched the lives of countless learners, colleagues and families.*

He was a true pillar of our community and his absence will be deeply felt.

Our hearts go out to his wife, Trudi, their beloved daughters, Amber and Chanté, and the rest of his extended family. We offer them our deepest condolences and pray for strength and comfort during this difficult time.

A full tribute to Mr Bezuidenhout will be shared in time, allowing us to properly celebrate his life and the lasting impact he made on all who knew him.



Charles Maasdorp

It is with profound sorrow that we share this tribute today in honour of a remarkable Old Unionite - Charles Maasdorp - who passed away on 29 May in Graaff-Reinet, two days after his 91st birthday.

Charles Maasdorp, the Head Boy of Union High School in 1951, embodied the values of leadership and excellence. **His life was marked by significant achievements and a steadfast commitment to his family and community.**

Born in 1933 in Lonely Mine, north of Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia, Charles grew up with two siblings. In 1941, his family moved to the farm Hopewell in Aberdeen, where his father managed a successful wool farming operation. From a young age, Charles showed promise and passion, particularly in cricket, where he excelled and played for the Karoo team.

After matriculating, Charles ventured to Australia to gain practical experience in farming.

In 1956, he married Eira Hartzenberg, the love of his life, and their union of 68 years produced four children. Charles and Eira became integral members of the Graaff-Reinet community, where they have resided for most of their lives.

From a young age, Charles harbored a dream of becoming a pilot, a passion he pursued against the initial reluctance of his father. His determination saw him qualify as a pilot at the Beaufort West Flying Club.

This accomplishment marked the beginning of a lifelong love for flying. Employed by the Murray family, Charles spent over 40 years flying them to various destinations, including Namibia, only retiring at the impressive age of 86. His dedication to flying was not merely a career but a defining aspect of his life, one he pursued until his health no longer permitted.

Charles Maasdorp was an eternal optimist, embodying a spirit of resilience and joy. He rarely complained, and sadness found little space in his life. His legacy extends beyond his professional and personal achievements; he was a beloved husband, a devoted father of four, a cherished grandfather of eleven and a great-grandfather of ten.

The Graaff-Reinet community was an extension of his family, and Charles was the very essence of the close-knit and vibrant Karoo community. His life and character are a testament to the extraordinary individuals this part of the world produces. **He was not just a part of the community but the fabric that held it together.**

In honouring Charles Maasdorp, we remember a man who lived a truly blessed life. His optimism, dedication and love for his family and community serve as an enduring legacy. Charles was indeed a great, colourful man whose memory will forever be treasured by all who had the privilege of knowing him. Rest in peace, Charles.

In Memorium

Connie King

It is with heavy hearts that we acknowledge the passing of **Connie King**, a former educator at Union High School.

Connie served the school as a teacher of Domestic Science, Needlework and Lifesaving in days gone by.

Connie's warm and caring nature touched the lives of

many, and her commitment to instilling valuable skills and knowledge in her learners has left a lasting legacy. Her presence will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to her extended family and friends during this difficult time. May they find comfort in the cherished memories they hold of such a remarkable individual.



We urge any Old Unionites who would like to submit an 'In Memorium' tribute, to please submit it via email to oldunionites@unionschools.co.za

Interschools News

Annual Assembly

Union High School's annual Interschools' Assembly will be held on Friday morning, 9 August, at 09:00 in the school hall.

This year's assembly, will see Old Unionite **Ms Nwabisa Mazosiwe**, a part of the Class of 1999, taking the stage as guest speaker.

Other items on the programme include the Headmaster's Address, a performance by the junior and senior choir, the Head Prefect's message and the introduction of the 1st rugby and hockey teams.

All those interested are invited to attend.

* The Assembly will be followed by tea and eats served in the Tony Burrell Union.

More about our speaker:

Ms. Nwabisa Mazosiwe currently serves as the Managing Director of Black Ruby House, an HR, Recruitment, and Productions Agency. *Continued on page 9.*



ABOVE: Ms Nwabisa Mazosiwe in Union's senior stage production in 1999.

After matriculating from Union High School, Nwabisa pursued her higher education at Wits University. Her dynamic career took a significant turn in 2007 when she joined South Africa's largest independent radio station. Her spontaneous and contagious laugh made her a household name and provided a launchpad for her specialized voice-over work, a passion she continues to indulge in daily.

While seeking full-time employment, Nwabisa was offered a position with a recruitment agency. **Her innate talent for talent and resource management quickly became evident, and four years later, she launched her own agency, Black Ruby House.**

The agency, which started as a recruitment firm, is a 100% female-owned Talent and Resource Management Company that takes pride in its South African heritage and success. Headquartered in Gauteng, the company boasts multiple teams of specialist employees who serve both national and international clients and candidates. They cater to diverse industries, offering permanent, temporary and disability staff placements.

When the world shut down in 2020, Nwabisa saw a gap in her world of voice and launched a production wing to Black Ruby House, focusing on adverts for both radio and television. She's currently doing work with large corporations like Pick n Pay, Standard Bank, Pioneer Foods, Metropolitan Life, Vodacom, SABC, DSTV and many others.

We are thrilled to have Nwabisa Mazosizwe return to our campus, not only to share her experiences and insights but also to inspire the next generation of Unionites. Her story of resilience, innovation and leadership exemplifies the spirit of our school, and we look forward to an enlightening and motivational assembly.

Interschools Programme

This year's **INTERSCHOOLS** is being hosted by Hoër Volkskool. As soon as the weekend's programme has been made available by the hosts we will publish it to our social media channels and send it out via AlumNet.

We will also share it in next month's issue of our newsletter, so keep an eye out.

Reunions in 2024

The Old Unionite Association is – once again – eagerly anticipating this year's **INTERSCHOOLS** and the annual class reunions associated with it!

We extend a warm invitation to all reunion groups to join us for this special occasion. *It is our hope that all class groups planning on hosting reunions will be able to participate and make this event even more memorable.*

To ensure a smooth planning process, we kindly request all reunion groups to complete the following link at <https://forms.gle/BSbyTZLsZgArJihA> or email us at oldunionites@unionschools.co.za

We have already received several responses! Thank you to all those who have submitted your details.

We will publish a comprehensive list of all reunions soon.

BREAKFAST & BRUNCH

on The deck

TREAT YOURSELF TO A DELICIOUS INTERSCHOOLS' SUNDAY BREAKFAST OR BRUNCH!

BUFFET MENU

Champagne Mimosa on Arrival

Creamy Scrambled Egg with Chives
Bacon & Boerewors off the Grill
Herbed Mushrooms
Tomato & Onion Relish
Roosterkoek / Butter


Coffee & Tea

RESERVE YOUR TABLE NOW!
067 338 8098

TONY BURRELL PAVILION

SUNDAY, 11 AUGUST | 9-11 AM

R120 PER PERSON



Boys will be boys...

By Mr. J.G. Kilian (Union High School 1957 to 1962)

My parents decided that we must go to an English medium school; the nearest was in Graaff Reinet. Many "wolhaarstories" can be told, but best is to leave those for a later date. But there is one that will never be forgotten.

The town received its water supply from the Van Ryneveld's dam in the Sunday's River. This dam fascinated me as where I came from there were no dams of this capacity. One Sunday, my two trusted friends and I came to the dam to walk over the dam wall. When we got to the other side, we had a cool swim as it was a usual hot summer day. Bravely, I said I could swim across the dam; they both dared me as it was quite a long swim and there was nowhere one could rest.

Off I went in my white P.T. shorts, the first hundred metres was ok, until I got midway, with the wind and small waves, I struggled to stay afloat. The side of the cement wall was slippery with moss growth. The two friends could not help me as the cement wall was about six to ten metres high. After a silent prayer and perseverance, I just made the other side, absolutely bushed. As I was still gasping for air, I felt a large hand on my shoulder and a loud voice in Afrikaans "Kom boet!"

I realized that this must be a policeman and he must be from the Afrikaans school, our main opposition. I was escorted to the police van and sat in the back behind bars. It was a fair drive to the police station, but nevertheless, on arrival, I was again escorted to the police cell. After a full explanation of who I was and where I lived, I was locked in the police cell. By this time, I was confident that I would be expelled from the school as we were told never to swim in the dam. The thought of my dad driving two hundred kilometres to come and fetch me was horrifying. After about an hour, I heard a voice that I recognized as my headmaster, then I knew the end was near.

Besides the hiding from the headmaster and the disgrace to the school, I thought, well I must face the consequences. When the headmaster arrived with the police captain, I will never forget looking at the headmaster peering down at me with his bushy eyebrows. This was enough to assure me of a disastrous end.

A short trip in the back of his car, we arrived at the boys' hostel. Mr. Arnott, that was his name, drove around to his apartment and stopped in front of his garage and told me to come. Well, I thought that is where it will start.

Entering the kitchen, he called his wife "Jenny, give this young man biscuits and warm milk." I could not believe what I just heard....cookies and milk?! I started crying because the pressure was too much at that moment. Mrs. Arnott put her arm around me and said it would be okay. I went to my bedroom wiping my tears for no one to see. At the end of the term my parents came to fetch my brother and me. My parents went into the office, and Mr. Arnott obviously told them about my escapade. When my dad called me to come to the office, I knew that it was now the bittersweet end. My dad said to Mr. Arnott, "I trust you gave him six of the best." And Mr. Arnott answered, "No, Mr. Kilian, boys will be boys!"

Yes, those were the days that will always be remembered.



TO UNION HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS SOAKING IN THE BREATHTAKING MORNING VIEW OF THE NQWEBA DAM OVERFLOWING BEFORE SCHOOL EARLIER THIS YEAR. ONE OF THE MANY PERKS OF LIVING AND GOING TO SCHOOL IN GRAAFF-REINET - SPECTACULAR SCENERY RIGHT AT YOUR DOORSTEP!

In the next issue:

Interschools - A Special Edition

Major Player #2

100 Club - the way forward

Technological Advancements at the Union Schools

Thank you for reading!