

Newsletter

OLD UNIONITE ASSOCIATION

June 2026



ONE OF THE RECENT HIGHLIGHTS ON THE OUA CALENDAR WAS OUR VIBRANT STOEP TASTING FUNDRAISING STALL, WHERE GREAT FOOD, WONDERFUL COMPANY AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT CAME TOGETHER IN SUPPORT OF UNION. READ MORE ABOUT THIS MEMORABLE EVENT IN THIS EDITION OF THE OUA NEWSLETTER.

A mid-year reflection from the Chairman

Dear Old Unionites,

It has already been a busy and eventful year and there is certainly much to celebrate, chew on and chat about within our community.

A standout highlight for us must surely be the invitation from Union Preparatory School to be part of their hugely successful Wild Karoo fundraising event at the end of March.

It was an exceptional occasion in every sense and we are incredibly grateful to our own Justin Kingwill and Dianne Murray for including the Old Unionites in something so special.

Sharing in the success of an event of that scale is no small thing and it once again reminds us that teamwork really does make the dream work. Nowhere is that more evident than within the OUA community.

One of the highlights of the year was undoubtedly the 2026 Stoep Tasting event in Graaff-Reinet, which took place over two wonderful weekends in May.

The OUA was privileged to host a station at our beloved Graaff-Reinet Club, providing a fantastic opportunity not only to raise valuable funds for our ongoing projects, but also to reconnect with Unionites from near and far.

As always, Stoep Tasting was a vibrant and festive occasion, filled with laughter, friendship and shared memories. It was heartening to welcome so many familiar faces and to celebrate the enduring bonds that unite the Union family.

As with all communities, our year was also marked by moments of sadness. We extend our sincere condolences to the Kroon and Maya families as they navigated their recent losses. Our thoughts remained very much with them during this difficult time. Thank you, as always, for your continued support and involvement. It is the strength, generosity and spirit of this community that keep the Old Unionites thriving.

Happy reading.

Rhett Newton

Loaded Rolls, Full Hearts and Lasting Connections



The Old Unionite Association was delighted to be part of this year's Stoop Tasting festivities, operating a fundraising stall at the Graaff-Reinet Club where our loaded sosatie rolls proved to be a firm favourite among festival-goers.

While fundraising for the OUA was certainly an important objective, what stood out most over the two weekends was the opportunity to connect with people. **Familiar faces, unexpected reunions, shared memories and plenty of laughter created an atmosphere that perfectly captured the spirit of both Stoop Tasting and the wider Union community.**

Visitors to the stall included Old Unionites, parents, staff, learners and friends of the school, all stopping by not only for a meal but also for a chat. Conversations flowed as easily as the wine being enjoyed around town and countless stories were exchanged between people connected by a shared love for Union and Graaff-Reinet.

Events such as these serve as a reminder that Union is far more than a school. It is a lifelong community built on friendships, memories and a sense of belonging that continues long after learners leave the classroom.

A sincere thank you to everyone who supported the OUA stall, whether by purchasing a loaded sosatie roll, lending a helping hand, or simply taking the time to stop and visit. Your support is deeply appreciated and helped make the experience both enjoyable and meaningful for all involved. We look forward to doing it all again next year!



A community's generosity on display at the Wild Karoo Auction

As mentioned in the Chairman's Letter on the front page of this newsletter, the Old Unionite Association was honoured to be invited to participate in this year's Wild Karoo fundraising auction.

The event provided a wonderful opportunity not only to raise valuable funds for the OUA, but also to witness first-hand the remarkable generosity that continues to define the Union family.

The success of our involvement would simply not have been possible without the extraordinary support of our Old Unionites and friends who so willingly donated auction lots.

From luxury getaways and farm stays to hunting experiences, fine wines, artwork and unique Karoo offerings, the variety and quality of the donated items were truly exceptional. Each contribution reflected not only generosity, but also a genuine commitment to supporting the OUA and its ongoing work.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Charl and Ann Pienaar, Andrew and Linda Jack, Vrede & Lust Wine Estate, The Beach Hotel, Mary Slater and Creative Life Gallery, Paige Lee, Radium Canvas & Cleaning, Rhett Newton, Richard Collett, Rose and Gordon Wright, Erinvale Hotel & Spa, Blanco Guest Farm, Tim Wood, Will Copeman and Mr William Pringle for their wonderful donations.

Behind many of these contributions were Old Unionites who once walked the corridors of Union and who continue to give back so generously to the school and association that helped shape them. Their willingness to support this initiative is a powerful reminder that the bonds forged at Union endure long after school days have passed.

The event's success rests squarely on the shoulders of those who contributed. While words can never fully express our gratitude, we trust that every donor knows just how deeply appreciated and valued their support is. **Your generosity not only made the auction possible, but also strengthened the work of the Old Unionite Association** and reaffirmed the spirit of community that lies at the heart of Union.

each donor, bidder and supporter who played a role in making the Wild Karoo Auction such a memorable success, thank you. Your contribution has made a lasting difference, and we are sincerely grateful.



OUA CHAIRMAN RHETT NEWTON ADDRESSING THE ATTENDEES AT THE WILD KAROO AUCTION.

And the winner is...

A special moment during this **WILD KAROO** live auction at the Graaff-Reinet Club was the Old Unionite Association's raffle draw, open to all members who contribute monthly through its 100 Club initiative.

Chairman Mr Rhett Newton and Mrs Tess Neill facilitated the draw, adding to the sense of occasion on a memorable evening of community support and generosity.

Congratulations to Mr John Crankshaw, who was the lucky winner on the night. The Old Unionite Association extends its sincere thanks to every person who contributes so generously through the 100 Club - your faithful support helps make a meaningful difference.

To find out how you can become part of this initiative, email oldunionites@unionschools.co.za or visit oua.co.za/all-donations/



Remembering our Old Unionites

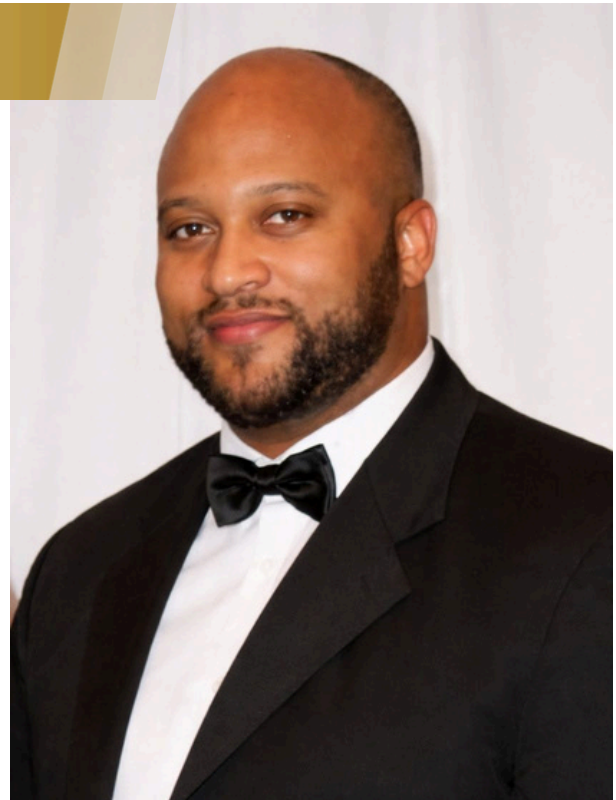
It is with deep sadness that the Old Unionite Association notes the untimely passing of Old Unionite **Warren Maya**, who matriculated from Union High School in 2001.

Warren went on to pursue his calling in medicine, graduating from the University of the Free State in 2007 with his MBChB degree. *He will be remembered as someone who chose a life of service, dedicating himself to the care and wellbeing of others.*

His sudden passing on Wednesday, 8 April 2026 came as a great shock to all who knew him. **We extend our heartfelt condolences** to his son, his family and all those whose lives he touched.

May they find comfort in the memories they hold dear and in knowing that Warren's legacy lives on through the many lives he impacted.

Rest in peace, Warren.



Mr Rory Kroon - Forever part of the Union family

There are teachers whose lessons are remembered... and then there are those whose lives become the lesson itself.

It is with deep sadness that we share news of the passing of **Mr Rory Kroon** - a much-loved member of the Union family, an educator of rare dedication and a gentleman whose quiet impact will be felt for generations to come.

An **Old Unionite, Class of 1964**, Rory's connection to Union was lifelong. From his own school days, through to attending his **60th reunion just two years ago**, he remained closely bound to his classmates and to the spirit of the school he loved so dearly.

After studying geology at Rhodes University, Rory returned to education with purpose, later completing further studies in mathematics and teaching through UNISA. In **January 1989**, he began his teaching journey at Union - one that would span over two decades and leave an indelible mark on countless young lives.

He went on to serve as **Deputy Headmaster** and during a pivotal time in the school's history, stepped in to act as Headmaster, leading with steadiness and integrity until the appointment of Mr Pringle. He retired at the end of 2011.

Yet, beyond the titles and years of service, it is the *person* we remember most vividly.

Rory had a remarkable way of making the complex feel possible. In his classroom, **science and mathematics came alive** - not just as subjects, but as shared discoveries.

He brought humour into the lab, patience into every explanation and a genuine care for each learner's journey. Stories shared on social media over the past week speak of a teacher who made time, who listened, who debated and who believed deeply in fairness and understanding - *even when it meant navigating language, learning and life with compassion.*

He was, quite simply, a teacher who saw his learners.

Rory's legacy is also woven through his family. Together with his wife Pam, they raised four children - Margot, Ted, Steve and Kathy - all of whom matriculated from Union, continuing a proud and enduring family connection to the school.

As we reflect on his life, we are reminded that the true measure of a teacher is not found only in results or accolades, but

in the **lives shaped,**

the confidence built

and the curiosity sparked.

In this,

Rory's legacy

is extraordinary.

To the Kroon

family, we

extend our

heartfelt

condolences

and hold you

close in our

thoughts and prayers.



Congratulations are in order!



LEFT: Congratulations to Old Unionite **Charlize Vorster**, Class of 2024, on her induction into the Golden Key International Honour Society while studying towards her Bachelor of Radiography (Diagnostics) at Nelson Mandela University.



LEFT: CONGRATULATIONS TO OLD UNIONITE CATELYN ANTHONY (CLASS OF 2021), ON BEING AWARDED THE PRIZE FOR THE BEST HONOURS STUDENT IN CRIMINOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE AFTER MATRICULATING FROM UNION. CATELYN WENT ON TO PURSUE A BACHELOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCE DEGREE, MAJORING IN CRIMINOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY, WHICH SHE COMPLETED WITH DISTINCTION IN 2024. AT PRESENT, SHE IS CONTINUING HER ACADEMIC JOURNEY WITH AN HONOURS DEGREE SPECIALISING IN CRIMINOLOGY.

From Union Head Girl to Golden Key Honouree

We are incredibly proud to celebrate the continued academic excellence of Old Unionite **Caitrin Spence** (Union's 2023 Head Girl) who has recently been invited to join the prestigious **Golden Key International Honour Society**. Now in her third year of BCom Actuarial Science at Stellenbosch University, Caitrin's inclusion in this globally recognised society is a fitting acknowledgement of the exceptional standard she has consistently maintained throughout her academic journey. During her time at Union, Caitrin's dedication to her studies set her apart. She was awarded the highly coveted **WHITE BLAZER** - the school's Honours Award for exceptional academic achievement - after maintaining an extraordinary average of

95% across her Grade 10 and 11 years. Her matric year further cemented her place among the top academic performers in the region. Caitrin was the **TOP MATRIC** in Graaff-Reinet for 2023, achieving an outstanding average of 92.63% and earning an impressive nine subject distinctions. In addition, she was recognised as the third highest achieving matriculant in the ECDE's Cluster B. *Caitrin's achievements are a reflection not only of her ability, but of her commitment, discipline and quiet determination.*



Adding colour to the Karoo

Old Unionites continue to make their mark in special ways and it has been wonderful to see the response to artist and Old Unionite **Mary Slater**'s latest mural outside Truth Coffee at Elsona Homeware in Graaff-Reinet.

Mary matriculated from Union in 1985, before studying Fine Art at Rhodes University, later building a career as both an artist and art teacher.

Now based in Graaff-Reinet, her newest work has added something truly unique and eye-catching to the town.

The mural, centred around the words "*Time flies... it's up to you to be the navigator*", beautifully reflects Mary's creativity and distinctive style.

We congratulate Mary on this lovely addition to Graaff-Reinet and are always proud to see Old Unionites sharing their talents with the wider community.



A special return to Union

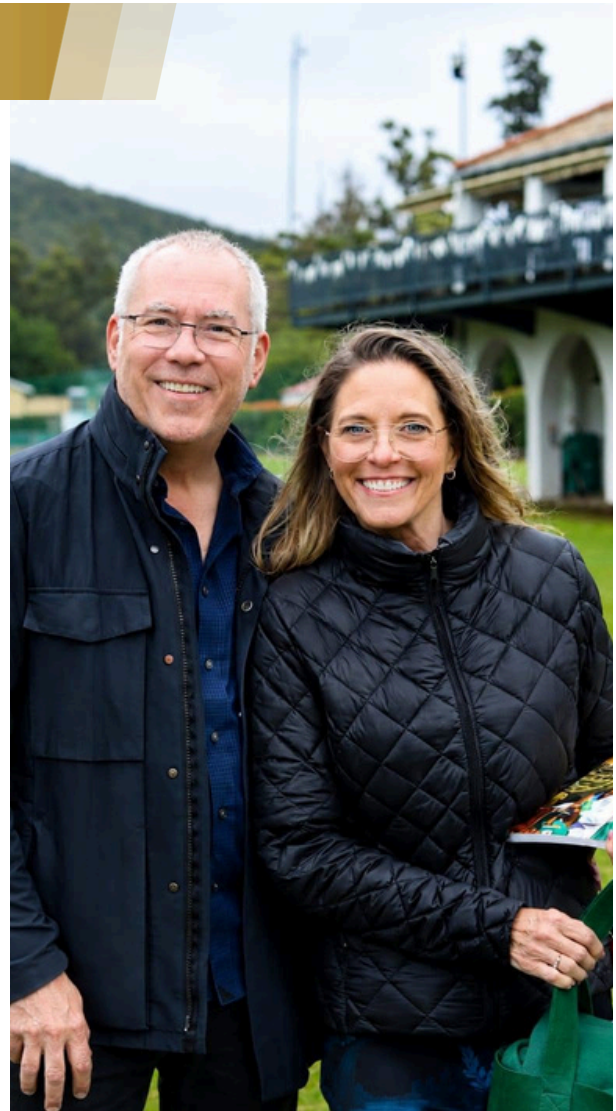
What a treat it was today to welcome a very special visitor back to Union.

In 1982, a young American named **Steven Stroessner** arrived in Graaff-Reinet as an exchange student and spent his matric year at Union. *During his time here, he stayed with the Knott-Craig family, whose son Michael was in the same class, forging friendships and memories that have clearly stood the test of time.*

Fast forward more than four decades and Steven has gone on to become a distinguished Professor in the Departments of Communication and Psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where his research explores topics such as social cognition, stereotyping, prejudice and even how people interact with robots and other non-human entities.

Joining him was his wife, Kerri Johnson, who is also a Professor at UCLA. **It was a privilege to show them both around Union**, sharing stories of what has changed over the years and what has remained reassuringly familiar.

There is something wonderfully special about seeing former Unionites return to the school after so many years. *Steven's visit was a reminder that while buildings may evolve and generations come and go, the connections formed at Union have a remarkable way of enduring across continents and decades.*



Keeping the Union connection strong

Building and sustaining a sense of community among Old Unionites - no matter where life has taken us - is something we care deeply about.

While the ties formed at school are strong, keeping those connections alive across the country takes a bit of intention, and that's exactly what this new initiative is all about.

We're excited to share that we've taken the first step by focusing on the Gqeberha (PE) area and its surrounds, where a dedicated group has been created to encourage greater interaction, connection, and good old-fashioned fellowship among Old Unionites in the region. It's a simple idea, but one with the potential to reignite friendships, strengthen networks, and bring a bit of Union spirit into everyday life again.

A huge word of thanks must go to Jane Cawood (1992), who has been the driving force behind getting this off the ground. Her enthusiasm and commitment have been instrumental in turning the idea into something tangible, and we are

incredibly grateful for the energy she has poured into the initiative.

While still very much in its early stages, the signs are encouraging. The hope is to build momentum and, before too long, host a gathering in the area—an opportunity for Old Unionites to reconnect with familiar faces, share stories, and enjoy the kind of camaraderie that has always defined our community. This is just the beginning, and we're excited to see where it leads. Please reach out on the OUA number should you wish to be added to this group - 067 338 8098.





INTERSCHOOLS

2026

FAQS FOR OLD UNIONITES

DATE: 7 & 8 AUGUST

HOSTED BY HOËR VOLKSKOOL



Reunion groups in attendance to please RSVP to oldunionites@unionschools.co.za



Interschools Assembly being held
09:00 FRIDAY, 7 AUGUST.

Class groups can reserve seating by emailing
admin@unionschools.co.za



Friday and Saturday night socials to be hosted
at the Graaff-Reinet Club
(come and join us after your reunion events)



Queries regarding Interschools can be directed to
Mrs Tess Neill, OUA liaison, at
oldunionites@unionschools.co.za