



KLAUS-JÜRGEN BATHE LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS

NEWSLETTER

July 2025

Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders

On Thursday, 20 February 2025, Professor Klaus-Jürgen Bathe hosted the annual Klaus-Jürgen Bathe Leadership Induction Dinner, a gathering to welcome the incoming class of scholars and reconnect with alumni and UCT staff who have been instrumental in the scholarship programme's success.

On behalf of UCT's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jeff Murugan, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Internationalisation, acknowledged the vital role of alumni funding in empowering students and expressed profound appreciation to Professor Bathe for his unwavering support and visionary leadership. Professor Bathe challenged the alumni and scholars to forge a dynamic community of leaders committed to creating a more equitable and prosperous South Africa, stressing the daily practice of gratitude.

Guest speaker Napo Mochekeane, a 2019 scholar, shared a deeply personal reflection on the programme's impact, recounting how it revealed his untapped potential for leadership and community influence. He passionately encouraged KJB alumni to step forward as leaders, emphasising the transformative power of individual action. The Director of Student Affairs, Mr Pura



Professor Klaus-Jürgen Bathe with the 2025 KJB scholars and some alumni.

Mgolombane, concluded the evening with a vote of thanks, reminding everyone of the importance of cultivating gratitude to combat entitlement and fostering a culture of kindness and understanding within their communities.

Romy Stevens, a 2024 recipient of a KJB engineering award, said, "It has been an honour to be supported by this wonderful initiative and I wish to

commit to the values of giving back to the community through dedication, altruism, humbleness, justice, and passion."

Since the dinner, Napo Mochekeane has spearheaded a KJB Alumni Scholarship campaign, encouraging those who have benefitted from Professor Bathe's generosity, to pay it forward. You can find out more on how you can contribute on Page 3.

Enduring Impact on Engineering Education

In 1985, Professor Klaus-Jürgen Bathe, a distinguished authority in his field, was part of a group of leading experts who developed a series of MIT Video Courses. He had a total of forty lectures on finite element methods recorded by MIT. These lectures were specifically designed for technical managers, practicing engineers, and industrial scientists worldwide, and companies purchased them for in-house training. The lectures were a huge success. About one and a half decades ago, MIT made the videos freely accessible on their MIT OpenCourseWare YouTube channel, where Professor Bathe's forty lectures can now be seen. His first lecture, titled [MIT Finite Element Procedures for Solids and Structures, Linear Analysis](#), has received 424k views since made freely available.



Professor Klaus-Jürgen Bathe is ranked as one of the top three researchers in the field of finite element methods worldwide. The finite element method is used abundantly worldwide, and he is ranked as the top living scholar. These video lectures continue to be a valuable resource, frequently recommended for graduate students and as excellent refresher courses. One viewer commented, "Thanks so much for uploading the lecture series, they are a great review for me to keep my knowledge fresh. Surprising how the info is still valid today." This highlights the timeless quality of Professor Bathe's insights and their continued impact on engineering education globally.

Looking to connect with chemical engineers

After completing her master's programme at Oxford University last year, Micaella Rogers, a 2019 KJB scholar, was selected to join a charity entrepreneurship incubator in London called [Ambitious Impact](#). They identify neglected areas of need and support the foundation of new charities to fill those gaps. Following that process in February-March this year Micaella has just launched a new organisation: the Lead-Acid Battery Recycling Initiative (LABRI).

[Lead is a highly toxic metal](#) that is responsible for over a million deaths each year and much more suffering, especially through developmental delays in young children.

The most wide-spread use of lead is in the batteries in our cars and back-up power supplies. This isn't dangerous on its own but, because lead is also very

valuable, when the battery reaches the end of its life it's very common for people to try extract the lead to smelt it and resell it. If this isn't done safely, it is incredibly dangerous and can cause lead poisoning up to 5km away from the initial extraction site.

Micaela and her cofounder are hoping to work with governments and recycling institutions to promote safer practices. "We're due to head off on our first site visits across sub-Saharan Africa (including in SA) in June and would really love to connect with anyone in the KJB community who has connections to the industry and might be willing to chat! I'm an economist and social scientist by training and my cofounder is a lawyer so we are in deep need of engineering expertise (particularly chemical and process engineers) of which I'm sure there is a



wealth in this community."

This is our [website](#) and our [LinkedIn page](#) if you're interested. But please feel free to use my direct contact info if you think it's appropriate:

micaella.rogers@labrecyclinginitiative.com

Cell: +27 711865895

KJB Alumni Scholarship appeal

Dear Fellow KJB Leadership Scholarship Alumni and friends

As proud recipients of the Klaus-Jürgen Bathe Leadership Scholarship at the University of Cape Town (UCT), we can attest to its profound impact on our journeys. It wasn't just financial assistance but an investment in our potential, providing us with the tools, networks, and confidence to pursue our aspirations. Professor Bathe continues to inspire and motivate us to become more effective and impactful leaders.

Our Turn to Lead

Africa's challenges are significant, but so is our collective capacity for positive change. We believe it's now our turn to pay it forward. For over eleven years, Professor Bathe has solely funded the KJB Leadership Scholarship and, for over twenty years, the KJB Engineering Award programmes, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to developing future leaders. There are over 70 Klaus-Jürgen Bathe Leadership Scholarship alumni and over 150 Klaus-Jürgen Bathe Engineering Awards alumni. If we all contribute, imagine the impact we can make.

We invite you to join us in creating the **KJB Alumni Scholarship** to support Professor Bathe's shared vision of a better South Africa for all. This is our chance to build on the incredible foundation he has laid and ensure that his legacy

of nurturing talent continues for generations to come.

Every contribution, no matter how small, makes a difference. If we each aim for around 5k and encourage our friends and perhaps companies to donate, we can collectively build upon the strong foundation he has laid.



How You Can Donate

Visit [UCT Ways to Give](#), where you will find several convenient ways to make your donation to the KJB Alumni Scholarship fund. Please include an abbreviated donor name and '**KJB Fund**' in the bank reference field to assist with the prompt identification and processing of donations.

Together, we can make a profound difference and ensure that the spirit of giving back continues to thrive.

Napo Mochekoane
2018 KJB scholar

Applications for the 2026 Klaus-Jürgen Bathe Leadership Scholarship

Applications for the 2026 Klaus-Jürgen Bathe Leadership Scholarships is open with a closing date of 28 July 2025.

The Klaus-Jürgen Bathe Leadership Scholarships are awarded annually to selected UCT undergraduate students in their final two years of study who show evidence of a strong academic record and demonstrated leadership skills and experience in extracurricular activities, community service or other areas.

Criteria

- Students with a gross family income of no more than R1,2m per annum
- Undergraduate students from across all six faculties at UCT may apply.
- Students must be South African citizens.
- Two years of their degree remain at the time of the award.
- GPA 60%+ with no failed modules

- Postgraduate students are not eligible.
- Financial need will also be considered (all applicants must provide information about family income on the application form), but it will not be an overriding factor.

For more information, visit the [KJB webpage](#)

Panellist at Harvard Business School event



Mathew Saunders, a 2016 KJB scholar, is the Chief Operating Officer at Agrails, a tech company building the digital rails for climate finance and carbon markets—starting in Africa and scaling globally. He also serves as an Investment Advisor at Accelerate Africa, and was formerly Head of Investments at Future Africa, where he led funding for over 20 startups across the continent.

Before entering the worlds of venture and climate innovation, Mathew worked with the Boston Consulting Group, advising leading organizations across Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. He holds a dual degree in Finance and Accounting from the University of Cape Town.

In May he was invited to be a panellist at the Virtual Entrepreneurship Networking Event, hosted by the Africa Business Club at Harvard Business

Cleantech startup in Cambridge, UK



Lucy Wills, a 2020 KJB scholar, graduated from the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 2021 with a BSc in Chemical Engineering. She then pursued an MPhil in Engineering for Sustainable Development at the University of Cambridge, completing it in August 2024.

Following a three-month internship with Sustainable Energy Africa Data, Lucy

joined Neutreeno, a cleantech startup, as a Climate Measurement Engineer in September 2024. Neutreeno, a Cambridge University spin-out, is rapidly becoming a leader in global decarbonization. Lucy is a key member of the Cambridge team at Neutreeno, dedicated to a rigorous, science-driven approach to tackling emissions.

Celebrating graduation

Yazini-Nangamso Xinindlu, a 2022 KJB scholar graduated on 31 March 2025 with a Bachelor of Business Science in Finance with Accounting. In April, she joined E Squared Investments as an Investment Trainee. She is also a MCom Finance candidate at UCT. In celebrating her graduation, Yazini said, “I'd like to thank the Klaus-Jürgen Bathe Leadership Programme for all the support and mentorship they've provided me with - a lot of what I have achieved during my time at UCT, would not have been possible without them.”



2024 Rhodes Scholarship



Leago Sebeso, a 2020 KJB scholar, was awarded a prestigious 2024 Rhodes Scholarship. She is currently pursuing an MSc in Applied Digital Health at the University of Oxford. Leago completed her MBChB in 2021 and gained valuable clinical experience as a medical intern at Baragwanath Hospital from 2022 to 2023, followed by a year as a Medical Officer in Internal Medicine in 2024 before her enrolment at Oxford.

Engineer, designer, entrepreneur

Toni Ojo-Akinkunmi, a 2022 Klaus-Jürgen Bathe Leadership scholar, celebrated her graduation on 3 April 2025, earning a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical and Mechatronic Engineering. Her journey included navigating unforeseen visa delays in 2023, which required her to return in 2024 to complete her studies.

Describing herself as a conscientious mechatronics engineer, Toni's passion lies in product design solutions that emphasise circularity and renewable resources. Driven by a desire to contribute to the advancement of sustainable technology, she actively engages in volunteerism and advocacy efforts at the intersection of environmentalism and climate justice. Looking ahead, Toni hopes to pursue a master's degree in mechanical engineering, specialising in either materials and manufacturing or robotics.

Beyond her academic pursuits, Toni actively cultivated her leadership skills throughout her undergraduate

years through involvement in several campus clubs and societies. From contributing to the Green Campus Initiative to participating in Engineers Without Borders and guiding new students as an orientation leader, she demonstrated her commitment to the Klaus-Jürgen Bathe leadership values, which are dedication, altruism, humbleness, justice, and passion for helping others (a sense of community).

Furthermore, Toni honed her entrepreneurial skills by establishing Totostry, a small business that champions sustainable consumption and responsible waste management. Through tailoring and mending services, alongside the creation and sale of unique, upcycled clothing and accessories, Totostry embodies her commitment to environmental consciousness. To learn about her work, visit her Totostry Instagram Page and YouTube channel. Balancing her studies and entrepreneurial pursuits, Toni also works part-time as a social media



marketing manager for Picnic & Thrift, a sustainable, preloved market space supporting local, small businesses, where she is responsible for building and engaging with the community through the creation of marketing content and management of their social media platforms.

Toni's passion and dedication will lead to impactful contributions in her chosen field