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**Media Release**

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### **UCT to award honorary degrees**

Lord Steyn – the retired senior member of the Judicial Committee of Lords, Writers and Theatre Directors David Kramer and Taliep Petersen, Engineering Scientist Professor Mark Dry and Earth Scientist Professor George Philander, will all be recipients of honorary doctorates from the University of Cape Town in the December graduation ceremonies this year. UCT will also confer an honorary doctorate (LLD) *honoris causa* to Nobel Peace Laureate and Burmese democratic leader, **Aung San Suu Kyi** who is currently under house arrest in Burma. The degree will be accepted on her behalf by fellow Nobel Peace Laureate, Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu at a graduation ceremony on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December (which is, International Human Rights Day).

**Lord Steyn**, the retired senior member of the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords, will receive the degree, Doctor in Law (LLD) *honoris causa*. After a brilliant student career at the University of Stellenbosch, where he obtained the degrees BA LLB, a Rhodes scholarship was awarded to him. He excelled as a student again at University College, Oxford, after which he returned to South Africa. Johan van Zijl Steyn joined the Cape Bar and rapidly built up a leading practice. In 1968, at the youthful age of 36, he was elevated to the ranks of senior counsel. In 1973, Johan van Zijl Steyn emigrated to the United Kingdom. Again within a short period he built up a leading practice (chiefly in the field of international trade) as a barrister in London. In a short span of six years he was made Queen’s Counsel, and in January 1985 he was offered an appointment by the Lord Chancellor to the select ranks of the Commercial Court. After seven years he was elevated to the Court of Appeal and shortly thereafter he was appointed a Law Lord and member of the Privy Council. A collection of his judgments and public lectures has been recently published under the title “*Democracy through Law: Selected Speeches and Judgments*”. His clear public voice on wider issues of constitutional law and human rights moreover has marked him out as an exceptional legal figure of our age.

**David Kramer** was born in Worcester, South Africa in 1951, received his schooling in the same town and was awarded a bursary to study at Leeds University in the UK, where he graduated with Honours in 1974. He began his musical career as a singer/songwriter, performing at folk clubs and campus concerts

across South Africa in the early 1980's, singing satirical songs in English and Afrikaans. When he released his first album in 1980, it was banned in its entirety by the SABC as it was considered too political and vulgar for the South African ear. Despite initial setbacks, he went on to be awarded 11 gold and one platinum record for sales of his albums. Today, Kramer works as a writer and theatre director. His interest and passion has, for almost thirty years been to explore South African identity. His work in South African musical theatre has focused primarily on the communities of the Cape. The thrust of the five musicals that he has written with Taliep Petersen and one on his own, is in the retelling of a suppressed history.

The late **Taliep Petersen** was born in District Six, Cape Town and has been involved in music since a very young age. As a teenager he won the Post newspaper Mr Entertainment competition in 1968/1969, after which he entered the professional arena by joining Alfred Herbert's African Jazz and Variety Road show which toured South Africa and Mozambique. In 1979 he studied at the Fitznell School of Music in England and during his time in the UK saw West End productions, which inspired him to write a revue based on his memories of New Year in Cape Town – this was called 'Carnival a la District Six' and was very successful.

He joined forces with David Kramer in 1986 and they wrote their first musical, District Six, which was invited to the Edinburgh Festival and had sold out runs at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town and the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. This was followed by Fairyland, which ran for 3 years at the Dock Rd Theatre in the Waterfront. Crooners, Poison and Klop Klop were also musicals written by Kramer and Petersen. 'Kat and the Kings' was their big international success, which was performed for 10 years including a run on the West End and Broadway. His most recent collaboration with David Kramer was as Musical Director for Ghoema, which was first staged at the KKNK Festival in 2005, went on to be performed at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town, UJ Arts in Johannesburg and the HB Thom Theatre in Stellenbosch.

David Kramer and Taliep Petersen will be recipients of the degrees, Doctor of Literature (DLitt) *honoris causa*. A family member of Petersen will accept the degree on his behalf.

**Prof. Mark Dry** will be awarded the Doctor of Science in Engineering (DScEng) *honoris causa*. He is an outstanding scientist in the complex field of catalysis. Catalysis is a field of study which includes both the synthesis of catalysts and their application in catalytic processing. He obtained his B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees at Rhodes University majoring in chemistry. He subsequently obtained his PhD at Bristol University returning to South Africa in 1958 to join the Sasol Company which had been formed in 1954. He retired from Sasol in 1993 after 35 years of service to take up a position of Honorary Professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Cape Town where he continues today to contribute both to the development of the next generation of catalysis experts as well as continuing to be

the world leader in the use of catalysts for the Fischer Tropsch process which is used by Sasol to convert gas from either coal or natural gas into liquid fuels, a technology in which Sasol is unquestionably the world leader, thanks in no small way to the internationally acclaimed work of Mark Dry. By recognizing Professor Dry in this way UCT will be honouring one of South Africa's foremost scientific experts who, unlike those who carved out their reputations in Universities or Research Organizations, achieved his international reputation by playing a key role in the development of what is unquestionably one of South Africa's finest technical achievements of the 20th century.

Of the University of Cape Town graduates in earth-related sciences, **Prof. George Philander** is a most distinguished and well-known one. He graduated with a BSc from UCT in 1962 and received his PhD from Harvard University in 1970. After a short sojourn at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he joined the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Program at Princeton University where he has been ever since. He currently holds the Knox Taylor Chair of Geosciences and until recently was the chairman of the Department of Geosciences at that university. He is a fellow of the American Meteorological Society, the American Geophysical Union, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of the USA. He has published widely, including 6 papers in the journal *Nature* and 4 in the journal *Science*. Most of these have dealt with the circulation and behaviour of the ocean and atmosphere in the tropics and especially the role of ocean-atmosphere interactions in understanding global climate, including the value of modelling in this enterprise.

UCT will confer on him the degree, Doctor of Science (DSc) *honoris causa*.

With this announcement, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Njabulo S. Ndebele said: "Apart from being added to UCT's long list of honorary graduates, we award these honorary degrees to recognise people whose work has distinguished them as significant in their fields of specialty. We honour them for their endless and dedicated work in contributing to the building of a better world."

UCT graduations will be as of Monday, the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2007 until Friday, the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2007 at the Jameson Memorial Hall on Upper Campus.

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**Issued by:**

**Gerda Kruger – Executive Director: Communications and Marketing; University of Cape Town**