



University of Cape Town

# Sutherland Reburial

Media Conference

**1 November 2019**

**Media conference: UCT providing redress through science**

**(Embargoed till 4 November 2019, 14:30)**

**4 November 2019 | 12:30-13:40 | Mafeje Room, Bremner Building, Lower Campus,  
UCT**

In 2018, the University of Cape Town (UCT) announced that it had 11 skeletons in its human remains collection that were found to have been unethically obtained by the institution in the 1920s.

Nine of these individuals were brought to UCT in the 1920s from Sutherland in the Northern Cape. UCT commenced a restitution process for the nine sacred remains.

Through this moment of transformation and an acknowledgement of past injustices, an interdisciplinary team of academics from UCT and two partner institutions conducted unprecedented scientific studies that enable the university to provide redress and social justice through science.

In a comprehensive process which could influence national policy on restitution and be precedent-setting internationally, a team of scientists from across various disciplines worked together to establish the identity of the individuals; reconstruct their faces as they would have appeared at the time of death; provide insights into where they lived, their diet and the conditions in which they lived; determine their gender, height and estimate age; establish any medical conditions they had and the cause of deaths; and determine their genetic relationship. The team also conducted a survey of the Kruisrivier farm cemetery they had originally been buried at; did an in-depth analysis of the disturbed graves; and examined the history of the farm and of the area.

The Sutherland community requested as much information as possible about their ancestors and the process of them being taken to UCT. The scientific team conducted their studies in the areas of archaeology, biological reports, chemical (stable isotope) analysis, CT scans, DNA analysis, facial reconstruction, and historical analysis.

While this part of UCT's history is one the university is ashamed of, it is the institution's duty, where possible, to begin to make amends for the injustices UCT was complicit in.

Media are invited to hear from the UCT executive, the families related to the sacred human remains and the team of academics who have undertaken the scientific studies. The team includes academics from Face Lab at Liverpool John Moores University, UK and Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Germany.

**RSVP: Please confirm attendance by Sunday, 3 November 2019.**

***ENDS***

***Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department***

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