



Professor Dewald Roode

It is with sadness that we learned of the passing on of Prof. Dewald Roode on Sunday 27 September 2009. Professor Dewald Roode pioneered the field of Information Systems in the Southern Hemisphere through transferring his extensive knowledge to a host of academics at various universities in South Africa.

Prof Roode's academic career started in 1971 as a professor of computer science, at the then Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg. In 1981 Prof Roode became the first Director of the South African Computer Users Council (CUC) (1981 to 1983), and was responsible for coordinating the development of standards for training in the South African computer industry. Following that Prof Roode spent several years involved in and managing a large number of consultancy projects for major South African firms.

In 1988 he was recruited to head the new Department of Informatics at the University of Pretoria, while continuing on a part-time basis with consultancy work. In 1995 Prof Roode was requested by the University of Pretoria management to accept, in conjunction with his job as Head of the Department of Informatics, the job as Director of Information Technology (responsible for all computer and network services to the entire university). He handled these two positions concurrently until 1998, when a new academic dispensation was established with the creation of the School of Information Technology, incorporating the three academic departments of Computer Science, Informatics and Information Science. Prof Roode became its first Director in March 1998.

At the end of 2001 Prof Roode decided to continue with academic work at different universities, and to devote more time to high-level training of individuals in the computer industry who had not had the opportunity to receive formal tertiary education. This decision meant that he had to exercise an early retirement option at the University of Pretoria. In 2002, Prof Roode was appointed to be Professor Emeritus and Professor Extraordinary in the Department of Informatics of the University of Pretoria.

Since 2003, Prof Roode was also Visiting Professor in the Department of Information Systems of the University of Cape Town, and was instrumental in strengthening the PhD programme and mentoring new PhD supervisors. He was appointed Honorary Professor in the Faculty of Business Informatics of the Cape University of Technology in 2004. In addition to all of this he was also involved in presenting seminars for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

A very important focus of Prof Roode's academic career was supervision of doctoral students. In all, Prof Roode mentored more than 30 doctoral students from across several South African universities, empowering them to supervise their own students. These included students from Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Potchefstroom University, University of Cape Town and University of Pretoria.

In 1996 Prof Roode became a member of Working Group 9.4 of the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP). In 1999 he was appointed as South Africa's representative on

IFIP's Technical Committee 8 on Information Systems. Prof Roode was elected as Vice-Chair of TC8 in 2000, and as Chair in 2001, for the period 2002 – 2004. In 2004 he was re-elected as Chair for the period 2005 – 2007.

Prof Roode was also involved in IFIP's World Information Technology Forum (WITFOR) and was a member of the Steering Committee of the first WITFOR event in 2003 in Vilnius, Lithuania, and Program Chair of the second WITFOR in 2005 in Gaborone, Botswana.

In 2007 Prof Dewald Roode was honoured by IFIP with the Silver Core award, the highest accolade for service.

Prof Roode also achieved world-wide honour in 2008 with the LEO Lifetime Achievement Award. Named after one of the world's first commercial applications of computing (The Lyons Electronic Office), the purpose of the LEO Award is to recognize truly outstanding individuals in the Information Systems community. It is awarded to truly outstanding scholars or practitioners who have made exceptional global contributions in the field of Information Systems. Winners are regarded as a pre-eminent representative of their national or regional Information Systems community.