

Departmental History

An overview of the development of the Department of Afrikaans and Dutch takes one back to the second last decade of the 19th century and the University's predecessors, namely the Arts Department of the Stellenbosch Gymnasium, the Stellenbosch College and the Victoria College. On 1 January 1880, Professor Nicolaas Mansvelt was appointed as professor in Modern Languages and History in the Arts Department of the Stellenbosch Gymnasium at the time. He was but the fourth person to achieve professorial status here and he remained in this post during the transition to the Stellenbosch College (1881) and the Victoria College (1887). In 1904, during Prof. W.J. Viljoen's years of service, the Department of Dutch developed from the Department of Modern Languages at the time. Later it became the Department of Dutch and Afrikaans with Prof. J.J. Smith as professor, a post which he occupied from 1919 to 1945. Since 1926 he was also the editor in chief of the *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal*. Well known academics, such as Prof. E.C. Pienaar and Lydia van Niekerk were colleagues of Prof. Smith. In 1930, Prof. F.E.J. Malherbe was appointed as professor in the Department Afrikaans-Dutch. The Department kept this name until the late seventies when it became the Department of Afrikaans and Dutch. Over the decades, the Department had leading linguists and literators as professors, namely Prof. W. Kempen, M. de Villiers, W.J. du P. Erlank, D.J. Opperman, W.E.G. Louw, H.v.d. M. Scholtz, J.G.H. Combrink, F.A. Ponelis, J.P. Smuts, L. Spies, L.G. de Stadler, L. Viljoen and M. van Niekerk. The Department is built on a long tradition concordant with the demands of the time and changes in the South African society.

The Department of Afrikaans and Dutch is an exceptionally diverse centre of expertise that is in continuous discourse and cooperation with other national and international linguistic fields and professions. Quality research underlies the diverse activities which centre around the Department's core, namely the study and teaching of Afrikaans and Dutch literature, linguistics and applied directions. Additionally, the Department provides a particularly wide offer of academic as well as practice-oriented, multilingual education in creative writing, lexicography, translation, interpreting and editing.