**MOTIVATION FOR THE AWARD OF A UNIVERSITY GOLD MEDAL TO:**

**DAVID HYMAN SCHNEIDER**

This motivation for the award of a Gold Medal to David Schneider is in consideration of a noteworthy contribution to the University, as provided for in the Council Policy for such awards. In particular, the award is motivated for in recognition of services provided to the University to strengthen its capacity to benefit from philanthropy (again, a consideration provided for in the policy).

Born in Johannesburg on 10 January 1938, David Schneider graduated from Wits with an LLB Degree in 1958. David married June Benjamin, who graduated with a Bachelor’s degree and a Doctorate in Music from Wits. She also lectured at Wits University. In South Africa, they were active participants in a variety of organisations in the arts and in business. David and June emigrated to the United States in 1977 principally for reasons of conscience as they were critical of the apartheid system. As Wits graduates they believed in the liberal traditions of academic freedom and advancement by merit. They became US citizens in 1983.

David’s one and only employer in the United States has been The Coca –Cola Company where he joined the legal division in Atlanta in 1977, moving out of law into executive management in 1989, based in the Company’s New York office. He has risen over the years to senior executive positions and is currently Senior Advisor to the Chairman of the Coca-Cola Company, in a consultancy role that he assumed in 2007. Boards on which he has served include The Business Council for the United Nations, The United Nations Association and Community Service Society, New York.

Approximately six years ago, David Schneider approached John Teeger, a fellow alumnus, about joining him in reconstituting the Wits Fund Board. As a former senior partner of a major South African law firm and a long time senior executive of The Coca-Cola Company, David recognized that the Wits Fund required major improvements in governance, legal registration and financial internal controls before it could legitimately assemble a board of directors who would pass muster with major capital sources for donations.

Without David’s commitment of time and energy, and most important, his legal and business expertise in South Africa and the US, there is no question that the Wits Fund would not have been successful. David took over as Executive Director of the Wits Fund at a time when there were serious administrative and governance issues. He promptly corrected these issues which were impacting upon the credibility of the Wits name in the States. His activities included creating an appropriate legal entity, including a practical constitution, obtaining a Form 501c3 certificate (allowing for the legitimate tax deduction of donations to Wits Fund by US donors), creating the board of directors by handpicking each member, building a reliable list of US resident Wits alumni, crafting and updating an attractive website, allocating assignments to helpful friends of Wits, running numerous successful events, raising funds, and recording all the above in minutes of meetings and annual audits. David has led these activities in his role as Executive Director of Wits Fund. He has supported Stan Bergman as Chairman and Joh Teeger as President of the Board respectively.

David has been very instrumental in the Fund reverting to being a viable fundraising resource for Wits. The University should not underestimate what could have happened if David had not assumed this responsibility and indeed rectified these matters. Although the Fund is directly responsible for only a small part of Wits’ funding from US sources, had this matter not been resolved this would have impacted upon Wits’ ability to raise money from US foundations and other funding sources because of the association with the University’s name. David has selflessly committed himself to his current role as Vice Chairman of Wits Fund Inc.

As an example of David’s influence in important social and charitable circles attained through his multi-year senior position at Coca-Cola, he has been particularly successful in not only approaching individuals and groups that can assist Wits Fund but also in having them respond positively to him. His success is reflected in the fact that David has played a major role in Wits obtaining in excess of US $5 million in aggregate from the Coca-Cola Company, John Chalsty and Goldman Sachs. Over R10 million was transferred to the Wits Foundation by the Wits Fund Inc. since David has been managing the Fund, with a further amount exceeding R25 million, facilitated by David, which was transferred personally by the above-mentioned donors, bringing total income received by the University, due to David’s efforts, to R35.9 million.

The Coca-Cola donations, which totaled R9.532 million, included funding for bursaries to the value of R6.7 million. The criteria for Coca-Cola bursaries specifies that only Previously Disadvantaged Individuals pursuing studies in the field of Industrial Psychology Science, Commerce and Chemical and Industrial Engineering are eligible.

Further valuable support from Coca-Cola is reflected in the company’s commitment to Wits Business School’s Coca-Cola Chair in Marketing to the value of R8million, of which the first of three tranches has already been received.

As part of his commitment to Wits, David has also been active with the Mandela Institute of the School of Law, where he established the USA advisory Board. On behalf of the Institute, he has led several seminars and programs on world trade, both in New York and in Johannesburg, including a major conference in 2007 on the theme of building peace through trade and development. David has also been instrumental in the Institute’s contribution to the School’s successful fundraising record.

David’s strong support for Wits is reflected in, among other things, the advice and guidance that he generously provide to Wits whenever they are sought. David has spent many hours advancing the University’s cause in the States positioning the Fund directly, and Wits indirectly, to undertake fundraising in general in the States. Wits’ reputation has been sustained, goodwill preserved and the University’s cause is well positioned to attract further support into the future. David has used his personal standing and his network in a selfless way to support his alma mater.

This is a motivation for David Schneider to be acknowledged by Wits University for his invaluable contribution to the welfare of the University through the award of a Gold Medal.