



Operations Research Society of South Africa



Category II Recognition Award

(To a current member of ORSSA for a single, outstanding achievement with respect to the practicing of operations research on a national level)

Wessel Johannes Pienaar

Citation. By Jan van Vuuren, on behalf of the Executive Committee of ORSSA.

Wessel Johannes Pienaar was born in East London on 9th July 1950. He obtained bachelors and honours degrees in the economic and management sciences from Stellenbosch University, in 1976 and 1979, respectively. In addition, he holds two masters degrees, one in transport economics from Stellenbosch University, obtained in 1981, and one in civil engineering from the University of California Berkeley, obtained in 1983. He also holds two doctorates, one in transport economics from the University of South Africa, obtained in 1985 for a dissertation entitled "Transport economic determination of vehicle running costs for application in the evaluation of road and traffic engineering projects" and the other in civil engineering from Stellenbosch University, obtained in 2000 for a dissertation entitled "The economic evaluation of bus and minibus taxi terminals and transfer facilities".

Wessel started his career in 1972 in the employ of the Planning Division of South African Railways and Harbours in Johannesburg. In 1974 he moved to Rembrandt in Paarl, where he held the position of Senior Cost Consultant, and then to Kalley Flooring in Cape Town in 1977, where he held the position of Transport Manager. In 1979 he joined the National Institute for Transport and Road Research at the CSIR as Senior Chief Researcher, where he remained until 1987. In 1988 he was appointed as Managing Director of the Southern African Bus Operators Association in Randburg, and in 1989 as Executive Project Manager at Tramway Holdings in Cape Town. Since 1991 he has been full professor of logistics management at Stellenbosch University. He has also held various consulting and visiting professor positions at universities and research institutions in North America and Europe since the early 1990s.

The research interests of Wessel Pienaar include logistics, transport economics and transportation engineering. He was the first South African researcher in the field of logistics and transport economics to obtain a rating by the National Research Foundation of South Africa. He has published more than 70 peer-reviewed papers and has supervised 12 doctoral students to completion in these fields of research. He has contributed chapters to various books and has co-authored a very successful logistics management textbook which is now in its third edition internationally, published by the prestigious Oxford University Press. In addition, he has read a large number of papers at national and international conferences and has acted as external examiner for a many masters theses and doctoral dissertations.

Wessel has been a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers since 1983, the Institute of Transportation Engineers since 1983, the Transportation Educators Council of the ITE since 1992, the South African Academy of Science and Arts since 1997, and the Operations Research Society of South Africa since 1999. He also served as chairman of the Transport Consultative Committee (a committee of the South African Business Chamber) during 1988 and 1989, as member of the Cape Town Metropolitan Transport Advisory Board during the period 1999-2004, as member of the Leadership Group of the Supply Chain Council in 2004, and as member of the Education Committee of the International Society of Logistics in 2007.

Wessel chaired the Department of Logistics at Stellenbosch University during the period 1991-2010, during which time he built up the department from a three-person operation in 1991 to the top research department in the Faculty of Economic and Business Management at Stellenbosch University, a department today boasting no fewer than 15 academic staff members and hosting a Centre for Supply Chain Management, which employs a further 5 consultants. Notably for ORSSA, Wessel established a grouping of 7 operations researchers within the department during the period 1998-2007 which has gone on to play a prominent role in terms of serving the Society and producing a large number of scarce skills operations research graduates entering the job market since 2004. The Department of Logistics at Stellenbosch now houses one of the largest academic groupings of operations researcher professionals and students in the country. For this single, outstanding service to the profession of operations research, Wessel Johannes Pienaar is, on this 18th day of September 2012, duly awarded a Category II ORSSA Recognition Award.