BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH – PROF MIKE WINGFIELD (2017)

Michael (Mike) Wingfield, Ph.D. in Plant Pathology, University of Minnesota (1983), Harvard Business School AMP175, has conducted research on tree pests and pathogens especially concerning their global movement for more than thirty years. His highly cited research in this field, conducted in many different countries of the world but with a clear focus on Africa, has led to the discovery of some of the most important pathogens of trees grown commercially in plantations. It has also elucidated elements of the biology and global movement of many of the most important pests and pathogens of trees, substantially contributing to new management options and solutions to problems that have reduced losses to industry. Based on his research reputation, he has been a long-term advisor of many major forestry corporations in South Africa and globally.

Amongst his most important contributions to forestry has been the role that he has played as an advisor to more than 70 Ph.D. and an equal number of M.S. students, many of whom now hold very senior positions globally. In this regard, he has been heavily involved in providing education opportunities for students, capturing his deep commitment to research and education particularly in the developing world. He was responsible for establishing the Tree Protection Co-operative Programme (TPCP) in 1990 to minimise the impact of pests and pathogens threatening commercial forestry in South Africa and this has become the largest single tree health project in the world. It also formed the catalyst for the establishment in 1998 of the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI; www.fabinet.up.ac.za) of which he was the founding director. FABI has rapidly gained substantial international recognition for research excellence and the post graduate education of large numbers of students, many from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Mike Wingfield has published widely on the topic of tree health in more than 900 research papers, six books and he has presented many invited plenary addresses and other public lectures globally. He has served/serves in many distinguished positions including the boards of institutions such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR, South Africa), the International Union for Forestry Research Organisations (IUFRO) and the Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures (Netherlands), most of these for extended periods of time. He has received numerous awards and honours for contributions to education, research and industry, in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. Based on these contributions he has been elected as a Fellow of Scientific Societies including the Royal Society of South Africa, Academy of Sciences of South Africa the Southern African Society for Plant Pathology and the American Phytopathological Society and is one of the few honorary members of the Mycological Society of America. He received honorary D.Sc. degrees from the University of British Colombia, Canada in 2012 and North Carolina State University, USA in 2013. He also received the highest scientific award, the Kwame Nkrumah Scientific Awards from the African Union in May 2013. In 2015 he became the President of IUFRO, one of the oldest scientific unions in

the world, representing approximately 20,000 scientists globally and with its head quarters in Vienna and he will serve in this role for five years.

PERSONAL GLIMPSES

Mike Wingfield was born in South Africa and is deeply committed to Science and Education in his home country as well as on the African continent. His research on tree diseases has allowed him to work with, and provide mentorship to, students from many parts of the world. In this regard, he believes passionately that the ‘chain of mentorship’ holds the key to resolving problems, both scientific and social, which challenge countries, particularly in the developing world. Team work, collaboration and long-standing friendships have typified Mike’s approximately 30 years of active research and he never tires of being fascinated by the amazing ‘stories’ that emerge from his research on the health of trees. He has had the privilege of collaborating closely with the accomplished geneticist, Prof. Brenda Wingfield who has contributed substantially to his research over many years. The couple have two young adult children that add perspective and bring humility to their lives.