**Biography of Professor Brenda Wingfield – University of Pretoria**

Professor Brenda Wingfield has made the study of the global movement and evolution of fungal pathogens, particularly those on trees, her main research focus for the past 30 years.

After obtaining a BSc in biochemistry and genetics from the then University of Natal (now the University of KwaZulu-Natal) and her Honours from the University of Cape Town, she moved to the University of Minnesota where she completed her Master’s in biochemistry, and then to Stellenbosch University for her PhD. She spent time as a Research Assistant for the Institute for Electron Microscopy and then as a Research Officer for UCT’s Department of Biochemistry. After leaving her position of Researcher at Stellenbosch, a position she held for two years, she moved to the University of the Orange Free State (now the University of the Free State) to work as lecturer, Senior Lecturer and eventually Associate Professor, before taking up the position of Professor at the University of Pretoria’s Department of Genetics. She was involved in leading the winning bid for the research team in Tree Health Biotechnology to be one of the first six DST-NRF Centres of Excellence to be established, and was the Programme Leader for the first five years of its existence. She is one of the founding members of the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute, and served a 7 year term as Deputy Dean of Research and Postgraduate Studies of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Pretoria. During this time she was also acting dean for a period. Prof Wingfield holds the DST-NRF SARChI research chair in Fungal Genomics. She is vice president of the Academy of Science of South Africa and the Secretary General of the International Society of Plant Pathology.

Prof. Wingfield has been responsible for a number of major advances in fungal taxonomy and phylogeny, not the least of which was the introduction of DNA-based research tools to her field of research in South Africa. This has enabled her research group to identify the biology of a wide variety of tree pathogens and establish itself as one of the foremost in the study of distribution and population dynamics of tree pathogens using DNA markers. She pioneered fungal genomics at the University of Pretoria where she was responsible for the first fungal genome to be sequenced in Africa. Her success as a researcher is reflected in the internationally recognised work of many of her past PhD students. She has trained 51 Honours students, and supervised 51 Master’s and 49 PhD students and has contributed considerably to bringing more female graduates into the research field.

She has published more than 360 peer-reviewed papers in a variety of international journals including the *Fungal Biology*, *Fungal Genetics and Biology,* *Mycologia*, *Molecular Biology and Evolution,* *Plos Pathogens,* and *Molecular Ecology*. In addition, she has co-authored one book and authored/co-authored 13 book chapters.

Prof. Wingfield’s work and standing as a scientist has garnered considerable recognition. She has won the University of Pretoria’s Excellent Achiever’s Award for 10 consecutive years, and received the University’s Chancellor’s Award for Research in 2012. Additionally, she received the Women in Water Sanitation and Forestry Award twice, the DST Distinguished Women in Science Award, and the African Union Regional Award for Women in Science. She was a recipient of the Harry Oppenheimer Memorial Fellowship Award in 2016 and received the American Phytopathological Society Fellow Award in 2017.