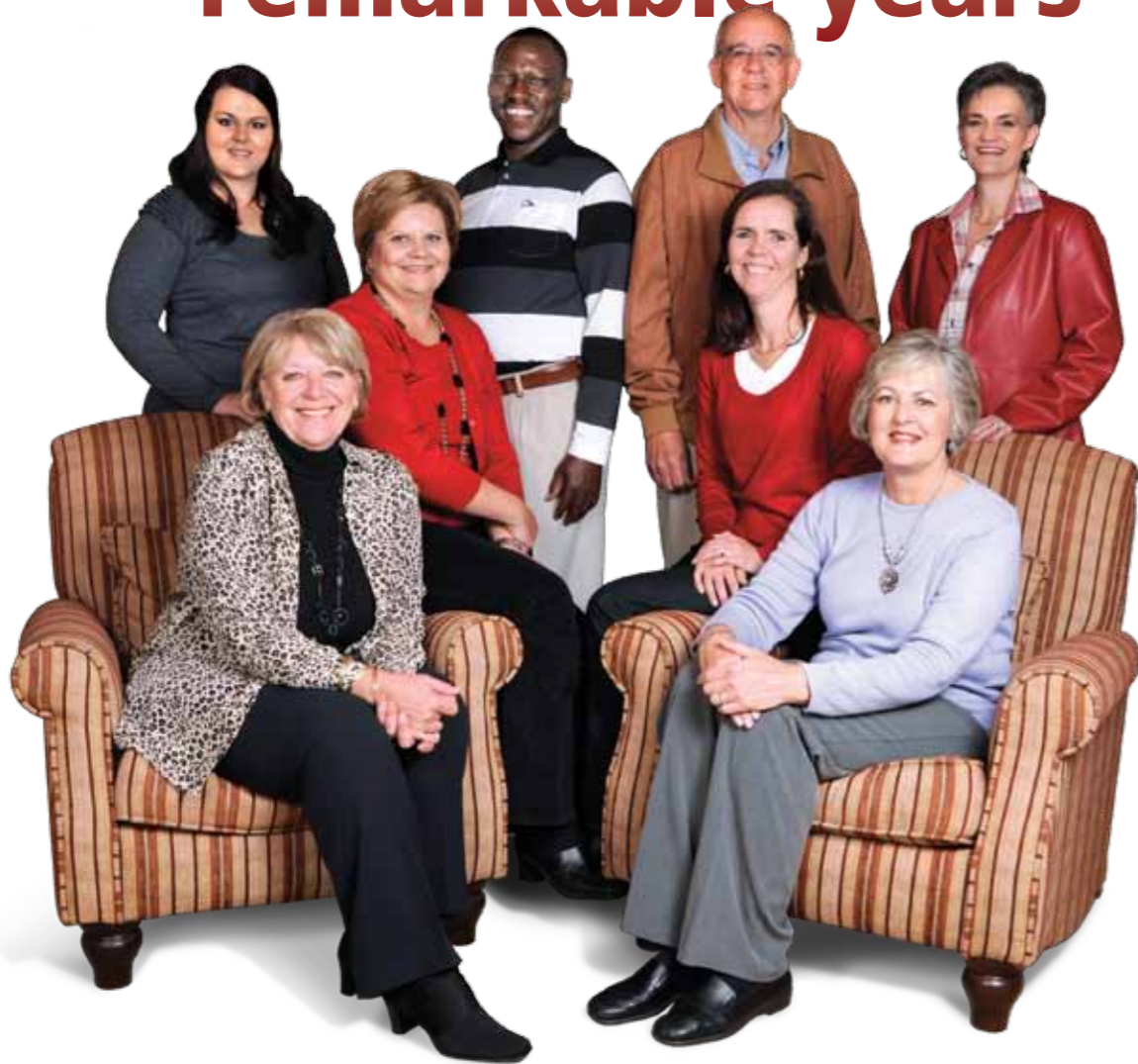


Celebrating

30

remarkable years



Back row, from left to right:
Nadia, Solly, Adri and Angie
Front row, from left to right:
Sandy, Liana, Jackie and Cécile

Photograph: Nadia Bezuidenhout

WHEELS, the annual, was conceptualised in a Ford Granada at Goodyear's test facility in Luxembourg, Europe in 1980. I was doing an interview with three-time Formula One world champion, Sir Jackie Stewart, for an Afrikaans motoring programme called *Ankers* on SABC.

With rain interfering with progress, Sir Jackie and I had more than enough time to talk about matters not even remotely related to the reason for us being together – the interview.

Out of the blue Sir Jackie came up with a question: "Why don't you start publishing a motoring annual in South Africa?" I took the bait, so to speak and the rest – as the saying goes – is history. It was a classic example of fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

Two years later, in 1982, the first edition of WHEELS appeared on the shelves at CNA outlets throughout South Africa. Now, celebrating 30 years of WHEELS, it is the appropriate time to reminisce.

There are a number of reasons why WHEELS has made it through good times and some challenging times. The main reason for the publication's success is that it is a team effort. In fact, it's another lesson I learned from Sir Jackie. He maintains: "I've always surrounded myself with people more talented than me, in racing and in business. That's the best way to be successful."

I have also surrounded myself with people who are more talented than me. Executive editor Liana Reiners joined WHEELS in 1990 freshly out of journalism prep school. Dedicated, committed and capable, she has grown in the various and demanding facets of her job to such an extent that she runs the show nowadays.

Another qualified journalist with vast experience, Angie le Roux, joined the team in 2009. Energetic and enthusiastic, Angie has become the soul of the team.

Office coordinator Jackie Gildenhuys plays an unenviable role in the day-to-day running of the office with exceptional dedication,

while assistant, Solomon Malla, has become a major and trustworthy cog in WHEELS's production engine.

Proofreading, if done properly, is an arduous and time-consuming task. In Cécile Bezuidenhout and Sandy Truter we have the best in the business. The two of them have been keeping WHEELS clean for many years.

The creativity of staff photographer Nadia Bezuidenhout has also added enormously to the visual impact of the publication.

A mere thank you to each and everyone on the team cannot convey my appreciation for their input and resultant success of WHEELS.

However, if it wasn't for others not on the payroll of WHEELS, the publication would not have survived.

Exceptional photographs lend visual impact to any publication worth buying. The old story of a picture is worth more than a thousand words. During those formative years photographer Roger Swan's outstanding photographs added enormously to each and every edition of WHEELS. A man with enormous experience and capability, Roger had, even at that stage, forgotten what others still had to learn.

Then the late Colin Watling appeared on the scene. Impetuous, impulsive, unpredictable, witty, often hilarious, Colin was a Van Gogh with a camera. He didn't take photographs, he created works of art. Soon Colin, in his not too subtle manner, became the self-appointed director of photography at WHEELS.

Danie van Jaarsveld, chairman of the South African Guild of Motoring Journalists and currently the best motorsport photographer in the country, put it in words far better than I ever could when he wrote in the foreword of WHEELS 29: "Getting an image past the critical eye of first Adri Bezuidenhout and then beyond the belligerence of the late Colin Watling – who would not allow ordinary rubbish to compromise his publication – was no mean feat."

With the advent of digital photography, Danie van Jaarsveld's photographic achievements became

the yardstick for other budding motorsport photographers to judge their own work by. Danie, creator of the photographic website Motorpics, also had – and still has – a meaningful and much appreciated input and impact in later editions of WHEELS. You will not find a better soundboard than Danie, a man with enormous intellect.

Most of South Africa's leading motoring scribes have written more than 2 000 articles for WHEELS over the past 30 years. Without their much-appreciated input there would not have been any output. I thank each one of you dearly.

No names, no pack drill, but one name needs special mention. Colin Windell is the only contributor whose byline has appeared in each and every one of the 30 editions of WHEELS. Colin, you are a star.

Without support from vehicle manufacturers, importers and players in the associated industries, no motoring publication has a hope in hell of surviving. To those who have supported WHEELS over many years, our gratitude. I am convinced it was to your companies' benefit to be associated with WHEELS.

Last but not least, a big thank you to Sir Jackie Stewart. Having met him in 1967 while the Tyrrell Team was testing tyres at Kyalami, had a profound impact on my life.

Exceptionally intelligent, informative and professional to the nth degree, he is also a man with great integrity. If Sir Jackie Stewart speaks, it is wise to listen. You will come away a better informed individual. He also has the uncanny – yet sincere – ability to make members of his audience feel important. He is, to my mind, the best make-others-feel-good individual I have ever had the privilege of meeting.

Thank you to Sir Jackie for that chance remark in the Ford Granada in Luxembourg in 1980. It got the wheels rolling which led to the formation of WHEELS, the annual. It opened up a whole new world for me. It changed my life.

-by Adri Bezuidenhout