



MEDIA RELEASE

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SOUTHERN AFRICAN WILDLIFE COLLEGE TRUST CELEBRATES KEY MILESTONES AT CASA LABIA

October 2016: The Southern African Wildlife College Trust and its Founder Trustee, Countess Sylvia Labia, had the pleasure of welcoming supporters and donors to an event held on 4 October at the Casa Labia Cultural Centre in Muizenberg.

The Trust, which was established in 2000 and is administered by WWF South Africa, has over the years awarded more than 50 highly prized accredited Higher Education and Training scholarships and bursaries to people employed in the conservation sector across the SADC region. People, who would otherwise not be afforded this opportunity, attend the College to acquire the latest skills needed to deal with the formidable challenges facing conservation today. In addition, the Trust has provided funding to various projects at the College and also put its weight behind the College's acquisition of a well-recognised anti poaching training unit.

The celebratory event thus marked a number of special milestones including what would have been well-known businessman, philanthropist and conservationist, Dr Anton Rupert's 100th birthday. "The Late Dr Rupert was instrumental in getting the Trust off the ground when he approached Countess Labia to act on his progressive idea of establishing a trust fund to help provide funding for education in nature conservation," said Ms Lesley Richardson, chairperson of the Trust. "With the support of its donors, the Trust has to date raised a noteworthy R30-million to help sustain the work of the Southern African Wildlife College," she added.

The College, which is situated in the Greater Kruger National Park, was established in 1996 by WWF South Africa in close cooperation with interested and affected parties including national and provincial government departments, SADC and other conservation agencies. It has trained over 14 000 custodians of Africa's wildlife, its purpose being to build the capacity of professionals in the field of environmental and conservation management and to train a new generation of natural heritage and wildlife managers.

Built in 1929, Casa Labia was the former Muizenberg residence of Count and Countess Natale Labia and is today a national monument and multi-functional cultural centre. Countess Labia and the Labia family together with Dish Food and Social and the Cucina Labia team provided support for the event.

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The primary objective of the Southern African Wildlife College, which is located 10km west of the Orpen Gate to the Kruger National Park, is to provide people from Africa with the required motivation and the relevant skills to manage and conserve their protected areas and associated flora and fauna on a sustainable basis in cooperation with local communities. In doing so, the College aims to ensure that the region's rich biological diversity, and its threatened species are conserved and that the parks, if well managed, become focal points for rural development and economic growth thereby breaking the poverty cycle and making a substantial contribution to the economic activity in the region.

CAPTION: SOUTHERN AFRICAN WILDLIFE COLLEGE TRUST CELEBRATION



Southern African Wildlife College, CEO, Theresa Sowry and Southern African Wildlife College Trust, Chairperson, Lesley Richardson.