

THE INAUGURAL FORGING ENTERPRISE SMALL BUSINESS PROMOTION PIONEER AWARDS

Awarded to the FMF last month in the category “Small business advocacy”.

Osiba Management: “2015 marks 20 years since the release by the South African government of its White Paper on national strategy for the development and promotion of small business in South Africa and former president Nelson Mandela’s first President’s Conference on Small Business, both of which took place in March 1995. To mark this important milestone, we decided to organise an international small business conference called *Forging Enterprise 2015*. The aim of the event is to celebrate past achievements in the field, reflect on current practices and dialogue on future approaches to small business development in the country ... To celebrate achievements since 1995, Osiba Management and its partners decided to present Small Business Promotion Pioneer Awards to institutions that have played a special pioneering role in the field. The Awards are presented in several categories ... To be considered a “pioneer”, the Panel had to be satisfied that the recipient had played a recognisable pioneering role over the past 20 years or before, in the category in which they are awarded ... In giving these Awards, we are recognising our peers in the field who are exemplars of good practice. We honour and salute them for their pioneering work, their dedication and their pursuit of excellence. We trust that through this initiative recipients will be encouraged to keep on doing their great work and to scale new heights. We trust that others will learn from their example and follow in their path...”*

FMF citation: “... Throughout its history, which spans nearly forty years, the FMF has fought more resolutely and consistently than any other role player for the rights of small business enterprises in South Africa. The FMF continues to advocate for the removal of bureaucratic shackles, which prevent small businesses from entering, and effectively competing, against larger established businesses and for a more just dispensation for small business ... Over the years the FMF has identified several laws that create serious impediments to doing business in SA. Through its advocacy work the FMF brings these issues into focus by drawing the public at large as well as business owners’ attention to these issues. It persuades policy makers to amend legislation by offering practical suggestions for reform. In addition to advocating for the rights of small business owners in the popular media the FMF also produces rigorous analytical studies. For example, the FMF has produced several booklets specifically highlighting the laws that hamper small business operations in South Africa, under the series called *Laws Affecting Small Business* ...”

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international network of intermediaries that specialise in innovation and technology transfer and commercialisation in the small business field.

To celebrate achievements since 1995, Osiba Management and its partners decided to present **Small Business Promotion Pioneer Awards** to institutions that have played a special pioneering role in the field. The Awards are presented in several categories:

- Advocacy
- Business finance
- Business incubation and information
- Business skills development
- Corporate SMME investment / finance
- Enterprise education
- Entrepreneurship research
- Export development
- Informal business development
- Mentorship and business advice
- Microfinance
- Product design and innovation
- Public policy
- Rural and township enterprise development
- Small business exhibitions
- Small business media
- Supplier development
- Technology transfer and advice
- Venture capital
- Women's business development
- Youth enterprise development

The process followed to select recipients of the Award was as follows:

1. An Adjudication Committee was established, comprising individuals with many years of experience and involvement in small business promotion in South Africa. They are: **Abigail Mahlangu-Khuluse** (Thushiyah), **Elize Bezuidenhout** (BSSA), **Mopione Molotsi** (Centre for Small Business Development, University of Johannesburg) **Tello May** (GEP), and **Septi Bukula** (Osiba Management). We were saddened to have lost an esteemed long-time colleague and member of the Panel, Mr Martin Theron. Martin had a distinguished career in small business development in the career. In recognition of his immense contribution, both in the field and on the Panel, the Panel decided to present Martin posthumously with a **Distinguished Service Award**, which will be handed to his family.
2. Members of the Award Adjudication Panel identified and nominated potential Awardees (both existing and past organisations)
3. Nominees were notified of their nomination and invited to express interest in being considered for the Award

4. Nominees that expressed interest were invited to submit a maximum of 4-5 pages of prescribed information to assist the final adjudication process
5. The Award Adjudication Panel considered the responses / information and selected the Award recipients who are receiving their Awards today.

To be considered a “**pioneer**”, the Panel had to be satisfied that the recipient had played a recognisable pioneering role over the past 20 years or before, in the category in which they are awarded. The majority of these organisations are still in operation, some have morphed into different types of operations or changed names, and a few are no longer in operation. In giving these Awards we are recognising our peers in the field who are exemplars of good practice. We honour and salute them for their pioneering work, their dedication and their pursuit of excellence. We trust that through this initiative recipients will be encouraged to keep on doing their great work and to scale new heights. We trust that others will learn from their example and follow in their path. It is our plan, resources permitting, to make these Awards an annual event and to open them up to all players in the field. We hope to see you again at the 2016 **Forging Enterprise Awards**.