



## Building inspirations and aspirations



Prof Robertson and her prizewinners

When eminent neuropsychiatrist and UCT alumna, Professor Mary Robertson became the first woman to receive a DSc (Med) from UCT in 2006, she vowed to “give something back”. She therefore established the **Professor Mary Robertson Scholarship and Award Programme** in the Faculty of Health Sciences, funding a full cost scholarship and annual awards - for Excellence (the top female medical graduate) and Progress (the woman who makes the most progress over the six years of study).

In April 2010, Professor Robertson invited all seven past winners to Cape Town for an educational and bonding weekend. The programme included trips to Robben Island, Cape Point, Kirstenbosch, and numerous meals together, as well as opportunities for the young Doctors to share with each other their experiences and aspirations. The holder of the Professor Mary Robertson Scholarship also joined in the activities.

One of the highlights of the weekend was a cocktail party, held at the Medical School and attended by the Vice-Chancellor who surprised Prof Robertson by presenting her with the **Chancellor’s Circle Gold Pin** in recognition of her generous support.



Cocktail reception with the VC

**Professor Robertson is a remarkable woman.** The fourth generation in her family to graduate from UCT (MBChB 1971, MD 1983, DSc (Med) 2006), she settled in the UK and became a leading authority on Gilles de la Tourette Syndrome, producing some 300 publications and co-authoring four books. Apart from Fellowships of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Royal College of Physicians and Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, she is also a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. This last honour was bestowed for her extensive “anthropological travelling” in the 1970s when she “hitchhiked” on canoes through the jungles of Borneo, eventually living for a time with the Iban people. She is also a published poet as well as an accomplished photographer.

**The Prizewinners Weekend** was such an outstanding and inspiring success that Professor Robertson hopes to host many more in the future, as the band of talented women prizewinners grows each year. In fact, the next get-together has already been pencilled in for December 2011.