

Note from the editor

“In many ways, it is hard for modern people living in First World countries to conceive of a pandemic sweeping around the world and killing millions of people, and it is even harder to believe that something as common as influenza could cause such widespread illness and death.”

– Charles River Editors, *The 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic: The History and Legacy of the World’s Deadliest Influenza Outbreak*

Just over a century ago, the “Spanish Flu Pandemic” had spread over the world and killed millions. We are now living in similar uncertain times, where a pandemic is sweeping around the world, threatening millions, not only their health, but also economic livelihoods. South Africa is in a lockdown, and most researchers and academics are working from home.

However, there are a few positive aspects:

- We are all forced to be a lot more innovative, rescuing our businesses, or delivering the services we are supposed to deliver in different ways. An industrial engineering mindset is a valuable attribute in these times.
- Most of us have learnt to operate in a virtual on-line world. We have learnt new skills and had set new standards. When all returns to “normal” one day, it will be a different kind of normal, where more of us will be working more hours from home.
- We have been forced to learn and optimise personal time management, and we have spent more time as families together, balancing these with our work responsibilities.
- The environment has benefitted with the lesser human activities, and in many areas, wildlife are reappearing, blue skies are visible again, and the stars shine brighter!

Despite the uncertain times, this edition contains 13 articles, of which 6 are from international authors outside South Africa.

As we went to press with the final edition in 2019 in December, I received the sad news that our founding editor, Prof Paul Kruger, had passed away. This edition therefore contains an Obituary, honouring him in his role, not only as founding editor but also as well-known professor in the field of Industrial Engineering, author of several articles in this journal and a loved mentor for many of us, myself included.

If you have suggestions on how we can take this journal forward, please let me know.

Corne Schutte
Editor

Obituary

Prof Paul S Kruger (2 November 1944 - 11 December 2019)

Prof Paul Kruger, a well-known and loved figure in Industrial Engineering in South Africa, passed away on Wednesday 11 December 2019 at the age of 75.

Prof Kruger was a Professor Emeritus at the University of Pretoria, Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, was Head of the Department from 1989 to 1996 and a professor extraordinaire from the University of Stellenbosch.

He was a postgraduate supervisor or co-supervisor for numerous DSc, DEng, PhD, MSc, MEng and MBA degrees. His research outputs included numerous publications in national and international peer-reviewed/refereed journals, full-length conference papers and invited keynote addresses at national and international conferences as well as non-refereed technical publications or popular articles.



He was a founding member of the Southern African Institute for Industrial Engineering (SAIIE) as well as the Operations Research Society of South Africa (ORSSA). He served in the past as SAIIE Council member, SAIIE President from 1992 - 1993 and SAIIE Honorary Fellow.

He was founder and editor (1986 to 1996) of this journal, with the first edition appearing in 1987, with only 3 articles. Despite being retired, he continued with research and continued to publish in the journal, the last article to appear from him was in the Special Edition in November 2018. And in October 2019, he attended the annual SAIIE conference and delivered his last paper.

He received the SAIIE Award for Most Outstanding Industrial Engineering Educator in 2016. During the last years of his life, he spent most of his time looking after his grandchildren and his collection of succulents while trying to survive in the information age.

Our deepest sympathy to Prof Kruger's family. May precious memories fill your heart and ease your pain.