

NWU academic is recipient of prestigious Oppenheimer Fellowship

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North-West University (NWU) professor Abiodun Salawu recently received a fellowship under the prestigious Oppenheimer Fund, and will be spending time at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom.



Prof. Abiodun Salawu

The Oppenheimer Fund awards grants for academic exchanges between Oxford and South Africa. This programme is applicable to senior members of Oxford who wish to visit one or more universities in South Africa, or to senior members of South African universities who would like to visit Oxford.

During the fellowship, Prof. Salawu – who hails from the Indigenous Language Media in Africa research entity in the NWU's Faculty of Humanities – will be working on a project titled “Sol Plaatje: A Pioneer of Black Press in South Africa”.

He intends to research Sol Plaatje's journalism and its contribution to the early South African black press and politics, as well as how Sol Plaatje used this to mediate the relationship between natives and European settlers.

Prof. Salawu says Sol Plaatje remains one of South Africa's most important political and literary figures and was a pioneer of black press in South Africa.

“He was an opinion leader and a spokesperson of his people. He was also the first secretary-general of the South African Native National Congress, which later became the African National Congress (ANC), the current ruling political party in South Africa.

“Plaatje edited and/or published a number of newspapers such as *Koranta ea Becoana* (*Bechuana Gazette*) and *Tsala ea Becoana* (*Bechuana Friend*), which was later changed to *Tsala ea Batho* (*Friend of the People*) and *Umteteli wa Bantu* (*Mouthpiece of the People*). He also wrote regularly for English newspapers such as *Star*, *Pretoria News*, *Cape Times*, *Cape Argus*, *Daily Dispatch* and *Diamond Fields*,” adds Prof. Salawu.

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