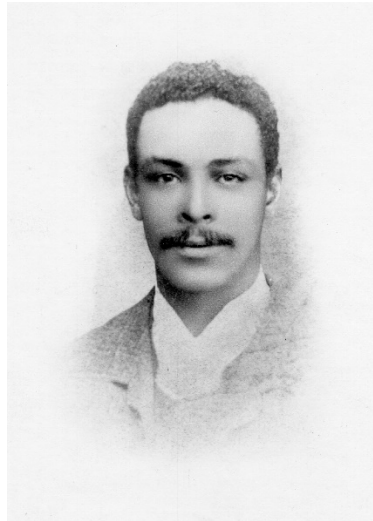


## **Veterinary Faculty Library named after the first South African who qualified as a veterinarian, Dr Jotello Festiri Soga**

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The Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Pretoria named its library in honour of the first South African who qualified as a veterinary surgeon. Dr Jotello Festiri Soga studied for the veterinary degree at the University of Edinburgh and qualified in 1886. A bronze bust of Dr Soga was also unveiled during the event that took place on 5 May.

Dr Soga serves as an exceptional role model and pioneer for the black community, encouraging and inspiring a growing number of students applying to study in this field.

“Dr Soga played an important role in combating rinderpest and lung-sickness in the country as the first qualified South African veterinarian. He also laid a foundation for veterinary education in South Africa. But he is better known in veterinary circles as a pioneer researcher in the study of toxic plants and their effect on animals – both for their poisonous and curative effects.” (*Prof Gerry Swan, Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria*).

The Faculty of Veterinary Science was founded by Sir Arnold Theiler in 1920 and used the library of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute (OVI) for the first 5 decades of its existence. The faculty library was established in 1974 when the Faculty of Veterinary Science became part of the University of Pretoria. In April 1987 the faculty library moved to new quarters in the Sir Arnold Theiler Building at the Onderstepoort campus.

This Library provides a specialised information service to the faculty and extends this role to promote animal health information provision throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

Among others, the ceremony and cocktail function were attended by the Chancellor of the University of Pretoria, Prof L. Wiseman Nkuhlu who also conducted the naming ceremony, the guest speaker, Mr Jesse Lewis, Executive Officer of Admiralty Associates International and author and biographical researcher on Dr Jotello Festiri Soga, Camagu Malcom Soga, family member, and Carole Gallagher, Great granddaughter of Dr Soga.



**Mr Camagu Malcom Soga (family member), Carole Gallagher (Great granddaughter of Dr Soga) and Thembi Soga after the bust was unveiled by them.**

**Notes on Dr Jotello Festiri Soga (1865 – 1906)**

- Born in 1865 at the Mgwali Mission in the then Transkei and died on 6 December 1906 at age 41 in Amalinda, East London

- Son of Reverend Tiyo Soga (a Xhosa), a Presbyterian Church Minister (the first black Church Minister in South Africa) and Janet (Burnside) Soga
- He studied at the Scotland Royal (Dick) Veterinary College of the University of Edinburgh and graduated in 1886

### Career

- From 1886 – 1889 he worked as veterinarian in private practice in Tutuka in the Cape Colony. From 1889 to 1894 he was employed by the Cape Colony as Junior Veterinarian. He was involved with the vaccination campaign against contagious lung-sickness. While working as veterinarian for the Cape Colony he studied toxicity of plants and their relation to animal diseases and also used plants as remedies in his practice. He also lectured on diseases of stock and their treatment in Somerset East and worked with the bacteriologist of the Cape Colony, Dr Alexander Edington. He did his own inoculation experiments on lung-sickness (CBPP) and his vaccination method was accepted as standard use thereafter. He also worked with the Cape botanist P. MacOwan.
- In 1894 – 1895 Dr Soga was appointed as District Veterinarian and transferred to King William's Town where he worked on foot-and-mouth disease, redwater and biliary fever. He assisted Prof Andrew Smith with investigation into the medicinal properties of South African plants and is mentioned in Smith's 3<sup>rd</sup> revised edition: *A contribution to South African materia medica* (1885). During this time he was appointed as Assistant Veterinary Surgeon and worked for the Veterinary Department of the Cape Colony and Botswana.
- In March 1896 Rinderpest entered the Northern Cape and Dr Soga was ordered to Mafikeng and cooperated with Duncan Hutcheon, the Colonial Veterinary Surgeon of the Cape Colony and the police to shoot infected animals (sometimes as many as 400 cattle at a time). Dr Soga, together with the other South African role-players continued to combat rinderpest until 1899 and he also did research on inoculating cattle against rinderpest at Herschel, near Aliwal North in the Eastern Cape.
- In 1899 he retired from the Cape Civil Service, after taking recurrent sick leave as a result of the exhaustive fight against rinderpest. In 1900 he went into private practice in the Border area and in 1902 he was employed by Carl H Malcomess to supervise his cattle on the farm Itala in the Stutterheim district.
- He later moved to the farm of the veterinary farrier AB Fitchett at Amalinda close to East London where he continued with his own small veterinary practice. He died there in 1906.

### Contributions

- Dr Soga was one of the first veterinarians to warn against rinderpest in 1892. He was also one of the major role-players in combating rinderpest (according to Hutcheon one of the most skillful and successful inoculators). He investigated poisonous plants in the Cape Province and resolved the aetiology of krimpsiekte by dosing *Tylecodon ventricosus* to goats.
- He was a founder member of the Cape of Good Hope Veterinary Medical Society