



*Prof. WFO Marasas*

## PROFESSOR WALTER MARASAS

Professor Wally Marasas was born in Boksburg in 1941 and matriculated from Voortrekker High School in 1958. He obtained his BSc (Agric) degree in Plant Pathology at the University of Pretoria in 1962 and three years later his MSc in the same field of study. In 1969 he was awarded his PhD in Plant Pathology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, USA for the thesis entitled "Moldy corn: Nutritive value, toxicity and mycoflora with special reference to *Fusarium tricinctum* (Corda) Snyder & Hansen". Professor Marasas began his professional career as a mycologist at the Plant Protection Research Institute of the Department of Agriculture in Pretoria in 1969. In 1975 he was appointed Chief Specialist Scientist at the Medical Research Council in Tygerberg and in 1992 became Director of the PROMEC (Programme on Mycotoxins and Experimental Carcinogenesis) Unit of the MRC, a position which he currently holds. In addition he serves as Adjunct Professor in the Department of Plant Pathology at the Pennsylvania State University (1986-Present) and Kansas State University, USA (2001 - Present). He is also an Extraordinary Professor in the Department of Microbiology & Biochemistry at the University of the Free State (1989 - Present) and FABI in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences of the University of Pretoria (1998 - Present).

His research interests include mycology and mycotoxicology, particularly *Fusarium* taxonomy and human and animal diseases caused by *Fusarium* toxins in foods and feeds. Professor Marasas has received numerous awards and honours including the Christiaan Hendrik Persoon Gold Medal for Scientific Excellence and Outstanding Achievements in Plant Pathology, Southern African Society for Plant Pathology (1987); the Wellcome Gold Medal and Award for Medical Research (1993); the African Academy of Sciences/CIBA Prize for Agricultural Biosciences (1995); a D.Sc honoris causa, Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of the Free State (1996); the MRC Silver Medal for Excellence in Research (1997); the MT Steyn Gold Medal for Natural Sciences, SA Academy for Science and Art (1998) and the Distinguished Service Award for International Agriculture, Kansas State University (2003). He is widely travelled and has published extensively with three books to his credit, 51 chapters in books and 253 Journal Publications. He has presented 161 papers at International Conferences and promoted or examined 61 theses.