



The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)
cordially invites you to a conversation with

Prof Lee Berger

on

Discovery in a time of Pestilence

- lessons for the future from exploration during the pandemic

The global pandemic has left many areas of science in disarray. With international travel curtailed, laboratory spaces and field sites unsuitable due to transmission risks, many research projects have ceased, with scientists often adopting a “wait until we get back to normal” attitude. However, as we find ourselves nearly a year and a half into the pandemic, and as new variants of COVID-19 arise, it is becoming clear that science must adapt to this “new normal”. In this talk and discussion, Professor Berger will explore his team’s experiences during COVID-19, how they prepared for the pandemic in advance, and how they invented solutions for working in a COVID-19 world. These novel approaches have not only allowed his teams to keep working during even the height of the pandemic, but have resulted in spectacular new discoveries related to human origins. He will also explore what he perceives as the many potential opportunities that have arisen due to these global changes, many of which may have surprisingly long-term positive impact on scientists living and working outside of the global North.

Date: 14 September 2021

Time: 11:00 – 12:00

Venue: Zoom

RSVP: [Click here](#)



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About Prof Lee Berger

Prof Lee R. Berger, PhD. D.Sc. is an award-winning researcher, explorer, author and speaker. He is the recipient of the National Geographic Society’s first Prize for Research and Exploration and the Academy of Achievement’s Golden Plate Award, the Academy of Science of South Africa Gold Medal and was the 2016 National Geographic Society’s Rolex Explorer of the Year. His work has brought him recognition as a Fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa, the Royal Geographical Society, the Explorers Club and the Academy of Science of South Africa and prominent advisory positions including the Chairmanship of the Fulbright Commission of South Africa, the Senior Advisory Board of the Global Young Academy and the Centre of Excellence in Palaeosciences of South Africa among many others. He is a South African Ambassador for Tourism, Conventions and Business Events. He has been awarded several humanitarian awards including the Boy Scout Medal of Honor for saving a life and the Red Cross Certificate of Merit. He is the Honorary National President of the South African Spelaeological Association.

Berger is presently the Phillip Tobias Chair in Human Evolution and Head of the Centre for the Exploration of the Deep Human Journey at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa and an Explorer at Large for the National Geographic Society. His collaborative team of scientists numbers over 140 individuals.

Programme

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| 11:00 – 11:05 | Welcome, Background and Introduction Prof Himla Soodyall, ASSAf Executive Officer |
| 11:05 – 11:45 | Discovery in a time of Pestilence - lessons for the future from exploration during the pandemic Prof Lee Berger, University of the Witwatersrand & The National Geographic Society |
| 11:45 – 11:55 | Q&A Facilitator: Prof Himla Soodyall |
| 11:55 – 12:00 | Closing Prof Himla Soodyall |