



The president's award: Louis Nel, Joep Stevens, Nhlanhla Themba and Oupa Pilane.



Albie and Bettie Pretorius, Cecilia Kaufman and Frans Pretorius.



Jonathan Hen-Boisen and Wendi Roux.



Karin Erasmus and Pieter Vorster.

KLCBT honours cream of the crop

Hardus Hartzenberg

MBOMBELA - The Kruger Lowveld Chamber of Business and Tourism's (KLCBT) 17th annual awards ceremony sparkled with the flair of excellence and prestige last Friday.

Big and small and old and new leaders in business and tourism were recognised for their role in the local community at Emnotweni.

KLCBT chairman, TJ Maré, thanked the hosts Linda Grimbeck, Zelda Koegelenberg, and Jonathan Hattingh after Wernich Swart opened the event with a prayer.

President of the KLCBT Oupa Pilane said he wanted to join hands with those who want to see the country succeed.

"This is the only country where you can unite cultures with a braai," he said in his speech. "South Africa has risen above hardcore challenges, becoming a diverse country where we have learned to embrace each other's differences above our painful past. But what went wrong?" he added.

"We are the only province where the local government arranges business indabas yet no businesses are invited, only government departments. Where the tourism department arranges tourism conferences with no tourism role players. It is time that business

shows government how business is really done."

The KLCBT's black-tie showcase of local business' accomplishments and ethics and their contributions to the community answered his call. The chamber selected the five special awards in categories where there were no finalists.

The Kruger National Park received the president's award for its unrivaled contribution to the Kruger Lowveld economy over several generations, while James Aling was presented with the KLCBT leadership awards for HL Halls & Sons' contribution to the community and economic growth of the region and its deep roots in society.

Nico van Zyl was named Bidvest Car Rental business personality. The legendary, 90-year-old Old Joe was named the Hotels.com tourism personality. Chris Christie won the MLF philanthropy award.

Two awards presented for the first time were for innovation in tourism and the webbie award. The former went to the Long Tom Toboggan, with Lowveld Media winning the Roan Systems webbie award.

The Swazi Tenors entertained the guests with a brilliant tribute to Il Divo, Josh Groban and other popular classic crossover songs. The catering from Emnotweni was

outstanding as usual, which added to the success of a delightful, well-organised prestige evening that the Lowveld could be proud of.



Other KLCBT award winners

Shumba large business: Konica Minolta Mpumalanga
Tracker Connect medium business: Wildman Nelspruit
Nedbank Retail and Business Banking small business: Cowley Paints
Crossing SUPERSPAR tourism large enterprise: Southern Sun Emnotweni
Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport tourism SMME: Aviation Adventures Flying Club
Sappi Nelspruit community service: GRIP
Halls Properties Alan Bachelor environmental: Mountainlands Nature Reserve and Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency
AON SA Entrepreneur: Mpumalanga Newshom.



Charney Jooste and Gerhard van der Westhuizen.



Sandra and Kobus Jacobs.



David Jacobsz, Wouter de Witt (Ghost) and Solange Soares-Nicholson with Old Joe.



Leadership Award: Johan Barnard, James Aling and Nick Elliot. Photos: Hennie Homann / HH Photography and Iconic Management