

JOHN MATISONN

John Matisonn began political reporting at the Rand Daily Mail in 1974, and received a prison sentence for refusing to divulge his source of reports about the South African Watergate scandal known as Muldergate. He did this work while barred from the apartheid Parliament throughout the apartheid era as a “security risk.” A foreign correspondent in Washington for the Rand Daily Mail and back in Johannesburg for National Public Radio (US), he has been published in the New York Times, Financial Times, Washington Post, The Observer and many others. After four years as a broadcast regulator in the Mandela administration and two as editorial director of the short-lived THISDAY newspaper, he became the United Nations’ Chairperson of the Electoral Media Commission in Afghanistan. He returned from a second tour in Afghanistan to write his first book in Franschoek, Western Cape.

On his appointment to the Interim Board of the SABC in March 2017, he cancelled his CTV weekly programme BETWEEN THE LINES, and put aside work on his second book.

Current:

GOD, SPIES AND LIES was published in November 2015 by his company, Ideas for Africa (Pty) Ltd. The book includes extensive new research about the SABC’s history. Excerpts and opinion pieces by Matisonn have been published in the Sunday Independent, Sunday Argus, Sunday Tribune, Mail & Guardian and Rapport, and in The Guardian (UK) among others. He toured the United States last year, speaking at U. of California (Berkeley), San Francisco State U., the University of Illinois Chicago and at the Harvard Club in New York.

South African Broadcasting:

Interim Board Member, SABC, Current.

Councillor, Independent Broadcasting Authority, 1994-1998

Chairperson, Policy Committee, Independent Broadcasting Authority, 1994-1998. In this position he managed the process of producing the Triple Inquiry Report setting national broadcasting policy, and adopted by the National Assembly as South Africa’s official broadcasting policy.

SABC, Executive Editor: Radio (for all 23 radio stations) 1994 first democratic elections.

Co-founder, Public Broadcasting Initiative, 1992-1994.

Blacklisted by SABC during apartheid.

Other broadcasting:

Southern African Correspondent, National Public Radio (US) 1986-1991.

Correspondent, TV documentaries, PBS FRONTLINE, 1992, 1993.

Special Correspondent, PBS, The Global Assembly Line, 1986 Emmy Award.

Print Journalism:

Editorial Director, THISDAY, 2002-2004

Parliamentary editor, Weekend papers, Independent Newspapers, 1999-2002

Editor, Washington Report on Africa, 1983-1986.

Washington Correspondent, Rand Daily Mail and five other newspapers, 1980-1982

Political Correspondent, Sunday Express, 1978 – 1980

Political Reporter, Rand Daily Mail, 1975-1977

United Nations:

Chairperson, Electoral Media Commission, Afghanistan, 2005

International Adviser, Electoral Media Commission, Afghanistan 2009-2010

Awards and elective position:

National Association of Black Journalists Award (US), 1992

William F Benton Fellow in Broadcast Journalism, U. of Chicago, 1991-1992

Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies Fellow, Sept-Dec 2014

President, Southern African Society of Journalists, 1978-1980

Additional Education:

BA, University of the Witwatersrand.

Many radio, television and broadcast management courses, in SA and abroad, including Canada and Hong Kong.