

Looking back on Dr Ludi Koekemoer's 'blessed journey' through advertising

 By Leigh Andrews

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Many were saddened to hear of [Dr Ludi Koekemoer](#)'s pending retirement from his role as CEO of the AAA School of Advertising - he's so vibrant and in touch with trends that he seems younger than his years but he's quite the stalwart, having joined the ad industry back in 1972...

Little wonder then that his insights are so respected, his views on the need for a '[new breed of advertising creative](#)' in particular.



Dr Ludi Koekemoer

And after 46 years of working, with 15 years in advertising and 16 years with the AAA School, little wonder that he's looking forward to scaling down a bit, to focus on academic challenges rather than managing a company, as well as playing more golf and spending more time with his family.

With just a week to go before he gets to put his feet up, we chatted about the difficult decision to move on, his career highlights and what he predicts from AAA School in future...

1. Let's dig right in: What prompted the decision to move on?

Koekemoer: The advertising world, worldwide, is going through radical changes. Technology is driving the media touchpoints, ad agencies are changing to cope with new demands from their clients and with technology, consumers are becoming more demanding, less loyal and more vocal. The brandscape has changed forever and the ad industry will, as always, respond with creative flair and resilience.

A key question I've asked myself and professors around the globe is: are we teaching students what we should be teaching? Yes, AAA embraced the digital field six years ago with its Digital Academy. We changed our Account Management, AMASA's Media Management and our Brand Management courses. We started focusing on copywriting for a digital world, design for digital and the like. The future of academia will be driven by technology, by eLearning initiatives and by challenges. This is a world for a younger CEO who can take AAA to the next level.

2. Share a few of your career highlights.

When I joined the ad industry as research manager at VZ (Van Zijl & Schultz, Lund & Tredoux - the Ogilvy agency) back in 1972, they were the biggest and best. I also bought shares in Mortimer Tiley in 1979, when Roy Mortimer was AAA chairperson and very involved in industry matters, and became MD in 1981. It was an amazing time, where we grew from R1-million in 1979 to R45-million in 1984. Then from 1989 to 1995 I served on the South African Consumer Council, as council member representing the marketing and advertising industries.

3. It's a rich career to be proud of. We hear you were the only South African member of the American Advertising Academy (AAA). Share some insights gleaned there.

Koekemoer: The AAA is a wonderful academy of advertising academics. They have an annual conference in the USA where new developments and research results are discussed every. There were a couple of key benefits for me as the only SA member, four of the main ones being:

1. The opportunity to meet well-known authors like Professor Tom Duncan, Sandra Mariorti, Bill Arens, Billy Ross, Jef Richards and Joe Pisani.
2. We met on a number of occasions, exchanged textbooks and curricula, and I even wrote a chapter in Billy Ross and

Jef Richards' textbook.

3. Every year we had a session on what the ad industries in the USA, Europe, Asia, Australasia and Africa expect from universities and advertising schools and we updated our courses accordingly.
4. I met young PhD candidates and graduates from all over the world and received their latest advertising research results. This was passed onto AAA staff and students.

AAA School benefitted greatly from all of the above and it gave us a competitive advantage.

■ 4. *Looking into your crystal ball, what do you predict from AAA School in future?*

Koekemoer: AAA School has a rich history spreading over 25 years. It offers sound, up-to-date academic excellence (the 'knowing') but what makes AAA special is its practical components (the 'doing'), which makes AAA graduates career-ready and employable.

AAA School employs excellent staff, many with industry experience and it is by far the most awarded ad school in South Africa. The fact that AAA School is owned by the ACA and that it has international accreditation give it a sound platform to expand from. It will expand into online training course offerings, new eLearning qualifications and relevant initiatives to prepare graduates for a changed ad scene and to train industry employees for future challenges.

Certainly seems that way, especially with [AAA School's batch of Gold wins](#) at the recent Loeries2015.

[Click here](#) for more on Koekemoer.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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