

XIVTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MYCOLOGY AND EUKARYOTIC MICROBIOLOGY

Prepared by Janneke Aylward

The XIVth International Congress of Mycology and Eukaryotic Microbiology, hosted by the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS), was an extraordinary conference to attend. Held every three years, it runs concurrently with the Congress of Bacteriology and Applied Microbiology and the Congress of Virology, resulting in researchers from a wide spectrum of microbiology disciplines coming together and sharing ideas. I was fortunate to attend through a grant from the Knowledge, Interchange and Collaboration (KIC) programme of the National Research Foundation (NRF).



Janneke Aylward attend IUMS in Canada

About 30 hours after leaving Cape Town, I arrived on the island of Montréal in the French-speaking Québec province of Canada. I stayed in the quaint suburb of Pointe Claire and was able to experience a little of the local every-day life on this side of the island before commuting to the city for the conference. One bus and train ride later I was underneath the conference venue - Montréal Convention Centre (Palais des Congrès).

The mayor of Montréal, the president of the IUMS, Prof Julian Davies, and the Cirque Carpe Diem acrobats provided an exciting opening ceremony. The conference was attended by

more than 2000 attendees (several of them being well-known mycologists) from 80 countries. The week passed quickly with a full scientific programme consisting of keynote lectures, smaller workshop presentations and interactive poster sessions.

I had the intimidating task of presenting research done during my Master's degree. I spoke about the population genetics of a fungus native to *Protea* plants in southern Africa. The audience received the results of the study with great interest.

The conclusion of the conference involved an excursion to the beautiful capital city of Québec – aptly named Québec City. The stone city walls still surround the old town, colonized by the French in the 1600's, inside of which history is thriving. We explored the historical buildings and experienced the provincial dish called poutine – French fries topped with gravy and cheese.

It was an amazing experience to attend the Congress of Mycology and Eukaryotic Microbiology held in a place with such a rich history. Meeting people from various places and scientific backgrounds was a privilege. I hope to do it again soon!