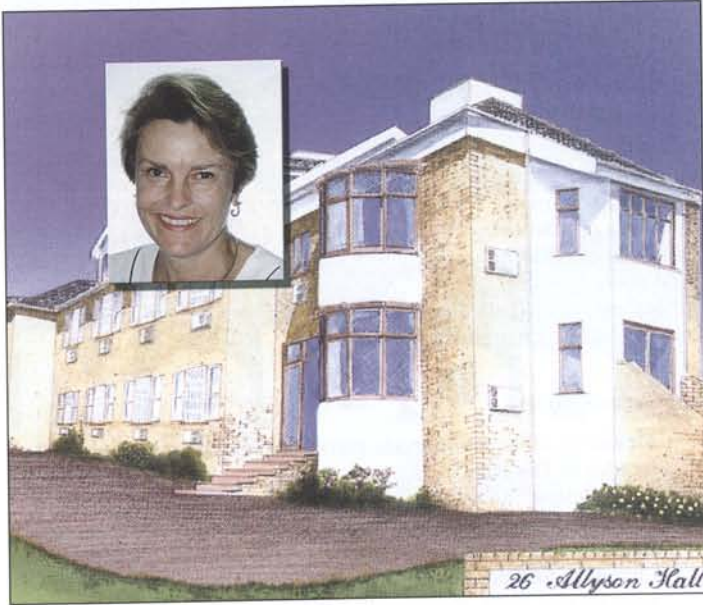


Allyson Lawless civil engineering software

Skok and Stoch were early local pioneers. However, desktop computing for most South African companies and municipalities came from an unusual source – a woman engineer.



Allyson Lawless became a household name.

This pioneer woman engineer and businesswoman needed R3 000 to buy her first computer in 1979, but husband Mark had to sign the lease documents, since a married woman was a minor in the eyes of the law.

As a lonely female in the male engineering world,

- she had to use the tradesman's entrance at the Rand Club to attend the IstructE SAICE functions
- her first invitation to a SAICE banquet was to 'Dear Sir', and stipulated 'Dress Black Tie' and 'No Female Allowed'

Owing to her background in structures, Allyson's first development was 'StructurAlly', which by the end of 1981 was being used by most consulting firms. Her software into the civils field followed. Her water design software was first but she teamed up with several independent developers to extend the civil engineering range to survey, earthworks, sewer, stormwater and road design.

CAD and GIS software were essential to give engineering offices a complete range of modules to address their daily needs and these were added using another independent developer. The 'AllyCAD' had arrived!

Finite elements to South Africa and document control systems followed.

The person and the product became indivisible. It was all action, all MAD as in 'Make A Difference'.

And even though

Allyson Lawless moved on to contribute towards building the human civil engineering capital for South Africa, her legacy lives on and these products are still in use.

An unsurpassed achievement for women in civil engineering!



The computer revolution hit the engineering world from the late sixties to the early eighties. It was not an 'evolution' – it was a phenomenal revolution. It was the biggest change in engineering technology since log tables and the slide rule. What was the background?

- Programmable computers emerged only in the sixties. The calculations for the first spaceships were done with slide rules!
- Desktop computing became a reality only in the seventies, but at the same time main frames continually expanded their computing power.
- Affordable desktop systems appeared only towards the end of the seventies.
- PC systems as we know them today emerged in the eighties.

The early IT pioneers were in a continuing quantum leap environment. Major access problems to hardware and software were created by the sanctions era.



- space frame analysis ■ 3D model manager ■ concrete ■ steel ■ timber
- masonry ■ composite ■ detailing ■ connections ■ flat slabs
- retaining walls ■ loading ■ GAs ■ calculation wizard



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