

GRADUATION SPECIAL

UKZNDABA



YOUR MONTHLY CAMPUS NEWSPAPER • GRADUATION • APRIL 2010



Graduation 2010.

CELEBRATING UKZN'S GRADUATES

UKZN hosted 19 graduation ceremonies from April 16-23.

WORDS: INDU MOODLEY AND DEANNE COLLINS

A total of 8 111 (5 900 undergraduate and 2 211 postgraduate) graduates received their degrees at the ceremonies on the Pietermaritzburg and Westville campuses. Sixty two percent of the graduates are women.

Two hundred and fifty four graduates (of whom 164 are women) obtained their degrees cum laude and 109 students (of whom 61 are women) graduated *summa cum laude*.

Approximately 2 419 degrees were conferred in the Faculty of Education; 438 degrees in the Faculty of Engineering; 374 in the Faculty of Health Sciences; 1 753 in the Faculty

of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences; 345 in the Faculty of Law; 1 568 in the Faculty of Management Studies; 244 in the Faculty of Medicine and 970 in the Faculty of Science and Agriculture.

Five hundred and fifty four international students graduated this year, as did 67 students with disabilities.

This year's ceremonies took place in an auspicious year. 2010 marks the centenary of Higher Education in KwaZulu-Natal. It also marks the centenary of the Union of South Africa which was formed on May 31 1910; and 20 years since the release of the world's icon, Mr Nelson Mandela. This is also the year in

which South Africa is hosting the FIFA World Cup. These historic events symbolise leadership, innovation and determination to make a difference to society and lay down a challenge to UKZN's latest batch of graduates to leave a legacy that will benefit generations to come.

The graduation ceremonies are a watershed occasion in the life of an individual – an occasion that lays the foundation for successful careers through intellect, knowledge and skills gained at university. They are also an opportunity to acknowledge the sacrifices made by parents and guardians to provide the best education possible.

GRADUATES URGED TO USE skills to promote equality

Honorary Graduate Reverend Jesse Jackson urged graduates, academics and parents to fight for societal equality.



Reverend Jesse Jackson and Vice-President of Convocation Mr André Young with Bachelor of Social Science graduate Miss Phumelele Masango. Miss Masango, who was born a paraplegic, said meeting Reverend Jackson made her graduation very special.

WORDS: NEESHA MAHARAJ PHOTO: RAJESH JANTILAL

Famous for his unwavering commitment to social justice, the American struggle hero noted that in 1994 South Africa achieved democracy after decades of discriminatory apartheid laws. Now it is time to address the challenges of expansion and growth for all.

“When 10 percent of the people control 80 percent of the land and 50 percent of the income, and the majority is fighting an uphill battle to overcome crippling poverty, the need for a battle for equality is apparent. To achieve equality the cancer of economic injustice must be removed and economic equality for all must be applied,” he added.

Congratulating graduates, Reverend Jackson said they were empowered by education to spread the message of freedom, equality and hope through whichever profession they followed.

“Lifting others with you as you climb, you must address the

remaining barriers that are the key to real freedom: poor housing and social services; there is too much violence in Africa and the world, we must go another way. We must end the behaviour that leads to HIV and AIDS ... We must fight for drinkable water and clean air... We must restructure our economy from the bottom up, not just trickle down,” said Reverend Jackson.

Reverend Jackson stressed the importance of young South Africans getting an education and urged them to hold onto their dreams which could be realised. “Dream of teachers who teach for life, not for a living. Dream of doctors who are concerned more about public health than private wealth. Dream of lawyers more concerned about justice than a judgeship. Dream of preachers who are concerned more about prophecy than profiteering. Dream on the high road with sound values. And then, young South Africans, you go forward...,” he concluded.

DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS' AWARDS

Four academics were recognised at UKZN's graduation ceremonies for excellence in teaching.

WORDS: NEESHA MAHARAJ AND INDU MOODLEY

Distinguished Teachers' Awards were presented to Professor Deogratius Jaganyi, Dr Suzanne Francis, Ms Kerry Frizelle, and Ms Heidi Matisonn.

Dean of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture and Professor in the School of Chemistry Professor Deogratius Jaganyi was recognised for holistically embodying all aspects of a distinguished teacher. He is both a leader and a well-rounded academic displaying excellence in teaching and in research, and thus serves as an inspiration and role model to his colleagues and his students.

Dr Suzanne Francis, Senior Lecturer in the School of Politics was recognised for her ability to inspire students and enhance student learning. She was commended for developing curricula that are African-centred in accordance

with the University's vision, mission and strategic objectives. She was recognised for the innovative methods adopted in her teaching, and the clear integrated approach and the constant re-appraising of her curriculum.

Ms Kerry Frizelle, Lecturer in the School of Psychology was recognised for her outstanding delivery of a service learning module on HIV and AIDS in the School of Psychology. The distinguishing feature commended by the award panel was the way in which she straddled community engagement and teaching through this module. In addition to excellent module delivery, Ms Frizelle has supervised honours students and most importantly, published with them, a significant accomplishment for an academic at a lecturer level at UKZN.

Ms Heidi Matisonn, Lecturer in the School of Philosophy and

Ethics was recognised for her accomplishments in the area of small group teaching and the effectiveness with which she innovatively trained tutors in conducting their teaching. Student evaluations of Ms Matisonn's teaching were very positive and she has received peer evaluations from several independent sources that commended her teaching and regarded her as being an outstanding teacher.

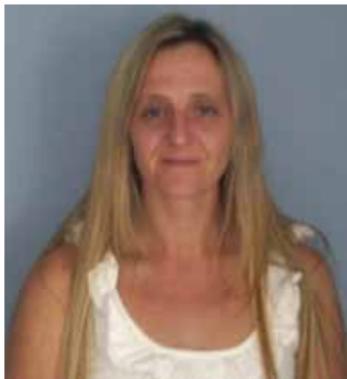
Congratulating the recipients Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning Professor Renuka Vithal said: "Academics who have been awarded are 'young' staff who have distinguished themselves in their discipline but at the same time have undertaken research. This should serve as an inspiration to other lecturers. It is also commendable to see a Dean receiving a Distinguished Teachers' Award which inspires quality and innovative teaching."



Professor Deogratius Jaganyi.



Ms Kerry Frizelle.



Dr Suzanne Francis.



Ms Heidi Matisonn.

HONORARY GRADUATE calls for service to society

"Don't ever forget where you came from and the sacrifices that have been made for you to be here. Use the skills you have attained at this prestigious university to benefit those around you."

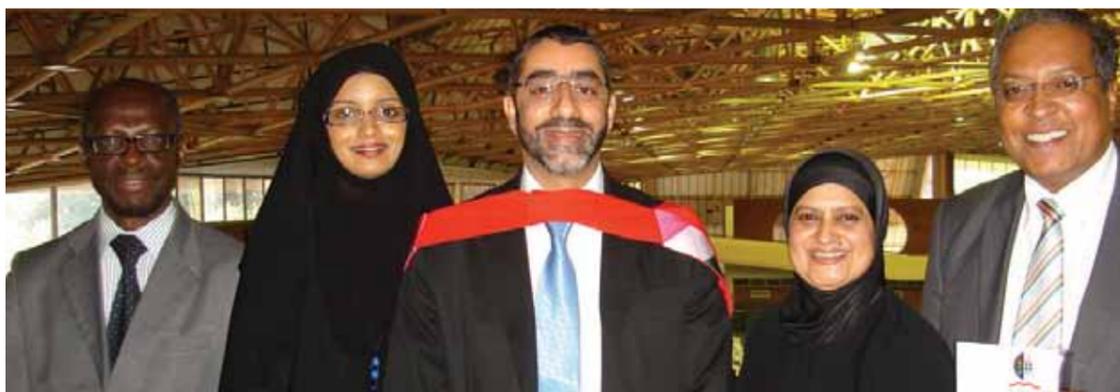
WORDS AND PHOTO: MARYANN FRANCIS

This was the advice to Health Sciences graduates from the founder of the Gift of the Givers, Dr Imtiaz Sooliman who received an Honorary Doctorate on April 23 in recognition of his outstanding global humanitarian work. Dr Sooliman's work was also acknowledged on April 27 by President Jacob Zuma when he received one of the highest orders in the country, the Order of the Baobab in Silver.

Dr Sooliman recounted his experiences in Haiti when Gift of the Givers accepted the call for

aid. The medical team consisted mostly of UKZN graduates, all of whom were able to persevere and provide excellent medical care despite a lack of facilities. On January 27, the "Dream Team" as members of the Gifts of the Givers became known, managed to convert a dilapidated Seventh Day Adventist Church into a 400-bed hospital. South Africans sterilised the facilities and provided medical care to all that required it. At times, they even trained US and UK medics on adapting to a situation where state-of-the-art equipment was lacking.

Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the College of Health Sciences and Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences Professor Sabiha Essack said, "Dr Sooliman's passion and unequivocal commitment to upholding human rights and serving humanity is evident not only in his leadership of the Gift of the Givers Foundation which expeditiously provides humanitarian aid internationally where it is required most but from the invaluable life experiences that enrich his inspirational speeches."



Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Professor Nelson Ijumba; Mrs Aysha Sooliman; Dr Imtiaz Sooliman; Professor Sabiha Essack; and Deputy Vice-Chancellor-elect, College of Health Sciences, Professor Tahir Pillay.

FELLOWSHIPS for leading academics

The University awarded Fellowships in recognition of distinguished academic achievement to Professors Ruth Elizabeth Teer-Tomaselli, Jamshid Moori and David Ward.

WORDS: INDU MOODLEY

Professor Ruth Elizabeth Teer-Tomaselli is a dedicated scholar of international standing, Professor Teer-Tomaselli has held the UNESCO Chair in Communications for southern Africa since 2002 and is the Vice-President of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), the foremost international association for media scholars in the world. Professor Teer-Tomaselli is an editorial member of six international journals, including *Critical Arts*, *Feminist Media Review*, *Global Media Journal*, and the *European Journal of Cultural Studies*.

Professor Jamshid Moori received the Fellowship award for his contribution as an outstanding scholar of Mathematics of international standing. He has produced 45 papers which have been published in all the top Algebra journals including six papers in the prestigious *Journal of Algebra*.

Recently he was appointed as Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Universities of Birmingham (UK) and Tehran (Iran). Professor Moori has served the University with distinction for more than 20 years

Professor David Ward is an internationally known and respected ecologist and a leader in his field. He has held academic positions both locally and abroad, mainly in Israel, where he was awarded the Paula and David Ben Gurion prize for outstanding contributions to desert research and combating desertification. A prolific researcher, he has published over 140 publications as papers in peer-reviewed journals and scientific reports, 15 chapters in books, a single-authored book *The Biology of Deserts* published by Oxford University Press in 2009, and numerous conference presentations.

EDUCATION FACULTY produces a first

Lecturer in the School of Education and Development, Dr Callie Grant has achieved a first for the Faculty of Education – a PhD in Education through publication.

WORDS: NEESHA MAHARAJ

Her quest to seek answers on the possibility of teachers taking on leadership roles in South African schools, which began in 2004, had led to her latest academic success.

Her dissertation, *Distributed Teacher Leadership in South African Schools: Troubling the Terrain* is underpinned by the findings of six research projects (or strands) with the overall aim of understanding existing perceptions of teacher leadership in diverse school settings.

Dr Grant, who was conferred with her PhD on April 17, said a significant accomplishment resulting out of her research was the development of a model for teacher leadership which offered researchers “a language of description to be able to converse with other researchers about the possibilities of teacher leadership and a framework for future studies”.

At the same time as completing her PhD, Dr Grant also supervised a group of Masters students who graduated on the same day.



The 11 educators who graduated with their Masters in Education degree pictured with Dr Callie Grant (in the red robe).

Educators who are part of the ELMP (Education, Leadership, Management and Policy) specialisation Mrs Yvonne Moonamy; Mrs Khombi Gumede; Mr Alphonso Jasson; Mr Steven Gunkel; Rev Jairos Hlatywayo; Miss Beatrice Mpangase; Miss Khumbu Molefe; Miss Goodness Nene; Mr Armstoring Xulu; Ms Gael Lawrence; and Mr Clive Moonamy successfully completed their degrees as participants

in a group research project titled: *Teacher Leadership in Action: Collective Case Studies*. The part-time Master in Education programme comprises 50% course work and a research dissertation comprising 50%. What was significant about this group of dedicated part-time students was that they all completed the degree within the minimum time period of two years.

THESIS ON ACTIVIST'S writing earns PhD

Ms Zoë Elizabeth Molver, Academic Co-ordinator at UKZN's Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS) received her PhD on April 21.

WORDS: LUNGA MEMELA

Registered in the Department of English, in the School of Literary Studies, Media and Creative Arts, her thesis is entitled: *Harold Strachan in Context: Guerilla Artist, Writer*.

Drawing on unique archival documents, including State Security files and the transcript of the 1965 *Rand Daily Mail* Perjury Trial, Ms Molver's thesis is the first critical evaluation of the writing of Harold Strachan. Born in 1925, Strachan is one of the most remarkable figures, in recent South African history, his life intersecting with many of the key figures in the liberation struggle during the 1960s and '70s. One of the appendices of the thesis comprises DVDs of six

films on Strachan co-produced by journalist, writer and filmmaker, Dr David Basckin, also a PhD graduate from UKZN, and Ms Molver.

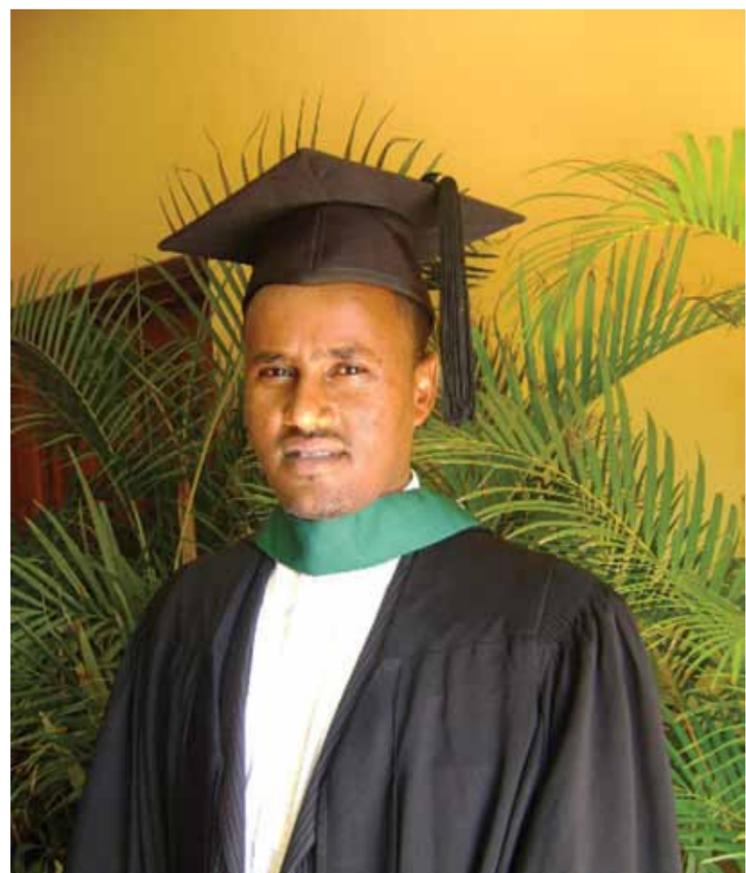
Commenting on her topic, Ms Molver said: “Harold is locally situated, still living in Durban, a Fine Arts graduate of [the former] Natal University, as well as a political activist who refused to leave this country. I was interested both in his writing and why he had been airbrushed out of recent South African history. I finally found a topic I wanted to work on.”

However, she advised that students should do their PhDs when they were younger if they wanted to make a career in academia. “Your PhD should be



Dr Zoë Elizabeth Molver.

seen as your heavy-duty license,” she said.



Mr Desale Yosief Okubamichael.

STUDENT WALKS ACROSS AFRICA to reach his dream

Mr Desale Yosief Okubamichael walked and hitchhiked thousands of kilometres, all the way from Eritrea to register for his Master of Science Degree in Botany

WORDS: LUNGA MEMELA AND INDU MOODLEY PHOTO: INDU MOODLEY

The ex-graduate assistant of the University of Asmara in Eritrea, a country in the horn of Africa, often dreamt of studying in South Africa. In 2007 he left home and began the long journey with just \$500 in his pocket and a small bag of clothes on his back. It took him two months to join his brother in Pietermaritzburg. “It was hard, especially because I didn't have any exposure to the different cultures,” he said. The quietly-spoken student began his masters in 2008.

“This is a story of indomitable determination. It is an indication of his enormous commitment to pursue an education and should serve as an example of the enormous power of the human spirit,” said Ms Nomonde Mbadi, Executive Director: Corporate Relations.

“No one is special, what makes you special is patience and hard work,” said Mr Okubamichael. His research was titled: *Host specificity of the hemiparasitic mistletoes*. Mistletoes are green shrubs growing parasitically on branches of various trees and are widely used for Christmas decorations.

Mr Okubamichael's study investigated a broad range of topics from ecology to molecular biology,

physiological and population genetics. It utilised several different experimental designs, scientific tools and statistical packages which may be applied to other scientific studies. These studies have multidisciplinary implications in ecology, evolution, biology, environment, conservation and parasitology.

“A common misconception about plants is that they have roots and are capable of producing their own food using solar energy. However, this is not always true. There are about 4 000 parasitic plants which are rootless and dependent on other plants (host plants) for water and nutrients. Among these are mistletoes which grow on the branches of host trees,” explained Mr Okubamichael.

His main challenge was that research was the first priority at the University. In his previous studies, the emphasis was on tests and exams. “Learning to write a scientific paper was a difficult task... I found the School of Biological and Conservation Sciences very excellent,” he said.

“Be focused, determined and work with passion. Then don't worry, you will make it,” is Mr Okubamichael advice to aspirant students.

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE for Food Security graduate

Passionate about Africa's development, Mr Moleka Mosisi is one of three UKZN students who graduated with a Masters degree in Agriculture.

WORDS: VICKY CROOKES

Mr Mosisi's experience at the 13th African Union Heads of State Summit on Agriculture and Food Security, held in Libya at the end of 2009, bears testimony to his motto that "nothing is impossible." Attending the summit with other UKZN staff and students, Mr Mosisi was intent on meeting his role model, President Jacob Zuma. "I introduced myself to him and told him about myself and what I can offer to South Africa in my field of study," he said.

Originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mr Mosisi sought refuge in South Africa to escape the war that was paralysing his country. He first became interested in food security in 2004 when a friend

invited him to visit her in Maphephetheni, a rural village near Durban. Shocked to see how poverty affected the rural population, Mr Mosisi decided to create a non-profit organisation called Voiceless Services in an effort to support the community around farming. Soon after this, prompted by a newspaper article on UKZN's Farmer Support Group, he contacted the University to explore possible partnerships. He was put in contact with Professor Sheryl Hendriks, Head of UKZN's African Centre for Food Security.

Language presented the greatest challenge for Mr Mosisi who had to learn English, without attending any formal classes. At first, he also battled to finance

his studies but was fortunate to receive assistance from the Gift of the Givers and the National Research Foundation.

Mr Mosisi's thesis is entitled: *Can small-scale poultry production contribute to household food security in the Maphephetheni lowlands, KwaZulu-Natal?* His research, which was commissioned by Eskom, found that while both egg and broiler production is technically feasible in the Maphephetheni lowlands, broiler production proved more economically viable and desirable.

Last year, Mr Mosisi's Masters project grabbed the attention of the producers of SABC2's *Living Land*, an upbeat education television programme on developing agriculture.



Mr Moleka Mosisi with President Zuma at the African Union Heads of State Summit in Libya in 2009.



Ms Laura Atkinson.

ACCOUNTING GRADUATE reaches for the stars

Ms Laura Atkinson graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce *summa cum laude* on April 16.

WORDS: LUNGA MEMELA

Even though she is aware that "a long road to becoming a Chartered Accountant awaits," she is delighted with her achievement.

Funded by auditing firm, *Ernst and Young*, Ms Atkinson, says that her undergraduate years simply flew by.

"Starting 'varsity in first year I set goals that I wanted to achieve and, needless to say, I was ecstatic when I found out that I had in fact reached one of my goals through hard work and dedication. I proved to myself

that I can do anything I set my mind to and this has certainly spurred me on to achieve even greater things," she says.

Currently registered as an Honours student at UKZN, Ms Atkinson hopes to do her Masters degree in 2011, and then complete her articles with *Ernst and Young* before pursuing her dream to becoming a Chartered Accountant.

Ms Atkinson congratulated UKZN on its Commerce curriculum. "If you want to succeed in tertiary education, it is up to you, and only you," she added.

CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES

Electrical Engineering *cum laude* graduate, Ms Kerrylynn Pillay, dispels the myth that engineering is the domain of men.

WORDS: VICKY CROOKES

In her final year design project, which essentially represents each student's *magnum opus*, she achieved three of the top awards for academic excellence, one of which was the Siemens Prize for the Best Final Year Student in Electrical Engineering. This is no mean feat considering the demanding and arduous nature of the engineering curriculum.

According to Engineering Professor, Roger Peplow, "Even though the number of women in the Electrical and Computer En-

gineering Programmes has been rising over the last few years, it still is only around 23 percent of the class, so having a woman come top is great."

Ms Pillay cites time constraints, work load and academic content as the most onerous aspects of her studies. In her third year of study, an additional challenge was dealing with her father's cancer diagnosis. However, she learnt that it is possible to overcome any challenge that life throws at her and, as a result, subscribes

to the philosophy that nothing is impossible.

One of Ms Pillay's academic highlights was her final year design project which was the culmination of five months of rigorous research and intense design. She designed a protection scheme for the Kriel Power Station in Mpumalanga which involved a switching scheme to automatically swop over to an alternate supply in the case of a fault or a loss of supply.

Currently employed by the eThekweni Municipality as a

Candidate Engineer, Ms Pillay's future plans include a Masters degree in Electrical Engineering at UKZN. She is also working towards registering with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) as a professional engineer, a process that takes approximately three years.

Right: Ms Kerrylynn Pillay next to her final year design project entitled: *Protection and Co-ordination Scheme for a Power Reticulation System*.



MARKETING WIZ

impressed with UKZN

Exchange student Ms Le Ha Trang Nguyen graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce Honours degree *summa cum laude*, on April 16

WORDS: LUNGA MEMELA



Ms Le Ha Trang Nguyen.

Ms Nguyen first came to UKZN on a student exchange programme in 2007 from Singapore. After completing a semester at the Pietermaritzburg campus she headed back to Nanyang

Technological University and then returned to UKZN to do her Honours degree in Marketing.

Currently employed by international consumer goods corporation Procter & Gamble in Singapore, Ms Nguyen aspires to

excel in her job and develop an in-depth understanding of the career she is passionate about: marketing.

“UKZN is a prestigious institution in South Africa. I was impressed by the level of commitment and passion among the lecturers and professors,” said Ms Nguyen. She said she was proud to have been part of such a diverse group of students. “All of this was the driving factor of holistic education,” she said.

“Treat education as a life experience, not as a channel to get a degree,” said Ms Nguyen. She admitted that the journey towards achieving such great results was not easy, but the hard work paid off.



Mrs Bronwynne Anderson.

WENTWORTH

RESIDENT

does her community proud

Lecturer Mrs Bronwynne Anderson is the first woman from the Wentworth community to graduate with a PhD in Gender and Education.

WORDS: NEESHA MAHARAJ

Mrs Anderson conducted research on the dilemma faced by Coloured boys in Wentworth. She graduated on April 22.

Coloured Boys in Trouble: An Ethnographic Investigation into the Construction of Coloured Working Class Masculinities in a High School in Wentworth, Durban investigated the trials and tribulations of Coloured boys aged 14-17 and the myriad of challenges that lead to their poor academic performance in school.

Her research which has been accepted for publication in the journal *Agenda* delves into the masculinities of Coloured boys who enter high school and are wading through a new school environment to establish their identity. Among her findings were that their socio-economic context – the high rate of unemployment, living in overcrowded tenements, drug abuse, a high pregnancy rate, poverty and gangsterism – prompted these boys to engage in problematic behaviour.

“Most of the boys interviewed had aspirations to one day obtain good jobs, drive fancy cars and live better lives. They had intentions to ameliorate their lives. But it wasn’t consistent to their commitment to education. They felt victimised and judged by teachers who the boys believed never gave

them a chance to explain their point of views and redeem themselves,” said Ms Anderson. This eventually led to the boys dropping out of school because most boys came from single parent households with working mothers who did not have the time to attend school meetings and discuss their children’s behaviour.

Ms Anderson believes the findings of her research could be valuable to the Department of Education who could use this information for the Schools Exclusion Policy. “I understand teachers have difficulty teaching ‘troublesome’ boys, but some consideration should be given to their circumstances and background where pain and hurt are central to their lives. Teachers can help the situation by being sensitive to their plight,” she said.

Ms Anderson who plans to introduce workshops for teachers in Wentworth on the findings of her research said of her achievement: “Work towards my PhD consumed my life. My research was at the back of my mind at every waking moment. I have to accept that I’ve finally achieved my goal. It’s a euphoric feeling and I consider myself blessed.”

Plans are on the cards to present her research findings at conferences, achieve more publications and possibly convert her dissertation into a book.

“TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE”

Twins, Ms Thabelang and Ms Thabelo Walusimbi graduated in the Faculty of Management Studies on April 16.

WORDS: LUNGA MEMELA

The pair are delighted that their hard work and joint efforts eventually paid off. “Our very supportive parents are so proud,” said Thabelo.

Thabelang graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Supply Chain Management and Economics and Thabelo received a Bachelor’s degree in Information Technology Systems and Supply Chain Management.

“We don’t always want to do the same things as twins but in this case Supply Chain Management was a common choice,” said Thabelo. “I am very excited. I want to study further and travel the world,” said Thabelang.

Both agree that their lecturers at UKZN enhanced their education and both want to pursue further studies. “The best thing about studying for a similar degree with my sister is that we were able to push each other. When one was slacking, the other would be there to support the other,” said Thabelo.



Ms Thabelang and Ms Thabelo Walusimbi.

Thabelang hopes to get a position at one of South Africa’s Big Four banks and Thabelo looks

forward to working at a well-established information technology company.



Dr Busi Kunene.

'LOVE MEDICINES' MIGHT INCREASE risk of HIV transmission and STIs

Using 'love medicines' to enhance sexual relationships increases the risk of men and women contracting HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

WORDS: NEESHA MAHARAJ

This was the finding of doctoral research undertaken by Ms Busi Kunene who was conferred with her PhD in Nursing degree on April 23.

A Project Director for Midwives Aids Alliance (MAA), Dr Kunene investigated *The use of 'love medicine' among Black Africans in KwaZulu-Natal and the risks of HIV transmission to both men and women in South Africa*. Her study included the participation of 148 men and women between the ages of 18 to 60 from the KwaZulu-Natal districts of Umzinyathi, Umkhanyakude, Ugu and Zululand.

Research findings suggest that the use of 'love medicines'

worked against HIV prevention measures. Dr Kunene said: "The fear of losing partners is greater than the fear of acquiring HIV infection among women and men. Therefore the users (of 'love medicines') purposely avoid using condoms while suspecting or knowing that they are in constant competition for sexual partners.

"The findings showed that the use of 'love medicines' contribute towards the complex web of biological, economic and cultural factors that increase the risk of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infection (STIs) among men and women," said Dr Kunene.

In an era when HIV infection

rates are high, Dr Kunene hopes the findings of her study would be made available to nurses who in turn would inform the communities they come in contact with of the perils of using 'love medicines' while implementing intervention programmes.

Graduating with a PhD in Nursing is "a dream come true" for Dr Kunene who indicated that her commitment to achieve academic success emerged from childhood experiences including times where she did not own the proper attire to attend school; and the knowledge that her own parents never had the opportunity to obtain a school education.

OVERCOMING the difficulties

Ill-health and other difficulties did not stand in the way of Ms Sheelagh Halstead (58) completing her Master of Science degree.

WORDS: LUNGA MEMELA



Convocation Vice-President Mr André Young places the hood on Ms Sheelagh Halstead.

Titled: *A critical analysis of research already conducted on student difficulties with acid-base chemistry*, her thesis developed a new method to synthesize the type of qualitative data under analysis as well as a conceptual analysis of the underlying chemistry.

"As a teacher I have always been interested in student misconceptions and how they should be addressed. In the course of my literature review for the research proposal I discovered there had been considerable work already done (but of varying standards) in this topic which had not been consolidated, so a critical analysis was first needed in order to synthesize this," said Ms Halstead.

A staff member at UKZN's Centre for Science Access, she

hopes to use her newfound knowledge to benefit students and to write curriculum material for teachers. She is also working on journal articles to publicise her research

"I am proud to have completed my 'marathon,'" said Ms Halstead. She is full of praise for her supervisor, Professor Trevor Anderson of the School, for his support and patience. "This feels like something which had been beyond my dreams," she said.

Asked what she gained by studying at UKZN, Ms Halstead, said: "You can look at, and talk about, tables of data endlessly, but the real insight comes from writing about them. This lesson was so unexpected ... I feel fulfilled in an academic institution."

UKZN MARKETING graduate is on a roll

Mr Duncan Land received his BCom Marketing Honours degree *summa cum laude*.

WORDS: LUNGA MEMELA

He is currently in Cape Town working in marketing and acquisitions for an online poker brand. "It is a great training ground in web-based marketing and e-commerce, so I'll be sticking with this for now," he said.

Following a couple of years of travelling, Mr Land decided to head to UKZN 'to get some real work done'. He stresses that as

you only have three or four years at university it is important that you get involved in more than just your lectures.

"Life after 'varsity is certainly an interesting beat, but on most Monday mornings I'm pretty keen to trade the morning traffic jam and my alarm clock for my digs in first year and a 9:30 breakfast slot," says Mr Land.

One of the main lessons he

learnt at UKZN is that fun without work, and work without fun, are both recipes for disaster. He expressed his thanks to the Media and Marketing Disciplines at UKZN for stimulating curricula and says he enjoyed a fruitful student/lecturer relationship.

"My honours year really forced me to work hard...it was really good to apply myself and see the results," he says.



Mr Duncan Land.

BEATING language barriers

Ms Nobuhle Zungu graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in French on April 21.

WORDS: LUNGA MEMELA

Her achievement is a challenge to all South Africans to go out and learn new languages.

During her studies at UKZN Ms Zungu was actively involved in a French for Tourism project. In her honours year she also took part in a French for Informal Traders initiative, a collaborative project between the eThekweni Municipality and Alliance Française to teach French to Durban's informal traders to prepare them for the 2010 Fifa World Cup.

Her research titled, *Est-ce que*

les Zuluphones ne s'intéresse pas à apprendre d'autres langues explored the stereotype that Zulu-speaking South Africans are not interested in learning foreign or even local languages except for English.

"The French for Informal Traders initiative was a pilot project that proved to be a success in teaching foreign languages through a vernacular language other than English," said Ms Zungu. "The challenge was to try and create lesson plans for students who aren't able to read or write, although some students were able to do so. Through feed-



Ms Nobuhle Zungu.

back, we found that the project was very helpful and that informal traders are eager to learn other languages," she said.

The 23 year old now looks forward to a lifetime of learning and teaching languages internationally. Sad to have to miss her graduation ceremony, Ms Zungu is headed off to Germany to spend a year learning German as her next target language.

UKZN'S YOUNGEST GRADUATE LOOKS AHEAD

Mr Previn Naicker completed his Bachelor of Medical Science Honours degree in Medical Biochemistry when he was just 18.

WORDS: NEESHA MAHARAJ

Now aged 19, Mr Naicker graduated on April 23.

Mr Naicker has become accustomed to completing most of his education ahead of schedule. He completed his secondary schooling at Star College in Westville at the age of 14 and his Bachelor of Science degree at UKZN in 2008 at age 17.

Mr Naicker's postgraduate research project on *The Effects of Fumonisin B1 and Apoptosis on the Oesophageal cancer occurrence in Black Patients in South Africa* investigated the occurrence of this type of cancer among people who consume fumonisin contaminated maize.

Discipline, hard work and support from several role models made it possible for Mr Naicker to skip grades seven, nine and ten. "My high school teacher, Mr Ismail Bayinder, helped me greatly with my schooling and pushed me to do better, as well

as my elder brother who has always excelled academically. My parents were also there every step of the way and helped me get to where I am," said Mr Naicker.

Speaking about his early start in tertiary education at UKZN, Mr Naicker said:

"I enjoyed meeting groups of different people and learning from them. Some of the highlights would be excelling at certain modules where I achieved merit passes....With doing many biology and physiology courses the volume of work was intense but I was used to doing large volumes of work as I had a good grounding from high school. I feel that I was mature enough then to handle the work load and I am ready now to handle even more work," said Mr Naicker.

Mr Naicker has set his sights on securing a bursary to pursue his master's degree in the United Kingdom or the United States.

LAW STAFF CELEBRATE their graduation

Three staff members graduated at the Faculty of Law at 2010 graduation ceremonies.

WORDS: NEESHA MAHARAJ

Ms Razia Amod the Faculty Officer for Postgraduate Studies achieved her Bachelor of Law (LLB) degree; Ms Rani Pillay, an Academic Co-ordinator and Lecturer in the Child Care and Protection Programme obtained her Masters in Law (LLM) degree; and Mr Ed Couzens graduated with a PhD in Law.

Ms Pillay read for her LLM degree through course work and submission of a mini-dissertation on *The Beginning of Human Personhood: Is South African Law Outdated?* Her research sought to analyse

the concept of human personhood within the legal context. Emphasis was placed on the origins and purpose of the 'born alive rule' and interrogated its "contemporary relevance as a legal threshold for human personhood".

"This LLM degree has tested my commitment and perseverance. I have managed to complete my mini dissertation in the midst of tremendous personal and professional pressure. I feel a sense of accomplishment and personal satisfaction," said Ms Pillay.

Ms Amod said accomplishing her LLB degree after eight years

of part-time studying given her "a sense of achievement and increased self-worth".

To those who are permanently employed and contemplating a career in Law, Ms Amod said: "Do not give up! I took a few semesters off for various reasons, and regretted stretching out my studies. It is very difficult though – working fulltime and studying part-time takes quite a bit of discipline. I was very lucky in that I had the full support of my parents, the rest of my family and my colleagues who encouraged me to persevere every time I wanted to throw in the towel. I am forever indebted to them."



Ms Rani Pillay and Ms Razia Amod.

RESEARCH ON DIAMOND LAW earns PhD for staff member

Doctoral research by Senior Law Lecturer, Dr Fikile Portia Ndlovu on South Africa's Diamond Law will be converted into a book for publication.

WORDS: NEESHA MAHARAJ

Dr Ndlovu's research dissertation, *An Analytical Study of the Regulation of South African Diamond Trade from 1994 to 2009 with Reference to Aspects of the 1996 Constitution* identified an international and national trend to adopt "humane practices" in the diamond trade process. Dr Ndlovu said she also discovered that where good leadership existed, laws that governed a country's mineral resources were adhered to and this avoided the manipulation of a country's mineral wealth.

"The PhD has been a huge personal development tool. I will have become a far better academic ...it is a new beginning, a journey that has been long, made me face myself and find ways to be the best I can be. I can honestly say that I am changed by the experience," said Ms Ndlovu.

Inspired by academics in Law such as Professor Managay Reddi, Dr Edith Mnene; and former President, Mr Nelson Mandela and Dr Mamphe Ramphele, Dr



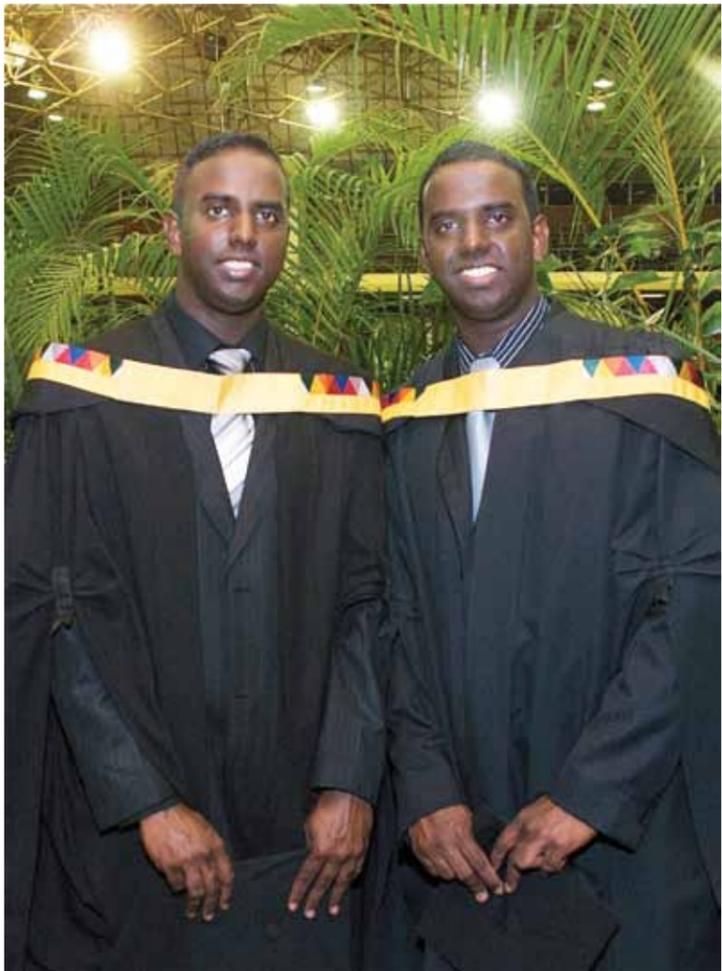
Dr Fikile Portia Ndlovu.

Ndlovu's message to other PhD Law candidates was to never give up during the PhD journey which could be a somewhat arduous journey. "Take everything you can out of the long, lonely and sometimes difficult journey, it is worth it. Mostly never give up. It is your choice, the end will come as night is followed by day," added Dr Ndlovu.

TWINS ARE TOPS

Twenty- one year old twins Messrs Anthony and Jude Govender graduated with an honours degree in Engineering.

WORDS: INDU MOODLEY



Messrs Anthony and Jude Govender.

Anthony received his degree *summa cum laude* whilst Jude earned his degree *cum laude*.

This accolade adds to the twins' numerous certificates of merit and Dean's commendations. Anthony attained the Dean's commendation in every semester, finishing first in his class.

"Having completed the degree one begins to appreciate the immense contribution of Engineers to society, which no society can be without," said Anthony.

They attribute their success to systematic hard work and the fact that they were both passionate about science and engineering-related topics from an early age. The twins also believe that the positive influence of their father, a retired artisan, and mother, a logistics manager, played an important role in their achievement.

"The four year study programme was both intensive and exciting. We were fortunate to have knowledgeable and passionate lecturers in the School of Mechanical Engineering, who made the experience both interesting and interactive," said Jude.

They hope to make a substantial contribution to the field of Mechanical Engineering and to play a role in solving the many problems facing the industry in South Africa.

Anthony is presently working in the power generation industry and plans to pursue a PhD in Turbo Machinery Design whilst Jude is in the petrochemical industry and plans to pursue a PhD in Finite Element Analysis.

The twins have a brother, Mark, who is in his 3rd year of study in the Faculty of Law. They share the same interests: in their spare time they are voracious readers, they collect stamps and coins, play cricket and go fishing.

TOP LAW STUDENT is proud of her success

The honour of best final year law student for the 2009 academic year went to Ms Bhavna Ramji who received her Bachelor of Law degree *summa cum laude* on April 22.

WORDS: NEESHA MAHARAJ

For Ms Ramji, the recipe for academic success is nothing more than hard work and consistent study. A Candidate Attorney at Bowman Gilfillan, she chose a career in law as it matched her personality – she admits to being a tad bit opinionated – and it blended in with her love for English, history and reading.

Ms Ramji believes judicial independence and transformation of the judiciary are two areas of law that need to be addressed in South Africa if it is to serve

citizens. "It is dangerous to have powerful people out there who market these two concepts as mutually exclusive – that is, that one (of the concepts) must give way in order for the other to even exist," she said.

A matter of concern for Ms Ramji is the access to justice for both poor and working class people. She said while excellent judgments were handed down; well-meaning legislation had been passed; and commissions set up to investigate legal matters, the majority of people



Ms Bhavna Ramji.

slipped through "the cracks in the system".

Ms Ramji considers her participation in the All Africa Human Rights Moot Court Competition where her team secured third place as a highlight of her years studying at law school.

Her advice to current and prospective law students who are contemplating a career in law is to keep up with the daily volume of work, read extensively and balance this out with non-academic activities.

PhD GRADUATE passionate about conservation

Wildlife enthusiast, Dr Kirsten Wimberger received her PhD in Zoology on April 17.

WORDS: LUNGA MEMELA

Her thesis, titled *Wildlife rehabilitation in South Africa* focuses on animal welfare, human-animal conflict and conservation.

"We need to have better communication and support between nature conservation authorities, who are looking after the health of entire ecosystems, and wildlife rehabilitators, who are at the forefront of human-animal conflict, as rehabilitated animals are often those injured or orphaned from vehicle collisions, cat attacks and being taken out the wild for pets," she said.

The former research assistant for UKZN's Professor Colleen Downs, who suggested she pursue a PhD, completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Cape Town in Zoology and Archaeology; her Honours degree at the University of Pretoria; and a Masters degree at the University of the Witwatersrand.



Dr Kirsten Wimberger with friends and family.

She is currently conducting post-doctoral studies at the University of Fort Hare, studying the conservation ecology of the endangered samango monkey, *Cercopithecus mitis labiatus*, in Hogsback, Eastern Cape.

She hopes that more students take up a career in Zoology, so that they can help ensure the

health and prosperity of South Africa's wildlife and indigenous habitats. She quotes an American Indian saying: "When all the trees have been cut down, when all the animals have been hunted, when all the waters are polluted, when all the air is unsafe to breathe, only then will you discover you cannot eat money."

THE UKZNDABA TEAM

Nomonde Mbadi – Executive Director; Smita Maharaj – Director: Communications; Deanne Collins – Publications Manager; Neesha Maharaj – Journalist; Lunga Memela – Journalist; Vidhya Singh – Layout & Design. Photos in this issue by UKZN Audio-Visual, unless otherwise stated.

Produced by Corporate Relations. Tel: 031 260 1245/8668/2957 www.ukzn.ac.za