

Speech by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the UKZN Scholarships Award Ceremony

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Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning and
Chair of the Scholarships Committee - Professor Renuka
Vithal

Distinguished guests

Parents and Scholarship Award Recipients

In accepting the invitation to be part of this glorious occasion I thought of all the recipients, how fortunate they are, but most of all; how hard they have worked to be the chosen few of these Awards given in the name of the best cadres of our country. I then remembered what Erma Bombeck, the writer, once said:

When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left and could say, I used everything you gave me.

Programme Director, the scholarship award is one of the most important motivating techniques used to keep the spirit of education and training of students at the highest levels.

It is a gesture that symbolizes the good attitude and aptitude towards student development and encourages continuous learning and development and it is indeed very special as once stated by former President Nelson Mandela, who said: **“A good head and good heart are always a formidable combination. But when you add to that a literate tongue or pen, then you have something very special.”**

As I congratulate all the recipients, I also want to impress on them that these Awards extols them to begin a long journey that requires them to emulate and surpass the achievements Frene Ginwala; Zak Yacoob; Vincent Maphai and Pius Langa.

This is no easy feat at all, considering that:

- **FRENE GINWALA** was a journalist and a politician who was the first Speaker of the National Assembly

of South Africa from 1994 to 2004. An eminent individual who also served as the first chancellor of the University of KwaZulu-Natal from April 2005. She was also in exile with Mama Adelaide Tambo for many years.

The scholarship given in her name will positively impact in assisting the country to meet the Millennium Development Goal number 3 which priorities gender equality and woman empowerment.

- **ZAK YACOOB,** this is Justice Zakeria "Zac" Mohammed Yacoob who was born in 1948 and became blind at 16 months because of meningitis. He attended Durban's Arthur Blaxall School for the Blind from 1956 to 1966 and from 1967 to 1969 studied for a BA Degree and proceeded to complete an LLB in 1972 at the University College, Durban (now the University of KwaZulu-Natal).

A fearless fighter and a former Advocate that was respected and recognised by his peers in the Democratic Lawyers Association; Durban Detainees' Support Committee; Durban Housing Action Committee; Natal Indian Congress; United Democratic Front and the African National Congress.

A selfless individual always prepared to serve and assist as he did in the Independent Electoral Commission; the Society of Advocates of Natal; as the Chairperson of the South African National Council for the Blind and as a Chancellor of the University of Durban Westville.

To the top ranked Honours students who are the recipients of this Constitutional Court Judge Award; you have a long road to travel and a lot to accomplish, we will be watching you. Self-belief will carry you far. Zak Yacoob is a living testimony that

indeed one's background and circumstances do not necessarily determine one's future!

- **VINCENT MAPHAI**, an eminent scholar who graduated from UNISA with BA degree in 1975; completed a Bachelor of Philosophy and a Master's Degree in Philosophy (both cum laude) at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium. A holder of a PhD from the University of Natal. He also achieved an honours degree in international politics at UNISA and completed an advanced management programme at Harvard University.

Dr Vincent Maphai, a very humble individual who has published widely, both locally and internationally. Maphai is an acclaimed and recognised intellectual who has held fellowships at the Universities of Oxford; Harvard; Princeton and Stanford. From 1996 to 1998 a professor extraordinaire in the Department of Political Science at the University of South Africa (UNISA) who

joined the private sector in 1998 as Director at the South African Breweries; a non-executive director of Discovery Holdings Limited; Tongaat Hulett's and a Chairman of a Rand Mutual Assurance Company Limited. Appointed as a Chairman of the Presidential Review Commission, a body set up by then president Nelson Mandela to investigate government restructuring and service delivery and a host of other responsibilities including that of being a Chairman of the SABC as well as Council Chair of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

What this says to the Vincent Maphai Award recipients, is that your journey has just begun!!

- **PIUS LANGA**, born in March 1939 and passed on two months ago. a self-taught giant who when employed in a very junior position in court decided that he deserved better. From humble beginnings as a court interpreter and messenger, he defied the many obstacles that the racist system placed in his

way, and that of the majority of his fellow South Africans, to become an eminent member of the Bar.

In recognition of all the good work and correct ethos, in 1994, the then President of our new democracy, Hon Nelson Mandela appointed him as one of the 11 founding members of the Constitutional Court where in 2005 he was promoted to Chief Justice.

This revered law man was described by President Jacob Zuma as *'a freedom fighter and an accomplished jurist who dedicated his life to making South Africa a better place for all, especially the poor and downtrodden.'*

He said to have realized that the law could not be practiced in a vacuum in a society that was in bondage and thus put his legal expertise to good use, to rid this country of institutionalized racism and apartheid colonialism.

We thus say to the recipients of the Scholarship that has been named after this illustrious legal eagle that they should understand that our country has lost a giant and continue losing a generation of fearless Human Rights Lawyers that requires replacement. Chief Justice Pius Langa is a testimony of the maxim that says education is a powerful tool that can lead to greater opportunities and a better future, so follow in his bold and giant steps.

An unknown Poet once said: *Some lessons are painful, some are painless...but, all are priceless.*"

We are indeed all happy for these hard working Scholarship Award recipients and their proud parents; you are all truly blessed.

Programme Director; allow me to mention that this Scholarship Award process collaborates and compliments the awarding of bursaries to poor students

by the KwaZulu Natal Department of Health to pursue studies in fields of health sciences. The only difference is that upon completion, the users of public health care are guaranteed of better and quality health emanating from qualified recipients of our bursaries.

As we speak there are 348 students in South African Universities including this one who are bursary holders that have been issued by our Department.

The management of UKZN will agree with me when I implore more individuals and conglomerates to open up their purses and make a contribution as means to expand the number of the awardees and also accommodate those students with potential who come from the deep rural areas or poor background.

In my capacity as the MEC for Health in KwaZulu Natal, I would be falling in my duty if I do not utilise this platform to sincerely thank the management of this august University for the support they give to our Department. Together we are involved on various

learning, training and development programmes and dates a while back. Allow me to tabulate a few:

- We have a 4 year comprehensive Diploma that commenced in 1986 leading to Registration as a Nurse, General Psychiatry Community and Midwifery. For our College of Nursing to offer this programme one of the requirements of the South African Nursing Council (SANC) was that it must affiliate to a University. This has happened with UKZN and has enabled our College to educate and train approximately 5, 500 Professional Nurses and 2, 500 Specialist Nurses over this period of time.
- In 2002 with UKZN, we entered into a contractual agreement to annually train 200 Professional Nurses in **PRIMARY HEALTH CARE**. The training continues to this day and has since produced 2000 PHC qualified Professional Nurses.

- In 2009 our College of Nursing entered into a partnership agreement with the UKZN to train **Advanced Midwives** through the Atlantic Philanthropic Donor Funding awarded to the UKZN. To date 195 Advanced Midwives have graduated with another 43 completing at the end of 2014 and this has benefitted mainly the rural districts where there is a shortage of Advanced Midwives and positively impacted in our efforts to reduce the maternal mortality rate.
- We also have an MOU with the UKZN that has resulted in 396 **Nutritional Advisors** trained and graduating in 2013 with an additional 170 currently enrolled at the University.
- Even though the Memorandum of Understanding is still to be finalised, we already have 30 **Physiotherapy Technician (PTT)** currently studying at UKZN.

- Again, with MOU still pending UKZN has offered 16 **Occupational Therapy Technician (OTT)** training and they all graduated in 2011. UKZN has agreed to another intake of 31 expected to start training before the end of this year (2013).

In our appreciation we say; a true African University in the African soil, serious about Africa's development.

To all the students who have received assistants to pursue their dreams and specifically to the chosen few that this assembly is about, we say, derive strength and wisdom Mahatma Ghandi, the Philosopher who said:

"...All of your scholarships, all your study of Shakespeare and Wordsworth would be vain if at the same time you did not build your character and attain mastery over your thoughts and your actions..."

Good luck in your studies

I thank you.