

#tag

UNIZULU



UNIVERSITY OF
ZULULAND

#News4UsByUs

May - July 2016

GRAND SLAM FOR GLAM:

Ace students bags
20 distinctions, 8
merits

STUDENTS BY DAY, PSD STAFF BY NIGHT:

How two security
officers qualified

FROM DOMESTIC WORKER TO BSC GRADUATE

Carving his future with a pen



#EditorialComment

This issue of UNIZULU #Tag has been dubbed as the graduation edition. This is because the majority of stories covered on this issue have to do with graduation in one way or another.

Graduation is really hard to ignore because it is one of the highlight events in any University's calendar. Students come to the University for one thing and that is to be educated.

The occasion marks that important period in the life of every student when the institution affirms that the student has indeed been educated and is ready to venture to the outside world.

Graduations at UNIZULU are very special occasions where people from all walks of life congregate at the iconic King Bhekuzulu Hall to honour and celebrate with the thousands of graduates who have "made it". The majority of the UNIZULU students come from poor backgrounds and thus climb onto the graduation stage having overcome many hurdles.

To them the day represents the start of a better life.

We chose a few stories that best demonstrate how hard work will always yield good results. We thank the individuals who agreed to share their stories. They did this with the realisation that such stories do serve as an inspiration to the current crop of students.

May the story about the two staff members who graduated with qualifications in Education serve as inspiration to students juggling both work and studying, that it can be done.

We also hope that the story about the domestic worker who graduated with a BSc will serve to inspire those students facing financial difficulties and other personal problems to never give up.

Glamorous Kubheka's 20 distinctions should encourage other students to always strive for excellence.

Indeed it always seems impossible until it's done as our graduates prove. We are proud of our graduates and wish them well for the future.

Happy reading!

Editorial Team

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Contributors

Siyabonga Myeni and Nompumelo Kubheka.

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Bam! Glam bags 20 distinctions

Twenty distinctions, eight merits and one pass! That is how the impressive academic record of Nompumelelo Glamorious Kubheka reads.

At first glance, Glam, as she is popularly known by her peers, comes across like any ordinary and bubbly 21-year-old student on campus. However after engagements with her it is not easy to miss the intelligent but humble side to this Communications Science student.

While the impressive record may tempt even the most humble people to start blowing their own horns and justifiably so, this is not the case with Glam.

In fact she chooses to credit everyone and everything else but herself for her achievements. A deeply spiritual being, she believes her faith has kept her grounded and also bred success.

When pressed on her achievements, she concedes that she had to work extra hard to achieve the results.

“The problem with many of us is that we do not plan and that is what hurts our chances of progressing successfully,” she says firmly.

Even then she attributes her hard work and proper planning to somebody else. When she came to campus she was lucky enough

to have someone, a staff member, advising her on the importance of planning carefully.

“Sis’ Phakamile pushed me. She told me that I have the potential and I just had to plan properly. She told me that I have 24 hours in a day and therefore should make sure that I use it well but also have time to rest”.

She also had to make some personal sacrifices which included ditching the choir which she was a member of in 2013 and 2014. “The choir is a module on its own and so it takes a lot of one’s time”.

While she makes it look easy, Glam is quick to point out there was a lot of hard work and that it wasn’t always smooth sailing.

“English gave me sleepless nights,” she says. She traces her hardwork ethic to her high schooldays when she worked extra hard to improve.

“At primary I was one of the best pupils, but from Grade 8 in high school I started to struggle a bit. While in Grade 11 I scored 31% for Physics I swore never to get marks that low again. I had to apply to universities with that report and got rejected by and I again swore that if I got the opportunity, I will work very hard”.

She was accepted to UNIZULU and has been a top performing student ever since.



Jubilation after graduation: Not only did Nompumelelo Kubheka walk out of the graduation hall with her degree certificate in hand but she was also given a brand new laptop as a prize for being one of the top achievers.

“The problem with many of us is that we do not plan and that is what hurts our chances of progressing successfully”

In 2014 she was chosen as one of the 21 participants in the Future Journalists Programme at Rhodes University. This was attended by a selected students from Universities such as DUT, Cape Peninsula, Fort Hare TUT, and others.

What’s next for her now? Currently Glam is pursuing

an honours degree at UNIZULU but hopes to pursue her Masters abroad. “If I do get an opportunity to go overseas I will grab it”.

She also hopes to venture into lecturing in the near future. Having already shown great love for academic work, she is no doubt well on her way to achieving her dreams.

Domestic worker beats odds, graduates

If you are looking for living proof that determination trumps adversity, then look no further than 27-year-old domestic worker Zanele Sibiya.

In May Zanele graduated with a BSc degree in Physics and Electronics at the University of Zululand following many years of sweat and tears.

Looking back to her graduation day she says: “I felt tears welling up in my eyes. I couldn’t believe that after all the hardship I had been through I was finally graduating”.

It took Sibiya six hard years to finally don the graduation gown as her journey had been delayed by many hurdles including severe health complications, financial strain and motherhood.

However her strong resolve saw her through this. In fact, she says she has always been determined from an early age. “I grew up under very tough conditions in a big family, and I was determined to improve life at home” says Sibiya who has nine siblings.

Back at high school she had to work part time as a hairdresser so she could



Zanele Sibiya was joined by her mother, also a domestic worker as she graduated with a BSc degree following many years of hardship characterised by ill-health and poor finances. She credits her mother for the success she has enjoyed in life

save enough money to go to a ‘better school’.

“I knew back then that to make it to University I needed a bursary and to do that I had to get good

grades at school and that to achieve that I needed to find a good school”.

From Grade 9 she joined Khula High School in eSikhaleni after she had

saved enough for transport and school fees.

Things were looking up and the results showed as in Matric she was able to get an A for Mathematics

with BSc

“I grew up under very tough conditions in a big family, and I was determined to improve life at home” says Sibiya who has nine siblings.

(SG). However bursaries were hard to find and in 2008 she took a gap year as she saved up for University.

UNIZULU’s KwaDlangezwa Campus was the natural choice because of its proximity to her home. Eventually in 2009, having convinced her domestic worker mother to also take out a loan, she enrolled at the University.

While studies were partly funded by the National Students Financial Aid Scheme, this was never enough and in 2010 she had to find a job. This is how she started as a part time domestic worker.

In 2011 while in her third year, things took a turn for the worse as Sibiya started getting ill and was diagnosed with liver complications.

That meant in May of that year she could not write one of her modules while she had poorly prepared for the others she wrote.

Later that year she gave birth to twins, who

were born two months prematurely.

“After the twins were born I started getting very ill and I was transported to the King Albert Luthuli in Durban. I did not see them for a month”.

However she says a procedure to deal with her liver complications resulted in a doctor erroneously perforating her small intestines. She had to undergo an eight hour emergency surgery. More complications followed after the surgery causing her an even longer than anticipated hospital stay. Being in and out of hospital in 2012 meant she couldn’t concentrate on her studies.

With two babies to feed, money also became a priority and that is when she landed a job as a domestic worker to Dr Zanele Bikitsha, a medical doctor.

“Dr Bikitsha has been a huge blessing in my life. She supported me through everything and understood



Zanele Sibiya is now to find a job related to her BSc degree.

when I had to go attend lectures. Even when the twins were ill I would consult her”.

In 2013 she was back to do the remaining four modules. She passed three and failed one. “I applied for a special exam and still did not do well.

By that time I got so disappointed that I decided to take another gap year in 2014. In fact I wanted to quit and forget all about the degree”.

In 2015 she decided to give it one more time and passed. It was a moment she had been waiting for all her life.

“Even though I haven’t found a job yet, I was very happy especially as my mother was there to witness my graduation.

What made it even sweeter is knowing I had overcome many odds”

All she wants now is to get a job as an engineer.

Future Secured

Security officers finally realise dream of becoming teachers.

The tale of two security officers on their way to becoming teachers. We celebrate Two security officers, attached to PSD, received their qualifications in education. They tell of their pain and perseverance of having to study, take care of the families and work fulltime

BHEKI MBANJWA

On a cool Tuesday morning in May Sizakele Nkalana and Phumzile Dlamini walked into the gates of the University of Zululand's KwaDlangezwa Campus with an extra spring on their step.

While their colleagues at the University's Protective Services Department (PSD) were already hard at work - ensuring that hordes of people who had come for the second day of the week long graduation ceremony were safe and that everything was orderly - the two middle-aged women were not bothered by all that.

Rather than walking into their place of work, on that day the two women were walking into an institution which had moulded them into qualified teachers and in the process helped transform their lives.

On that day, they had swapped their security officers' uniforms for graduation gowns and their work shoes for high heels as they were both

Photo: Sphamandla Gumede



Security Officers Phumzile Dlamini and Sizakele Nkalana share a light moment during one of their shifts. Both women graduated at the University of Zululand in May this year

to graduate in various disciplines offered by the Faculty of Education. The day in which their hard work and sleepless nights were to finally pay off had finally arrive.

Later that day, Nkalana

(40) graduated with a degree in B.Ed Foundation Phase degree while her colleague Dlamini, (47) earned the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). In tow were close family members who came to join in the celebrations

and enjoy the day with the two women.

Later on UNIZULU #Tag spoke to these remarkable women about their journey to success.

Here are their stories:



Sizakele Nkalana

Sizakele Nkalana:

Since January 2008, the 40-year-old mother of one has worked as a security guard at UNIZULU.

“Before coming to work here (UNIZULU) I already had a Travel and Tourism Diploma from a private college. However, after not finding employment in the tourism sector, I decided to swallow my pride and I enrolled for training as a security officer. After that I landed a job at UNIZULU,” she says.

Despite her tourism qualification having done little to secure her employment, Nkalana was not about to give up. In fact working at an educational institution buoyed her to study further.

In 2012, she did exactly that and enrolled for the full-time B.Ed programme. While she managed to

finish the degree in four years, she quickly points out that it wasn't as easy as it now seems.

“Sometimes I would knock off work at 6am after doing night shift and head straight to class. There were times when I couldn't attend lectures because I also had chores to do at home”.

She credits her husband, lecturers and fellow foundation students for making life easier for her.

“My husband was very supportive, he would come and fetch me from University while some of the time he was the one left to look after our child. The lecturers were very encouraging and I thank them so much”. Nkalana also speaks very fondly of her classmates, saying while some of them were half her age, they had developed a close bond with her.

“I also found myself being a mother figure to some of these kids. They respected me very much and they also helped keep me up to speed, especially when I could not attend due to work commitments.”

With her, what's next for her now? “As they say life begins at 40 and it is only beginning for me. I am definitely going to be registering for my Honours degree and I will also try to find a job as a teacher.”



Phumzile Dlamini

Phumzile Dlamini:

Just like her colleague, Dlamini says studying while working full-time was a road fraught with difficulties.

“In some instances I would end up taking a nap in my car while waiting for classes because there was no time to go home and rest after doing the night shift. That car had become everything, there isn't a book you won't find in there, it's more of a library than a car,” she said bursting into laughter.

Things got so tough for Dlamini that on more than one occasion she thought of quitting studying. “At one stage I had to take care of my grandchild, who at that time was two weeks old and my studies were affected,” she recalls. However, the love she has for teaching kept her going.

She has had a couple

of stints as a substitute teacher, the first one was after she matriculated. “I have always loved teaching, I think it also has to do with the fact that my mother is a teacher, although she is retired now. So after passing matric in 1995, albeit without any qualification, I taught at a primary school for three years”.

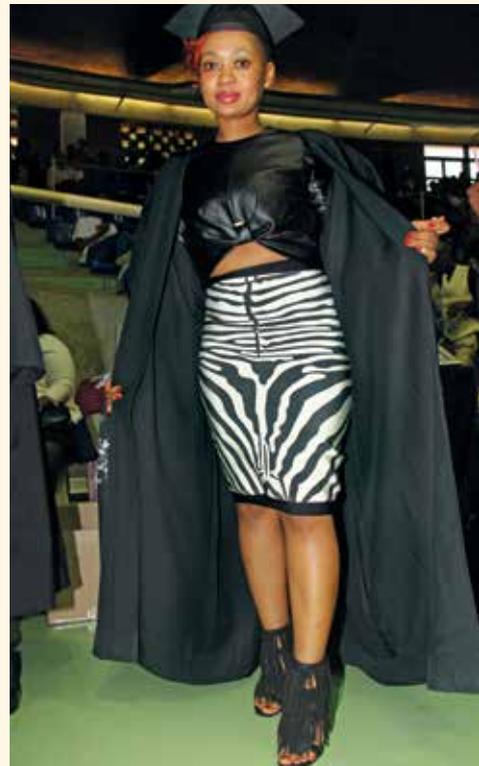
Dlamini then held various jobs to make ends meet. She also enrolled for a fashion design course. In 2003 she came to UNIZULU and enrolled for a degree in Correctional Studies.

“Even then what I really wanted to do was a degree in Education, but someone persuaded me otherwise” In 2008 she was back into teaching, as a substitute teacher, at Mahlabathini High School in Ulundi.

A year later she joined the University of Zululand as a security officer. “Working here really encouraged me to study further”. In 2014 she decided to enrol for the PGCE, which she completed last year. “I had to do it over two years because of my personal circumstances.” Dlamini, a mother of three and grandmother of two was grateful to her family for the support she got.

“My husband is a person who does not show emotions most of the time. But on graduation day I could tell he was very happy, he could not hide it even if he tried.

#Graduation 2016



#Graduation 2016



There is a new brand of student on campus, one who will not succumb to peer pressure or conform to norms when it comes to sexual intercourse, writes **SIYABONGA MYENI.**

Earlier this year, the UNIZULU Community witnessed a colourful parade by a group of virgins, clad in traditional Zulu attire, who joyfully marched around the main campus.

While the mood was a jovial one, the message being relayed was more earnest.

This group of female students had decided to take a stand against the spread of HIV/Aids by encouraging fellow students to abstain from sexual intercourse.

During the march songs of praise and self-empowerment were sung by the group determined to raise awareness and to make it clear that sex before marriage is a norm they will not conform to.

“My virginity is



Members of the Ubuhle Besizwe students embarked on an HIV/Aids awareness programme on Campus. The group of maidens marched at the University of Zululand's KwaDlangezwa campus as they sought to encourage fellow students to abstain from sex. The awareness programme was held under the theme: “The role of culture in preventing HIV and Aids”

Apart from abstinence from sex, the Ubuhlebesizwe society also advocates for

morality and self-respect. Members of the society are determined to restore

these values which they believe to have been eroded with the passing of time.

my pride”



“We want people to be proud of being virgins despite living in a society where some people are repulsed by it,” said 23-year-old Ntokozo

Xulu, the chairperson of Ubuhlebesizwe.

In a bid to achieve these objectives, the society convenes talk-shows

“We want people to be proud of being virgins despite living in a society where some people are repulsed by it”

where students discuss virginity and self-empowerment issues.

The society also holds camps every month where they educate each other on various issues and undergo virginity testing conducted by an elder.

Once a year in September the society members embark on an annual trip to King Goodwill Zwelithini’s Nyokeni Palace in Nongoma for the annual Umkhosi Womhlanga (Reed Dance).

However the progress is slow with the work being hampered by a lack of resources.

The group is currently supported by the HIV/AIDS society but is now gunning for registration as an independent entity.

Registering as an independent society has not been feasible as the group which had been unable to meet some of the requirements which included meeting the required membership threshold.

Athabile Boyce (20), a member of the society, said that 70 members were needed in order to register Ubuhlebesizwe independently.

The slow growth in membership numbers was partially due to girls being fearful and embarrassed of being virgins in today’s society, added Ntokozo.

The lack of resources also hampers the monthly camps held by the society.

“Although camping is a lot of fun, it is not easy because we have small tents. The university does not fund societies that are not registered,” the members said.

However there is now hope. Since the march, a multitude of students jumped on board.

Now with the requirements having been met Ubuhlebesizwe hopes to obtain independency which will equip the group with enough resources to make the change they so adamantly seek on campus and in society in general.

Alumnus scores a first in Agriculture

SIHLE MABASO

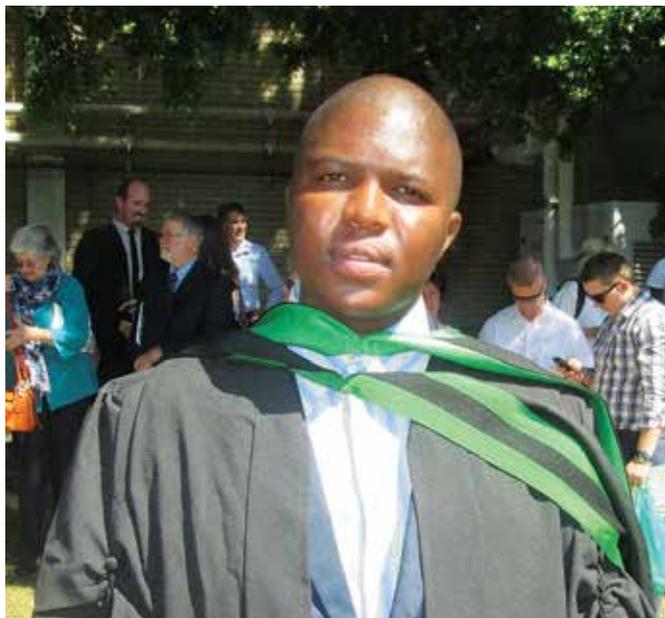
UNIZULU Alumnus Tshepo Morokong and four other people, have made history by becoming the first crop of students to graduate with an MSc degree in Sustainable Agriculture.

Although he obtained the MSc degree from Stellenbosch University, Morokong says it was the University of Zululand that laid the foundation.

It was in 2012 that he got his first qualification: the BSc degree in Agribusiness Management. That then paved a way for many golden opportunities that were to come his way.

In the same year he received a FASSET scholarship aimed at training the first group of 96 graduates in South Africa to become Business Analysts.

“This initiative was a success and at the end of the program, I received a Post-graduate certificate in Sustainable Business Modelling from Rhodes University. Whilst studying at Rhodes University, I was also working as a Trainee Business Analyst at Nedbank,” he recalls.



Tshepo Morokong is among the first crop of South Africans to graduate with an MSc degree in Agriculture

Morokong who now works as a researcher in Pretoria says he would love to give back to the University of Zululand saying the University taught him patience, perseverance and making the most out of the least.

In 2013 Morokong joined the National Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries as an agribusiness intern, but after a few months received another job offer at Conservation South Africa in Cape Town.

From 2013 until mid-2015 he worked as a Markets Assistant at Conservation

South Africa while he also received the South Africa Sustainable Agriculture scholarship which allowed him to further his studies at post-graduate level with the University of Stellenbosch.

“The programme consists of modules from science, humanities and economics, and touches

on a broad range of topics that deal with the complex problem of agricultural sustainability,” he adds

He proudly points out that he and the other four students completed the programme on time.

“I was really amazed and humbled by God’s grace, which carried me thorough the study programme,” he said

Morokong who now works as a researcher in Pretoria says he would love to give back to the University of Zululand saying the University taught him patience, perseverance and making the most out of the least.

“With consideration to my current exposure and involvement in the industry. The best form of giving would be to share my knowledge and experiences with the current students, which I strongly believe will make life a bit easier post graduating.

Another form of giving back would be if the University of Zululand could consider my application for PhD, so that I can publish extensively under the name of the University of Zululand.

More than just another degree

UNIZULU
#Tag writer
Siyabonga
Myeni has just
graduated with
an honours
degree (cum
laude), here he
reflects on his
journey.

My first graduation was bittersweet in the sense that I achieved what was once a dream but had lost a friend that was supposed to graduate with me. It was a day full of bliss, reassurance and serendipity. A day I would not have realized were it not for my resilient mother.

I recall walking into Bhekuzulu Hall filled with excitement while reflecting on the journey I endured to see the light of that day. I also reflected on how I had blossomed from the shy antisocial fresher who matriculated from Empangeni High School in 2010.

These flashbacks took me all the way to my first class as a Communication Science student taught by Dr Naidoo who inspires me to this day.

Overwhelmed by freedom on campus I spent several months gradually adapting, until I woke to songs of celebration one sultry morning.

I had witnessed graduates for the first time as a fresher. I was enthused to the point of setting a graduation alarm that would have went off three years later had my phone not gone haywire.

That morning was followed by sleepless nights and countless hours at the library, fuelled by unwavering desire which resulted in my first graduation in 2015, as predicted.

The 9th of May 2016 marked my second milestone as I obtained my BA Honours degree with Cum Laude. Academically, it has been a jolly good four years, however the hard work is just starting as I am now an MBA student.

Although this will not be my last degree, it will bring me closer to the success prophesized upon me by my late grandfather.



Hashtag contributor Siyabonga Myeni is now pursuing a Masters degree after graduating with an Honours in Communication Science.

I want to represent ideas and possibilities. I want to be the investor as well as the investment.

Graduating has given me more than the degrees as the lessons learnt outside class were just as insightful as those learnt inside one.

I dealt with formidable challenges requiring self-discipline, forgiveness and resilience. The passing of my best friend as well as an admirable classmate

inflicted immeasurable pain but sharpened me to the point that I left no room for failure. Staying focused in such a dynamic context is not exactly a walk in the park either. Some return home with everything but a degree.

As far as advice is concerned, it all boils down to ambition. If you are ambitious, you will exhibit passion, effort and enthusiasm which seldom results in failure. It is also imperative to invest in yourself. You are your biggest investment in the unpredictable but exciting journey towards the big day as well as the rest of your life.

“I recall walking into Bhekuzulu Hall filled with excitement while reflecting on the journey I endured to see the light of that day”

Asavela seizing the moment

SIYABONGA MYENI

“Not all of us will find employment after graduating, it is wiser to take initiative by starting your own business”.

These are the words of Asavela Sicina (21) who went from selling fizzer sweets in high school to being the brains behind Bundu: one of the most successful entertainment events at the University of Zululand.

Born and raised in uMzimkhulu, on the KZN south coast, the multi-skilled businessman spent his high school years exploring a variety of business opportunities so as to cater for daily necessities such as pocket money.

In grade 8, Asavela decided to save the money he had to purchase two packets of fizzer sweets which gradually grew to several boxes.

In Grade 10, the young entrepreneur established a barber shop where he showcased his ability to pull off stylish haircuts.

In matric he began planning events something which included organizing functions and offering sound equipment for hire.

That was when he founded Bundu, the multi-faceted business that is making waves on campus, uMzimkhulu as well as Port Shepstone.

Bundu comprises a meat grilling business, a tuck shop, events planning and the printing of promotional t-shirts.

The Bundu launch event at UNIZULU saw the likes of Gagasi FM’s DJ Flair showing up to have a good time. Asavela explains that his association with Flair gave him free advertising in radio stations like uKhozi FM.

The success of the Bundu launch led Asavela to greener pastures including hosting bigger events and featuring prominent entertainment figures like DJ Bongz as well as one of the country’s top rappers, Duncan.

The entrepreneur is also pursuing a B.Com Accounting Science degree, balancing school and business with discipline and time-management.

It took dedication for Asavela to get this far in the callous world of business. “It isn’t easy stepping out of your comfort zone but it is important to do so if you want to start a business. There were times when I had to go door-to-door just to market my business,” he says. Like many businessmen, Asavela asserts that the lack of capital was the biggest challenge he encountered. “People may have great ideas but without capital or a plan to generate capital, those ideas will remain ideas”.



From humble beginnings: Asavela Sicina is a 21 year old entrepreneur who is building his business empire having started small by just selling sweets.

Asavela advises aspiring business owners to identify a gap in the market before establishing a business that may already exist. “In 2015 there was a gap between students and entertainment because there was no SRC.

Bundu filled that gap by providing entertainment for students. If there’s no gap there’s no business,” he said.

Asavela plans to establish

Bundu Records to showcase the talent he works with.

He also hopes to expand his business beyond entertainment, aiming to influence people throughout KZN.

For now, UNIZULU students should keep their eyes open for Bundu-Chillas which will provide food, entertainment and bookings for those who wish to have social functions.

Everybody Stand Up:

There's a new comedian in town

NOMPUMELELO KUBHEKA

He may seem like an ordinary third year student or an ordinary guy who cracks up jokes to make people laugh but Mmangaliso or 'some blaq guy' as he jokingly claims his white audience know him to be, is far from being ordinary.

He has been through stumbling blocks in life but has used comedy to conquer them all.

Mmangaliso Mhlongo, a 27 year old Durbanite says he uses comedy as a 'filtering process' and believes that laughter heals. He says it has worked for him throughout challenges he has faced in life which include being raised by a single divorced mother who sold clothes on the streets in order to provide for their family.

Financial strains saw him de-registering after his second year at the University of Pretoria in 2009.

He has not only used comedy to laugh at his problems but it has become his second full time activity after his studies. He is now a professional Stand Up comedian and the salary he earns from comedy helps provide for his 15-month-old son, Nkosenhle.

From as early as Grade 7 Mmangaliso knew that he wanted to be a comedian. "I've always been that talkative child at school who'd crack up jokes all the time". However growing up from a religious family

made him think that it was impossible to be both a comedian and a servant of God.

He later found a creative way to infuse religion into his comedy, a trait still evident in his performances even today.

His journey as a semi-professional comedian began in 2013 after he was voted the best newcomer at a comedy competition held in Durban. He further entered another competition titled *Comediology Talent Search* where he won best newcomer in English Comedy. That title also landed him a trip to Gold Reef City where he got an opportunity to perform with Trevor Gumbi, Mark Lottering and Skhumba Hlophe.

After enrolling at the University of Zululand in 2014, Mmangaliso together with his mentor Gqonqa, started comedy shows at UNIZULU.

Two years after his career had started, Mmangaliso had opportunities to perform with and emceed for other big comedians such as Loyiso Gola, Justice Kubheka, Felix Hlophe, Kagiso Lediga, Kedibone Mulaudzi and Barry Hilton on different shows.

Seeing his comedy shows becoming a success at UNIZULU, he then decided to aim bigger and started Open Mic Comedy shows at Umfolozi Casino earlier this



Mmangaliso Mhlongo, the third year B.Ed student is making waves in comedy circles. He has already performed alongside the country's comedians.

year, whereby he gives other UNIZULU artists a platform to showcase their talents.

He has also recently opened for his other mentor, Simphiwe Shembe, on his One Man Show. Shembe has trusted Mmangaliso's talent enough to ask him to emcee for his entire tour.

Mmangaliso plans to do his One Man Show titled 'Mama's boy' later this year. As the title of the show suggests, he will talk mostly about his mother, his upbringing, life in general and most importantly, the role God has played in his life.

His biggest career aspiration is to be an international comedian just like his role

model Trevor Noah. "I want to take comedy as far as I can. I am not gonna quit comedy till the day I share a stage with Trevor".

With his Bachelor of Education he plans to be a teacher by day and then continue doing comedy gigs at night.

His mother and his son are his biggest motivations in life. He works hard each day to make his comedy career a success in order to make them proud and also so that he can be a role model to his son.

As an artist who loves what he does and 'chases his dream while money follows' he truly has a bright future ahead of him.



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