



# THE MERCURY TERTIARY $\Psi \pi$ TIMES

## Legendary music teacher honoured during Lecture

THE life and times of the late Professor Khabi Vivian Mngoma, an influential music legend and former lecturer of the University of Zululand (UNIZULU), were celebrated through a memorial lecture at the King Bhekuzulu Hall recently.

The event came at an opportune time as it coincided with the birth date of Prof Mngoma, who was born on November 18, 1922. The year 2019 also marks 20 years since the passing of the musical giant on December 21, 1999.

Even after two decades since Prof Mngoma's passing, he is still revered by many for his immense contribution to the South African music fraternity. He founded and ran numerous music programmes through his teachings, music performances and concerts. His philosophy was that local music should reflect both African and Western elements, which he ensured to incorporate in his teachings.

It was a great honour for UNIZULU to organise this lecture as the late legend assumed his last position as Head of Music at the university. During his time in the institution, he founded the Music Department in 1975. He continued to take strides in the musical sphere, starting the Khongisa Youth Centre for the Performing Arts in 1976 and the Ford Choirs in Contest (now Old Mutual National Choir Festival) in 1977. Earlier, he had established the Ionian Music Society in 1960 and Ionian Youth Orchestra in 1969.

The memorial lecture was presented by Prof Nyameko Barney Pitjana, a theologian, lawyer and activist, with the respondent being Prof Zoliswa Twani, the Director of the Miriam Makeba Centre of Performing Arts at the University of Fort Hare.

Prof Pitjana titled his lecture "Khabi V Mngoma: Community Builder. The Role of Music in Intellectual Development and Social Cohesion".

According to him, music played various roles in the black society. "It was not



Prof Siphoswe Seepe, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Institutional Support, and Prof Xoliswa Mtsoe, UNIZULU Vice-Chancellor, welcomed the guest speakers and delivered the welcome note at the Prof Mngoma Memorial Lecture, respectively.

just in church that music was made. Nor was it at formal events as in choir competitions or renditions by choirs at social events. It was also a way in which communities, formed, shaped and reshaped themselves. It was the means by which communities expressed their common or shared joy and pain or celebration or lament. At times, however, music brought people together in celebration at rugby

matches as a way of encouragement to the team, a kind of war cry. Even that brought people together in a common consciousness," he said.

Prof Mngoma's work with choirs in Soweto, Johannesburg, corroborates Prof Pitjana's theory. The legend aspired to improve the quality of voices that formed the choirs in townships. This led to his establishment of choirs and festivals in



Theologian, lawyer and activist Prof Nyameko Barney Pitjana and University of Fort Hare's Director of the Miriam Makeba Centre of Performing Arts Prof Zoliswa Twani, who presented and responded at Prof Khabi Mngoma's Memorial Lecture, respectively.

the township at the time.

At the core of the music enthusiast's heart, Prof Pitjana reckoned, was instilling the principle of harmonious singing; for choristers to understand that they were a part of a whole. He taught them that in music, one had to have an ear to listen to their own tone, the tones of other choir members, as well as the imagination to understand what the people

who are listening must be hearing. This notion can be likened to that of social cohesion, where one has to embrace their individualism, while also fitting into an entire community.

In her response, Prof Twani concurred with Prof Pitjana, adding that Prof Mngoma could also be described as an attuned leader considering how he cultivated and constructed music as an

academic discipline in African universities.

Borrowing from Dr Reuel Khoza's description, she said an attuned leader is preoccupied with their connectedness with the community. They are compassionate, have integrity, humility, reasonableness and are able to determine effectiveness based on knowledgeability. These are attributes, she affirmed, Prof Mngoma possessed.

## Providing quality education for 60 years and counting

THE year 2020 will mark a notable milestone for the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) when it will celebrate its 60th anniversary.

The university was established in 1960 as a constituent college academically affiliated to the University of South Africa. From a student intake of 41 in 1960, it now registers close to 17 000 students annually. The institution boasts having many of its graduates rising up to the highest ranks in various sectors. Among our alumni is Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng, Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo, who is also the current UNIZULU Chancellor, and Jeff Radebe, the former Minister of Energy.

In the past six decades, the university has gone through the leadership of six academics, three of whom are females. It has also appointed five chancellors.

The university's 60th celebration has been earmarked as a special period of reflection and repositioning for all the faculty deans. According to Professor Mncedisi Maphalala, the Dean of the Faculty of Education and a UNIZULU alumnus, the anniversary presents an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the milestones over the past six decades and "chart a way forward on how to continuously respond to the changing needs of students". Of the faculty's plans, he said: "The faculty needs to focus on producing more teachers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) subjects and Early Childhood Education as required by the education sector."

Prof Mogomme Masoga, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, shared the same sentiment, saying the 60-year anniversary is an occasion for the university to reimagine itself in terms of how it locates



The University of Zululand's KwaDlangezwa Campus.

itself within the broader higher education space. Within the Arts Faculty, he said the plan is to undertake a deep analysis on what it means to be a faculty of humanities and social sciences. All the various departments are going to embark on multiple projects as a way of celebrating the anniversary. The two annual conferences hosted by the faculty will also be around the 60-year anniversary theme.

For Prof Nokuthula Kunene, the Dean of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, 2020 will be a time to celebrate the faculty's accomplishments throughout the years.

"The faculty has grown from an average of two students annually to 3 698 in 2019. Our faculty is known nationally for demonstrating that it is possible to transform candidates coming from rural communities into suitable and sought-after candidates. We are proud to have fed such rare graduates to other science

postgraduate programmes in the country despite our disadvantaged background. At least 50% of the academic staff have PhDs. Therefore, (we are proud to say), it has been a productive 60 years for the Faculty of Science and Agriculture," she said.

In the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law, the Faculty Dean Prof Lorraine Greyling, said the focus will be on becoming a fully-fledged research faculty that cultivates research that benefits the community. In celebration of 60 years, each of the 62 staff in the faculty will present a paper or ongoing research during the annual faculty conference.

"We have also launched a student entrepreneurial start-up club for which we have planned extensive training programmes to assist students in contributing to the economy and living sustainable lives," Prof Greyling said.

## Research and Innovation Awards a means of bolstering research output

IN an effort to maintain esteemed scholars and a high calibre of researchers, the University of Zululand (UNIZULU), through its Research Committee, will recognise academics who have produced outstanding research work in 2018 at the sixth annual Research and Innovation Awards on Wednesday, November 27.

The ceremony will take place at the Premier Hotel in Richards Bay. Awards will be presented in six categories. They are Service and Development, Next Generation, Established Researchers, Departments, Special Categories, Research Entities (Chairs/RNAs/Centres) and Prestige Awards.

According to Chief Research Administration Officer Daniela Viljoen, the primary purpose of these prestigious awards is to boost staff morale and recognise the

commitment, hard work and impressive attitude that the scholars in the institution continue to display.

"A couple of years ago, we realised that researchers at the university worked so hard. They had so many publications and (supervised many) postgraduate students but they (were) not rewarded. Subsequently, we had a meeting to discuss what we could do to lift up their spirits and make them feel and see that they were appreciated (by the institution)," she said.

Viljoen said only research publications that were accredited by the Department of Higher Education (DHE) and published in the previous academic year were considered, as the current year is still in progress.

She added that the committee checked papers for each researcher, looking at how many units they had accumulated. Only researchers who met a benchmark of 1.5 units were put into consideration.

The DHE allocates one unit for each paper. However, it depends on the number of authors involved in the production of the paper. A co-written paper receives less units meaning, since one author receives one unit, the score of two authors is divided by two.

Viljoen said that for the first time in history, two staff members received two accreditations for their respective books.

She concluded that she was impressed by how the inception of the awards has improved research outputs and the number of publishers over the years.



The Department of Nanotechnology was named the best research department in the 2018 Research and Innovation Awards.