

# DOCTORS WITH PURPOSE

## UNMASKED

*Through the photographer's lens*

Doctors with purpose unmasked | Through the photographer's lens.

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DISCOVERY FOUNDATION AWARDS  
2020



# ABOUT THE DISCOVERY FOUNDATION

*Set up in 2006, the Discovery Foundation is an independent trust that aims to distribute R300 million in grants, over 20 years, towards the education and training of 500 healthcare specialists.*

The Discovery Foundation Awards honour and reward excellence in our country's healthcare sector. Award recipients receive grants in the form of scholarships, bursaries, research fellowships, and support for teaching and research institutions.

By supporting the training of specialists for rural areas, and the development of academic medicine and research centres, the Discovery Foundation hopes to increase the number of specialists available to adequately meet the country's healthcare needs.



DISCOVERY FOUNDATION AWARDS  
2020





# DR VINCENT MAPHAI

Chair of the Discovery Foundation

## Foreword

When I look back at the Discovery Foundation recipients of the past two years, and speculate about the future, I continue to be inspired by the commitment of medical professionals to their noble profession. The COVID-19 pandemic gave our doctors another reason to demonstrate their mettle, in a country that continues to face a shortage of healthcare workers. It reminds me of several health crises from which our country has emerged in recent decades. Yet, it is evident that we have slowly but surely created a pipeline of dedicated doctors who are determined to make a mark in our country.

What is also clear is that the future of healthcare is reliant on partnerships between the public, private and non-governmental sectors. Similar relationships are critical to achieving universal access to quality healthcare – a basic human right towards which we must aspire relentlessly. This is what the Discovery Foundation aims to achieve, by supporting the United Nations 2030 sustainability goal of bringing healthcare to as many people as possible.

The Foundation appreciates that this is not a simple exercise. Yet, data shows that improvement and progress is possible.

We have invested nearly R300 million in grants to support academic medicine through research, development and the training of nearly 500 (predominantly black and female) medical specialists in South Africa in the public sector.

These grants include scholarships, bursaries, research fellowships and support for teaching and research institutions to strengthen the country's healthcare workforce.

I am proud of the contribution that the Foundation has made towards this aim.

For example, Dr Sumy Thomas, who is on a secondment to Harvard Medical School, is undertaking research on the endocrine system of patients affected by HIV. The findings will be immensely invaluable to the 7.7 million South Africans on antiretroviral treatment. Sumy is a recipient of the Discovery Foundation MGH Fellowship Award for 2020/21 and will use her fellowship to focus on internal medicine in the public sector.

Every year, since 2013, a South African doctor working in the public sector is chosen for a year-long fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital, the largest teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School based in Boston in the United States. It is an opportunity of a lifetime for a doctor to learn from the world's top medical specialists and an opportunity to conduct cutting-edge clinical research.

Finally, Discovery Foundation Awards recipients are expected to service the public sector for at least two years after completing their training. It is noteworthy that more than 60 percent of our alumni continue working in the public sector even after their contractual requirement has lapsed. Many serve as academics, training new specialists. Long may they continue. I hope you enjoy reading their stories.

*Dr Maphai*

DISCOVERY FOUNDATION AWARDS  
2020

# RUTH LEWIN

Discovery's Head of  
Corporate Sustainability

Executive summary





When you read about the doctors featured in this book, I would appreciate you considering the context in which they have thrived, two years into a global pandemic. Many have lost loved ones and sacrificed their families while working long hours, yet maintaining their rigorous academic research programme. I hope we were able to capture their tenacity with the emotive content and photography that aims to highlight just how valuable their contribution to South African society is – and will be – in the future.

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought into stark reality the critical shortage of healthcare professionals in South Africa's public health sector. One of the most significant insights from this unexpected event was exposing and shining a light on healthcare systems globally. For South Africa, it was an indicator of our healthcare capabilities and an unveiling of what works, and what needs to work better.

But it also highlighted the impact of the work that is pushing us towards positive change.

I am pleased to see the long-term impact of the Discovery Foundation. With nearly 500 alumni to date, the Foundation fellows continue to fly the flag high. For example, Professor Ncoza Dlova is the first black female full professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's medical school in 71 years, while Professor Mushi Matjila is the head of the University of Cape Town's Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Professor Liesl Zühlke, a paediatric cardiologist and African leader in cardiovascular medicine, has been appointed the South African Medical Research Council Vice President, while Professor Lionel Green-Thompson is the Dean of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Medical School. Professor Tracey Naledi is the Deputy Dean of the Health Services Faculty of Health Sciences at UCT, and the Dean and Head of The School of Clinical Medicine at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

Several alumni are board members of the Academy of Science of South Africa, which honours and recognises the country's most outstanding and celebrated scholars. These include Professor Ntobeko Ntusi, cardiologist, professor of medicine and the Chair and Head of Medicine at UCT;

Professor Mosa Moshabela, associate professor and acting Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation at UKZN and Professor Salome Maswime, clinician, obstetrician and gynaecologist and Global Surgery lead at UCT. I could go on. It is important to note that the impact of these doctors' work is changing the landscape of our country's healthcare system for the better.

Through the Foundation, we have committed ourselves to the World Health Organization's Sustainable Development Goals and the South African government's National Development Plan that aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality and unemployment by 2030.

Thus, in our selection process of grants and awardees, we have considered an important aspect of the long-term vision by supporting postgraduates (especially PhD or doctoral support) study. One of the National Development Plan's enabling milestones is to ensure that skilled, technical, professional and managerial posts better reflect the country's racial, gender and disability makeup.

The awards highlighted in this book went to incredibly deserving healthcare professionals and institutions who have continued their ground-breaking work despite the challenges and setbacks of the past few years.

The Discovery Foundation shares the vision of an ideal landscape of medical professionals in South Africa that should have enough specialists for the country's population and features a demographic that is representative of the country across race and gender. Therefore, a big focus for us is the feminisation of the specialist sector, and it is an aim we are working towards with rigour.

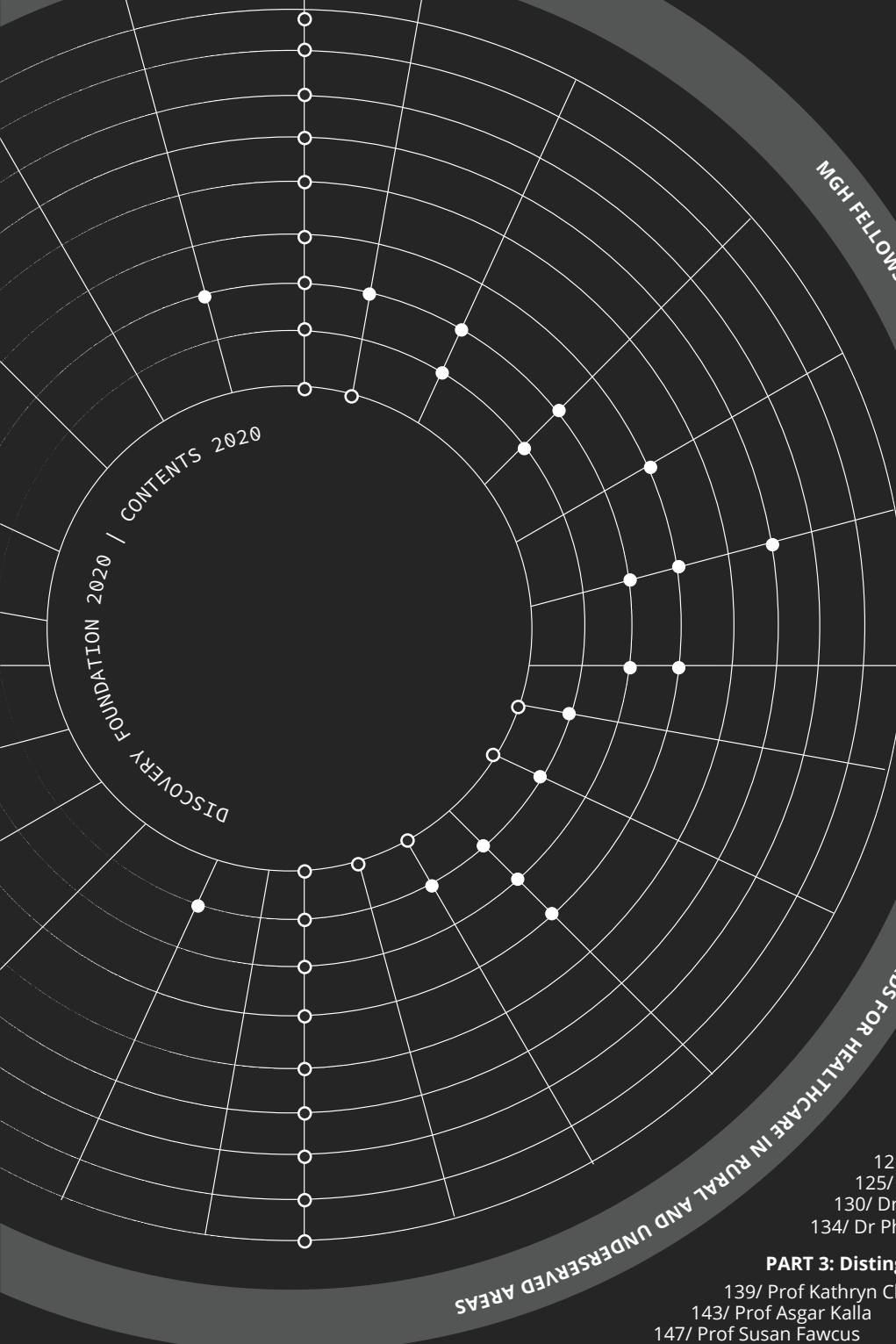
In the pages of this book, you will meet about 70 of the country's future leaders in healthcare. I hope you will be inspired by their journey. Huge congratulations to our esteemed recipients.

*Ruth*



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MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL  
FELLOWSHIP 2020

MASSACHUSETTS  
**GENERAL  
HOSPITAL  
FELLOWSHIP**



# Dr SUMY THOMAS

{MGH Award 2020/2021}

Deciphering the human  
puzzle from the inside out

*"Quite early on I was exposed to how difficult life can be for people starting out in South Africa, but how education can provide an equal opportunity," says Dr Teresa Sumy Thomas.*

As the 2020 and 2021 recipient of the prestigious Discovery Foundation MGH Fellowship, Dr Thomas will spend a year-long medical residency at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) in Boston, US. MGH is a clinical service and biomedical research facility and the largest teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School.

She will receive supervision from leading experts and gain exposure to the hospital's research environment.

## LOOKING FOR THE ANSWERS TO COMPLICATED CONDITIONS

Dr Thomas will be placed at the MGH metabolism unit in the division of endocrinology to figure out a complicated condition that has come up in her recent work. She makes the science sound simple, explaining that her research will explore how HIV and antiretroviral (ARV) medicine affect the endocrine system.

"This will address a need in the population of South Africa. We have an estimated 7.7 million people living with HIV – the largest pandemic in the world. While ARVs have helped give longevity to patients in the past decade, we are now seeing a larger number of patients at risk for cardiometabolic disease, including dysglycaemia (fluctuating blood glucose levels) and fatty liver disease, which could be a result of the virus itself or from ARV therapy. This area needs to be explored further," she says.







The main aspect of Dr Thomas' research is to study the reasons that ARV medicine and viruses promote glucose, cholesterol and hypertension abnormalities in patients. "It's a fairly new area of research, but I hope that it will allow us to work out how to target the right medicine for the right people," she says.

## BRINGING IT BACK HOME

As an endocrinologist, a much-needed specialty in the country, Dr Thomas will be able to support patients in the public sector. "I can bring this knowledge back to South Africa to enhance the care of patients and to continue research in this field. By being attuned to the needs of our population, I hope to generate relevant research and be involved in the training of specialists in years to come."

Dr Thomas adds that the fellowship opportunity is unparalleled in the medical field. "I realised that there was a knowledge gap, and it just so happened that Prof Steven Grinspoon, the Boston supervisor, was an organic fit."



**"And, as a lived experience, working abroad and seeing medicine in a different setting will be life-changing."**

*Learn more about this study and how Dr Thomas sees this opportunity.*



DISCOVERY FOUNDATION AWARDS  
2020

# DISCOVERY FOUNDATION

ACADEMIC

# FELLOWSHIP

# AWARDS



This award promotes research-focused training in academic medicine and aims to develop more clinician scientists to benefit healthcare in South Africa. It may also contribute towards funding a fellowship in clinical medicine.



ACADEMIC FELLOWSHIP  
AWARDS 2020







# DR DEIDRÉ MCPHERSON

{Academic Fellowship Awards}

“The cycle of violence needs to be broken”

*Dr Deidré McPherson, a qualified general surgeon, received a Discovery Foundation Award in 2018 to sub-specialise in trauma surgery. In 2020, she received an Academic Fellowship Award from the Discovery Foundation, this time to do her PhD in trauma surgery at the University of Cape Town and Groote Schuur Hospital.*

Her goal is to publish research that will have a lasting impact on patient care and post-operative outcomes, and help change policy and practice towards this end.

## **A CLEAR VISION OF THE FUTURE – AT THE AGE OF SEVEN**

“There was a weekly booklet called ‘How my body works’ and I could not wait for it to arrive on Fridays. I never doubted that I wanted to pursue a career in medicine,” she explains.



## BREAKING BOUNDARIES IN A MALE-DOMINATED FIELD

“There are six female trauma surgeons now, as opposed to about 19 male surgeons. The hours are terrible and we have to deal with gender-based violence as well as gang violence,” Dr McPherson says.

She says the high rate of repeat cases can be discouraging, as is the lack of recognition that trauma doctors receive. “The cycle of violence needs to be broken and I would like to one day get involved in programmes dealing with that,” she adds.



**“Trauma surgery is my passion and I am very happy about the opportunity that this Discovery Foundation Award has given me”**

*Read the full story about Dr McPherson's passion for trauma surgery.*







# PROF MFUNDO MABENGE

{Academic Fellowship Awards}

**“A woman’s death cripples the community”**

*For most people, qualifying as a medical doctor would be more than enough of an achievement. Not so for Prof Mfundo Mabenge, a gynaecological oncologist from Gqeberha who is also an arts graduate and a lawyer, and aims to study theology.*

When it comes to gynaecological oncology, Prof Mabenge knows that early detection and prevention of cancer are often more effective than aggressive treatment later down the line.

The Discovery Foundation has given him an Academic Fellowship Award to complete his doctorate in obstetrics and gynaecology in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand.

## **FROM TOWNSHIP YOUTH TO RENOWNED PROFESSOR**

“I was the tenth and last of my mother’s children and was born and raised in Gqeberha,” Prof Mabenge says. “My mother never had the opportunity to attend school, and my father had completed Standard 3 [today’s Grade 5]. My mother sold vegetables and old clothes that she had collected.”

Prof Mabenge has registered to do his doctorate at the University of the Witwatersrand’s Faculty of Health Sciences. Since 2016, he has been an associate professor at Walter Sisulu University.



## TRAINING OF YOUNG SPECIALISTS A PRIORITY

“I am currently the chief specialist in obstetrics and gynaecology at Dora Nginza Hospital, where I am involved with the training of specialists in obstetrics and also advanced midwifery. I feel it is very important to train and empower others to carry on the work when I am no longer there,” Prof Mabenge says.



*Find out what Prof Mabenge intends to explore for his doctorate.*



# DR SIYABONGA KHOZA

{Academic Fellowship Awards}

## The blessings of mentorship and hard work

*Patients with kidney conditions may never meet the doctor who could have the most impact on their health. Dr Siyabonga Khoza works behind the scenes in a laboratory and his research focuses on identifying the risk of chronic kidney disease sooner.*

With his Discovery Foundation Academic Fellowship Award, Dr Khoza will complete his PhD in chemical pathology, with a focus on detecting early markers for chronic kidney disease in black people.

“This research will enable me to bring new technology to South Africa, which should have a great impact on assisting medical professionals in the screening and early detection of chronic kidney disease,” he says.

### **EARLY IDENTIFICATION COULD REDUCE NEED FOR KIDNEY TRANSPLANTS**

“There has been a massive increase in kidney disease in South Africa, as rates of non-communicable diseases soar. Kidney disease is a complication of many of these conditions, which means the constant search for new markers for accurate diagnosis of chronic kidney disease is becoming crucial,” he says.



## “THE JOB CHOSE ME; I DIDN'T CHOOSE THE JOB”

Dr Khoza was born in Mtubatuba, a rural town north of Richards Bay in KwaZulu-Natal. He first enrolled for a BSc degree at University of Zululand, but then decided to study medicine. His first degree was laboratory-based, which he enjoyed immensely, he says. It was a natural progression from there to specialising in chemical pathology.



*Read about his childhood and future hopes.*





# DR SANDIKA BABOOLAL

{Academic Fellowship Awards}

An eye specialist with a unique view on life

*Dr Sandika Baboolal is a consultant ophthalmic surgeon with a passion for medical and surgical education. She has embarked on a PhD in this area and has received an Academic Fellowship Award from the Discovery Foundation to support her research.*

During her PhD studies, she hopes to transform the time-based apprenticeship model of specialist training to a competency-based model in alignment with global best practices.

But her interest in strengthening South African specialist programmes stretches beyond medical knowledge, into the field of non-technical and holistic skills.

"I want to make a global contribution to medicine in mentorship, medical and surgical education, eye care services, research and curriculum development," she explains.

## **A NEW WAY OF TRAINING SPECIALISTS**

With her PhD research, Dr Baboolal wants to identify gaps in the registrar training programme across all specialities, and to suggest possible solutions.

"I aim to develop policy guidelines for the national integration of competency tools in the training programmes for specialist trainees, and to develop a future generation of specialists who are also competent in non-technical skills such as communication, collaboration and leadership," she says.





## A HOLISTIC VIEW ON LIFE AND HEALING

Her interests go far beyond academia, though. “Early in my career, I recognised that healthcare workers need psychological support. Caring for carers is an important focus. I have trained as a facilitator for values in healthcare, which is a modular development programme that addresses this,” Dr Baboolal says.

### DEDICATION TO YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES

Dr Baboolal is also interested in youth empowerment. “I would like to inspire the youth to make positive social changes that have an impact. I have worked with young people living with HIV and helped them become mentors for those around them living with the disease,” she says.



*Accomplished and spiritual, read more  
about Dr Baboolal.*









# DR JOHANN DE WET

{Academic Fellowship Awards}

Dr Johann de Wet wants to bring a skin cancer cure to more South Africans

*A new micrographic surgery for the treatment of skin cancer is proving to have an almost 100% cure rate. Dr Johann de Wet, dermatologist and skin cancer specialist, aims to make this surgery a reality for more South Africans with skin cancer.*

## **STUDYING THE BODY'S LARGEST ORGAN: THE SKIN**

"It was while working in Canada that I became intrigued by the skin and dermatological disease. As the body's largest organ, the skin can act as a window and an external system that communicates directly with the internal organ environment," Dr de Wet says. "Skin cancer screening and treatment also became a large focus of my practice, and I think this is what made me decide to specialise in dermatology."

## **TAKING A MUCH CLOSER LOOK AT SKIN CANCERS**

Dr de Wet's area of special interest and passion lies in skin cancer diagnosis and treatment, specifically in Mohs micrographic surgery.

"The wonderful thing about this form of skin cancer surgery is that cure rates close to 100% are achieved with minimal tissue removal," he says.

"My research goals are to improve the treatment of skin cancers with this medically advanced surgical technique and to help to firmly establish this treatment in other parts of South Africa, besides Gauteng, where I currently spend three days a week," he adds.





## A RESEARCH DREAM FOR DR DE WET

Dr de Wet's research on the surgical treatment of melanoma in situ – cancer cells in the top layer of the skin – will contribute towards a master's degree in pathology. He received a Discovery Foundation Academic Fellowship Award to fund this game-changing research.



*Read more about Dr de Wet's work*



# DR NHLANHLA GUMEDE

{Academic Fellowship Awards}

## Giving children specialist care in rural areas

*Dr Nhlanhla Gumede received an Academic Fellowship Award from the Discovery Foundation to complete his master's degree in public health. His thesis is on the conditions influencing how district clinical specialist teams do their work in KwaZulu-Natal.*

### **FROM RURAL KWAZULU-NATAL TO SPECIALISING IN PAEDIATRICS**

Dr Gumede was born in the rural community of Ozwathini in the iLembe district in KwaZulu-Natal. He attended local schools and matriculated at Nkosibomvu Secondary School in Tongaat, on the north coast of the province. He studied at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and qualified as a doctor in 2001.

But the boys in a neighbouring informal settlement in Durban don't think of him as a doctor – he is the guy who is involved in organising the soccer games for them.

### **A CALLING FOR PUBLIC HEALTHCARE**

He says the primary healthcare re-engineering strategy in South Africa is of particular interest to him. "I personally observed some of the challenges facing the district clinical specialist teams and decided to do my research on the specific conditions that influenced the way these teams worked in KwaZulu-Natal in 2019 and 2020. I am hoping that my research will help healthcare professionals at facility and community levels," he explains.



## STRENGTHENING INTERVENTIONS IN PRIMARY HEALTHCARE AND COMMUNITIES

“I was extremely grateful when I heard that I had been given this award,” Dr Gumede says. “It came at a time that I was in desperate need of funding for my research project, and this really rescued me.”



*Learn more about Dr Gumede's passions.*





DISCOVERY FOUNDATION AWARDS  
2020



# DISCOVERY FOUNDATION SUB-SPECIALIST AWARDS



DISCOVERY FOUNDATION  
SUB-SPECIALIST AWARDS 2020







# DR SIBUSISO NHLAPO

{Sub-Specialist Awards}

## High-risk pregnancies in rural Mpumalanga: a dedicated doctor to the rescue

*Dr Sibusiso Nhlapo hopes to make a difference in the lives of rural women who are experiencing pregnancy complications – and a grant from the Discovery Foundation could help him to do that. His goal is to establish a maternal foetal medicine service in Mpumalanga.*

### **"A FAMILY OF WOMEN INSPIRED MY CAREER CHOICE"**

"After a few years of working as a medical officer in the public sector, I decided to specialise in obstetrics and gynaecology, because of my passion for women's health," he adds. His interest in women's health comes from his ongoing concern for the health and wellbeing of his mother and four sisters.

### **"A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH"**

Dr Nhlapo's passion for his work shines through when he speaks of the difficulties that women who have high-risk pregnancies experience in accessing specialist services in the urban centres several hours away.

Several factors contribute to the increase in high-risk pregnancies, including the fact that women tend to have babies at a later age, and a general increase in the number of women who have high blood pressure or diabetes, or who develop gestational diabetes.

"And," says Dr Nhlapo, "it's not just a case of 'happy mother, healthy baby'. I also get a tremendous sense of fulfilment from achieving a good pregnancy outcome with a patient, especially if things were not straightforward."







## A MATERNAL FOETAL MEDICINE SERVICE IN MPUMALANGA

Dr Nhlapo's chosen sub-specialty deals with high-risk pregnancies complicated by medical conditions and foetal anomalies. He is focusing on pregnancy outcomes of women with Takayasu's arteritis, a rare type of vasculitis that causes blood vessel inflammation and damages the aorta, the largest artery in the body. This usually affects women of childbearing age.

"This would not only benefit rural women with high-risk pregnancies, but also provide mentoring and educational opportunities for the doctors providing maternal healthcare and benefit medical students who may be sent for practical training in the province from the nearby medical schools," he says.



*Read about Dr Nhlapo's journey.*



# DR

# NOKUKHANYA

# NGUBANE-

# MWANDLA

{Sub-Specialist Awards}

Paediatrician  
puts spotlight  
on kidney  
conditions in  
South African  
children

*Dr Nokukhanya Ngubane-Mwandla was born in Empangeni, KwaZulu-Natal. She studied medicine at the University of Pretoria and qualified as a doctor in 2009. Ten years later, she completed her studies at the University of the Witwatersrand and became a paediatrician.*

For her second MMed degree in medicine, she will be investigating the impact of chronic kidney disease in children at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital over the last five years.

#### **AN ADVOCATE FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT FIGHT FOR THEMSELVES**

"I have always made it a personal mission to help and be an advocate for the vulnerable; those who cannot fight for themselves – children," Dr Ngubane-Mwandla says. "It really adds to your life if you have a job that you enjoy. I am so lucky in that respect."



## BRINGING CRITICAL SKILLS TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN HEALTH SECTOR

“I was not expecting to receive this Discovery Award. My mentor and supervisor, Prof Karen Petersen, encouraged me to apply. I was astonished and thrilled to hear that my application had been successful,” she adds.

“It is an absolute honour and privilege to be part of the nephrology sub-specialty fellowship programme, and the Discovery Foundation has made that possible for me,” Dr Ngubane-Mwandla says.



*Read how she plans to help  
those in need.*









# DR ISMAIL BANDERKER

{Sub-Specialist Awards}

## Nephrology sub-specialisation: It was now or never

*It was while he was on pilgrimage that Dr Ismail Banderker's colleagues reminded him of the Discovery Foundation Award's closing date. "I really had to scramble to get my application in on time on my return from Mecca," says the internal medicine consultant from Cape Town.*

### DOING THE ROUNDS IN MANY CAPETONIAN HOSPITALS

"Working in these hospitals has taught me life skills and also provided me with the opportunity to teach medical students, registrars, medical officers and nursing staff," he says.

So, why become a nephrologist? "There is a shortage of nephrologists in South Africa, especially in the public health sector. At the same time, there is also a high incidence of kidney disease in South Africa."

"Treating kidney disease requires high input from healthcare staff, as lots of work goes into dialysis sessions. Due to staff shortages and a shortage of equipment, not everyone can access treatment," he explains.

## PATIENT-TO-NEPHROLOGIST RATIO IS 'ASTRONOMICAL'

Once qualified, Dr Banderker says that he would like to bring his skills and knowledge back to the many communities around Cape Town where he has worked. He describes the ratio of patients with kidney conditions to nephrologists as 'astronomical'. If he could work as a nephrologist, it would lessen the burden on other specialists and he would be able to help more patients who are struggling to access nephrology services.



*Read the full story.*







# DR FAITH NGAMBU

{Sub-Specialist Awards}

An obstetrician and a lawyer?  
That's Dr Faith Ngambu

*Dr Faith Ngambu is an obstetrician and gynaecologist who aims to complete her sub-specialisation in maternal foetal medicine at the University of Pretoria. She is proposing to do research on the impact of herbal medicine on the development of cerebral palsy in infants. She is also a qualified lawyer.*

**"I COULDN'T FIND A FEMALE GYNAECOLOGIST FOR MYSELF"**

What inspired her choice? During her second pregnancy, she could not find a female gynaecologist in the her area. "I think women sometimes just have a better understanding of what other women go through," she says.

DR FAITH NGAMBU



## EXPERT TESTIMONY IN COURT

“Gynaecologists and obstetricians in public and private practice are often sued by patients when they think there was some negligence during the birth process. It got to the point where people hesitated to specialise in this field,” Dr Ngambu explains.

“Some cases have merit,” she acknowledges, “and others don’t. As I have both legal and medical knowledge, I am often called to give expert testimony for the health department.”



*Read more about her legal  
and medical background.*







# DR KHATIJA KADWA

{Sub-Specialist Awards}

“Access to reproductive medicine empowers women”

*Women withstand the worst of the social consequences of infertility, and Dr Khatija Kadwa hopes to make a difference to their lives by sub-specialising in reproductive medicine.*

## **MAKING INFERTILITY TREATMENT ACCESSIBLE TO ALL WOMEN**

Dr Kadwa hopes that her work will make infertility treatment more widely available to women in other parts of the country. Her parents wanted the best for her in life, and she wants to empower other women through her work.

Early on in her medical career, Dr Kadwa encountered the personal experiences of women who didn't have access to reproductive health services. She learned how unwanted pregnancies, infertility and other conditions could limit and challenge women's lives.

## **REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IS A HUMAN RIGHT**

“Women dealing with infertility often face social isolation and scorn. The effective management of infertility, therefore, has a considerable impact on reproductive health and human rights in Africa,” she adds.

For women, reproductive health issues include pregnancy and childbirth complications as well as infertility, fibroids and endometriosis. Treatment for these conditions, especially in young women, should always be aimed at preserving fertility as far as possible. Inadequate access to modern contraception also has a huge influence on women's reproductive choices.





## **ALL WOMEN SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO CARE**

“Infertility treatment in the private sector is available only to those who can pay for it, and it costs four times as much as in the public sector,” Dr Kadwa says.



**“THIS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN  
COMMUNITIES WHERE THE IDENTITY  
OF MANY WOMEN ...”**

*Continue reading.*

# DR RAMOKONE MOGOTLANE

{Sub-Specialist Awards}

“Male infertility is a very real problem”

*When someone mentions the subject of infertility, people tend to assume that it is a female problem.*

“That’s not the case at all,” says Dr Ramokone Mogotlane, a gynaecologist who is sub-specialising in reproductive medicine. “Male infertility is a very real problem and these patients are becoming increasingly aware of their reproductive, endocrine and fertility issues.”

#### **MALE INFERTILITY A NEGLECTED FIELD**

“I remember being deeply touched by a young man from a rural area who was only 18 years old. He had lost a leg, and wanted to donate some sperm for possible future use. He was so lost and confused. That particular patient partially inspired me to become further involved in this field of study,” she adds.

She explains that testicular cancer often threatens male fertility, and that the preservation of fertility in those patients is highly important. Her research involves both oncology and fertility, as the two are often linked.



DR RAMOKONE MOGOTLANE



## A NECESSARY FOCUS ON MALE INFERTILITY

Dr Mogotlane says that when couples come to see her, it is essential to investigate both partners, and that male infertility deserves attention as well.



*Read about her research hopes and goals.*





# DR SIHLE NHLABATHI

{Sub-Specialist Awards}

A digital approach to caring for the elderly, inspired by an irritable grandmother

*Dr Sihle Nhlabathi's challenging grandmother scared her as a child. So, she studied geriatrics to understand the mental health of the elderly. Her research seeks to increase knowledge and address the dire need for geriatric psychiatrists in South Africa.*

She received a Discovery Foundation Award to measure the impact that digital information can make in this field.

"I didn't like my grandmother at all when I was growing up. She was difficult, aggressive and irritable at times. I avoided her as far as I could," Dr Nhlabathi says.

"My mother, who was raising six children, also looked after her elderly mother. It is only now that I am studying geriatric psychiatry that I realise that my grandmother's behaviour was the result of serious mental problems experienced by many elderly people," she adds.





## **SOCIAL PRESSURE TO KEEP THE ELDERLY AT HOME**

“There is a huge amount of social pressure in our society to care for elderly relatives at home and not send them to old-age homes, but this comes with its own challenges for both caregivers and patients,” she says. “The truth is that the vast majority of caregivers in this situation have very little real information on how to deal with the elderly in their care, especially if they are exhibiting signs of dementia.”

### **CARING FOR THE CAREGIVERS**

When she qualifies, Dr Nhlabathi will be one of only five geriatric psychiatrists in the country. She is deeply concerned about the wellbeing of caregivers. Supporting the carer, she says, ultimately benefits the person they are caring for.

The research project Dr Nhlabathi is undertaking aims to explore the potential impact that digital resources could have in improving the awareness of caregivers and providing them with support.

A website, which will be developed as part of her sub-specialisation, will provide medical and legal information, links to specific service providers and information on referral pathways to get assistance for caregivers. There will also be podcasts providing information about dementia and medicine.



*The goal and long-term dream?*







DISCOVERY FOUNDATION AWARDS  
2020

**DISCOVERY  
FOUNDATION  
AWARDS FOR  
HEALTHCARE  
IN RURAL AND  
UNDERSERVED  
AREAS**





Part 1: Individual Awards

Part 2: Institutional Awards

Part 3: Distinguished Visitor Award



DISCOVERY FOUNDATION AWARDS  
2020

Part 1:

# DISCOVERY FOUNDATION INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

This award supports the training and development of specialists for rural and underserved areas, including MMed registrars and senior medical doctors. The aim is to bring more medical expertise to hospitals in under-resourced areas in South Africa.

RURAL INDIVIDUAL  
AWARDS 2020









# Dr ZAMANCI SEPTEMBER

{Rural Individual Awards}

## Testing patient knowledge in the fight against non-communicable diseases

*Dr Zamanci September knew she wanted to specialise, but couldn't decide on any particular field, so she solved the problem by choosing to do them all. That was how this year's Discovery Foundation Award recipient finally settled on family medicine.*

There is a tidal wave of non-communicable diseases in South Africa. Worldwide, non-communicable or chronic diseases kill 41 million people each year, according to the World Health Organization.

"The only way to combat these conditions is through education and the dissemination of correct information as a preventative mechanism and a practical guide to lifestyle changes," Dr September explains.

## JOINING THE FIGHT AGAINST NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

What inspired her to become a doctor and to specialise in family medicine? “I saw how dyslipidaemia (raised cholesterol) affected my mother’s life. I also saw how access to the correct information could open people’s eyes and what a difference this knowledge could make in their lives,” she explains. It was during her community-service year in rural KwaZulu-Natal that she saw that doctors really need broad general knowledge and skills.

### TAILORING RESEARCH TO THE PATIENTS’ NEEDS

“The more patients understand about their condition, the better they can manage it,” Dr September explains. For her research, she will ask patients questions before and after they have received information on their condition. The education levels of patients may vary, and she will have to keep this in mind when doing the research.



*Read how her award inspired others.*







DISCOVERY FOUNDATION AWARDS  
2020





# Dr DYLAN GIBSON

{Rural Individual Awards}

Empowering women with better access to family planning

*Dr Dylan Gibson has received his award to complete his study on contraception in rural areas. He hopes his research will empower women in the Eastern Cape to have better access to effective family planning.*

## **EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN WITH CHOICES**

"For this study, I will be looking at women's perceptions and experiences of an intra-uterine device inserted immediately after they have given birth," he says.

South Africa has a high rate of unintended pregnancies. "These pregnancies can be the result of contraceptive failure, or a lack of knowledge of – or access to – different types of contraceptive methods," Dr Gibson says.

That is why the intra-uterine device, also known as the loop, could be more effective. It is both long-acting and reversible. So why is there not a bigger take-up of this method?

"Women are not told about the full range of contraceptive options. They therefore rely on things they hear from their family, friends and other community members," Dr Gibson explains.





## A FAMILY MEDICINE REGISTRAR FROM A FAMILY OF DOCTORS

“I found it incredible doing my undergraduate training in a district hospital, which to me is truly the home of family medicine,” Dr Gibson says.

He says young doctors get a depth of experience when they have to make do with what they have, and they often don't have ready access to a referral network of specialists.

“This research has the potential to provide healthcare workers in similar contexts with valuable information to support women in accessing effective family planning.”



*Read about the contraceptive roadblocks and how Dr Dylan Gibson is planning to change that.*

# Dr KARTIK NAIDOO

{Rural Individual Awards}

“Empowering women can solve most of the world’s problems”

*Dr Kartik Naidoo believes that educating and empowering women to control their own reproduction is the key to solving most problems in the world.*

This has led him to do research for his MMed in family medicine on social influences that play a role in family planning in the community of Mossel Bay in the Western Cape.

“The issues involving reproduction provide a window into quite fundamental beliefs and attitudes that a community has. It is in understanding these that, I believe, the solution to unplanned pregnancies lies,” Dr Naidoo says.





## COMMUNITY SERVICE AN INSPIRATION TO DO FAMILY MEDICINE

It was during his community-service year in Ventersdorp, in the Free State, that he became inspired to do family medicine.

“Nurses can and do bring their own worldviews into the workplace, which, research shows, may influence the decisions their patients make. My research focuses on this aspect as well as health service factors that may influence nurses’ provision of family planning. It could also be a problem if there is some social connection between the nurses and patients, such as if the nurse is a friend of the patient’s mother,” he adds.

He says he was motivated to apply for the Discovery Foundation Award as he is doing research in a rural area, and he knew this is one of the Foundation’s priorities.



*Read about the struggles of living through history from India to South Africa and how Dr Naidoo was able to live his dream.*











# Dr SARAH BOSHOFF

{Rural Individual Awards}

## Tackling post-traumatic stress disorder in ICU patients

*Being in an intensive care unit and receiving critical care can be a harrowing experience. Psychiatry registrar Dr Sarah Boshoff is investigating how doctors and nurses can help to prevent triggers of post-traumatic stress disorder in patients.*

"In addition to the experience of going into ICU, South African patients also live in a society with high levels of crime and trauma, and many of us have symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder," she says.

Dr Boshoff is involved in research that stems from a larger cohort study that Dr Elizabeth van der Merwe is conducting at Livingstone Hospital in Gqeberha.

Dr Boshoff has received a Rural individual Award from the Discovery Foundation to cover the costs of this study, which she is completing as part of her MMed degree.





**“I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED  
IN PEOPLE’S STORIES”**

Today, she is working at the Dora Nginza Provincial Hospital in Gqeberha while she is specialising in psychiatry. “Doctors don’t always have the time to really talk to their patients to find out more about their life stories,” she says. “As a psychiatry registrar, that is part of my job, and I really enjoy it.”

**DENIAL: A BARRIER TO TREATMENT  
FOR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

One of the difficulties she finds in her work is that people sometimes cannot admit that they are suffering from mental health problems. This prevents them from accessing treatment.

“It’s not that we are more resilient as a nation – avoidance can be part of the problem of dealing with mental health issues,” she says.



*Read about the importance of this study and Dr Boshoff’s passions.*



# Dr ILLANA LINKS

{Rural Individual Awards}

Spotlight on the link between  
HIV and mental health conditions

*“Many people are unaware of the fact that people with HIV are predisposed to mental disorders such as bipolar disorder,” says Dr Illana Links, a psychiatry registrar at the Dora Nginza Hospital in Gqeberha.*

Dr Links has received her award to research the prevalence and clinical link between mental health and HIV in an acute mental health unit.

#### **A LOOK AT INTERCONNECTED CONDITIONS**

“I find neuropsychiatry absolutely fascinating, as it is a perfect mixture between internal medicine, neurology and psychiatry,” Dr Links says.

“I am absolutely fascinated by the effects that HIV has on the brain and have been greatly inspired by my supervisor, Dr Yanga Thungana, who is specialising in neuropsychiatry,” Dr Links says.

Dr Thungana is no stranger to the Discovery Foundation. In 2017, he received the same award to study the prevalence of substance abuse in patients with first-episode psychosis, and now he’s paying it forward by mentoring Dr Links.









## THE BENEFITS OF DIAGNOSING PSYCHIATRIC CONDITIONS EARLY

Dr Links hopes that her research will help patients in mental health units and in community and HIV clinics get the care they need.

She says there are key links between mental health conditions and HIV. “Early intervention is beneficial in patients with HIV or mental illness,” she says.



*Scan to read the full story.*





# Dr KWAKOMBE NDJONDO

{Rural Individual Awards}

## Caring for women who choose abortion

*Many women who decide to terminate a pregnancy suffer from depression, anxiety or ambivalent thoughts after the procedure. Family medicine registrar Dr Kwakombe Ndjondo hopes that his MMed research will help alleviate the mental anguish.*

Dr Ndjondo will do his research at the Moses Kotane Hospital in Rustenburg in the North West province, with the help of his award from the Discovery Foundation.

### **BETTER CARE FOR WOMEN WHO CHOOSE ABORTION**

“Voluntary termination of a pregnancy is a sensitive matter,” Dr Ndjondo says. “Besides their personal beliefs, women may also be in a situation where they get no support from family members or partners before, during and after the procedure.”



## IDENTIFYING THE ROOT CAUSE OF A PROBLEM IS CRUCIAL

“I have learnt from experience that if one doesn’t correctly identify and address the root cause of a problem, it recurs. Illegal abortions and mismanagement of pregnancies contribute to the maternal mortality rate,” Dr Ndjondo says.

Dr Ndjondo says gender-based violence often leads to unwanted pregnancies and pregnant teenagers. These survivors of abuse need support and care – which he aims to provide with his post-abortion care plan.

“I hope that my research will make a difference in the lives of women who come to the Moses Kotane Hospital to terminate pregnancies,” he concludes.



*Read about the seven aims  
of his post-abortion care plan.*





# Dr LIBINU THOMAS

{Rural Individual Awards}

Solving a doctor's dilemma:  
hidden germs on cellphones

*Doctors seldom go without their cellphones, especially when there are no working pager systems. A lifesaving tool of communication in difficult situations or in rural settings, but Dr Libinu Thomas, a paediatric registrar, wondered if cellphones could also be a source of infection.*

#### UV LIGHT VERSUS MICROBES IN THE PAEDIATRIC ICU

If a UV light can kill microbes, it would be a better option than using sanitising swabs in the paediatric ICU, where harmful organisms can be present. "The cost of doing the research was, however, a problem, as the phones needed to be swabbed constantly, and these swabs had to be sent off to the pathology laboratory for analysis," she says.

"I attended the Discovery Foundation's roadshow in East London, and it encouraged me to apply for funding to do this research project as part of my MMed," Dr Thomas says.



DR L TH  
PAED



## SOLVING A DOCTOR'S DILEMMA: HIDDEN GERMS ON CELLPHONES

“I was elated when I received the award, as it will go a long way in covering the costs of the laboratory tests,” she concludes. “This new research will show us the best way to disinfect cellphones in a paediatric ICU setting, and could save many lives.”



*Read about how Dr Thomas's family  
are spread across continents*





# Dr KAYLEM COETZEE

{Rural Individual Awards}

How a love of Lego led Dr Kaylem Coetzee to orthopaedic surgery

*Not everyone would agree that orthopaedic surgeons are carpenters of the human body, but that is exactly how Dr Kaylem Coetzee describes himself.*

He loved playing with Lego as a child, and it was a motivating factor in his decision to follow this career path.

But something more serious happened while he was in his fifth year of studying that helped him choose this field of specialisation.

## **A RARE INFECTION POINTS THE WAY TO ORTHOPAEDIC STUDIES**

Dr Coetzee shares his personal experience. "When I was a medical student, I developed a serious infection in my femur, which turned out to be a spontaneous osteitis, or inflammation," he says.

"The treatment I received from Prof Sithombo Maqungo at the Netcare UCT Private Academic Hospital inspired me to pursue orthopaedics."

DR KAYLEM COETZEE







## EVALUATION OF ORTHOPAEDIC TRAINING IN VARIOUS CENTRES

Dr Coetzee's award will help him to do a multi-centred study in various health science facilities using the Freedman-Bernstein musculoskeletal competency test. The aim of the study is to evaluate the orthopaedic training that junior doctors receive at health science faculties in South Africa.



*Find out how his life will change now that he has received the award.*





# Dr ISABEL MICHAELIS

{Rural Individual Awards}

Bringing hope to children with epilepsy in the Eastern Cape

*Dr Isabel Michaelis, like many other paediatricians, knew early on that caring for children was what she wanted to do with her life.*

*"During my studies, I enjoyed paediatrics the most. I worked in both paediatric surgery and paediatric orthopaedics, but I was fascinated by the neurology and the neurodevelopmental part of this field," Dr Michaelis says.*

## A PAEDIATRICIAN DEALS WITH TWO PATIENTS

"What makes paediatrics challenging is that you are dealing with two patients: the child and the parent. It is an interdisciplinary field, as looking at the lifestyle of the whole family is crucial in treating many childhood diseases," she explains.

Dr Michaelis has received a Discovery Foundation Award to study the epidemiology of epilepsies in children at Frere and Cecilia Makiwane Hospitals in East London.

In 2009, she started working at Frere Hospital in East London. She realised that epilepsy and neurodevelopmental delay were common in that region.

## “EPILEPSY IS STILL CONSIDERED A CURSE BY SOME”

“In my research, I also realised that the children were not always treated adequately for these neurological conditions, as it was still sometimes considered a curse in the community and one that should be treated with traditional medicine,” Dr Michaelis says.

What puzzles her even more is that there does not seem to be a genetic component to epilepsy. She explains that there is very limited antenatal and perinatal care, especially in the rural areas. So, when complications arise, the necessary medical expertise is not always at hand.



*Learn more about her experiences  
and how she approaches these topics.*





# Dr EMMMA GARDINER

{Rural Individual Awards}

Getting to the bare bones of rheumatology needs  
in the Eastern Cape

*Dr Emma Gardiner was a senior registrar when she developed a love for rheumatology, largely as a result of her work with Prof Thozama Dubula, who started the Rheumatology Unit at Livingstone Hospital in Gqeberha in 2012.*

"Rheumatology is a neglected discipline in the Eastern Cape region, and I am hoping that the research I am doing will define the scope of rheumatic disease in the western district of the Eastern Cape so we can further refine and develop our future needs," she adds.

#### **HER RESEARCH AIMS TO IMPROVE CARE**

The aim of Dr Gardiner's research is to improve rheumatological care for people in the Eastern Cape.

Her passion for the discipline shines through as she speaks of the tremendous suffering many patients in rural areas go through when their rheumatological conditions go undiagnosed and untreated. This can result in loss of function, and sometimes, loss of life, she says.







**“RHEUMATOLOGY PATIENTS  
SUFFER A TREMENDOUS  
BURDEN”**

“The treatment of autoimmune diseases and connective tissue disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis require holistic practice. A doctor cannot just focus on one specific area of the patient – these diseases affect all organs,” Dr Gardiner says.

“One of my main goals is to assist them to return to a good quality of life while living with their condition. It is important to raise and maintain awareness, especially in rural areas.”



*Find out about Dr Gardiner's vital research.*



The Accident and Emergency Unit  
at Livingstone Hospital  
was officially opened on 3rd June 2010 by the  
**MEC for Health,  
Eastern Cape**  
Hon. Phumulo



# Dr ADAM ASGHAR

{Rural Individual Awards}

Dr Adam Asghar provides quality care for patients in rural KwaZulu-Natal

*Working at a hospital in a remote setting has its own challenges, says Dr Adam Asghar, who has a special passion for rural healthcare. His mission is to find ways of delivering high-quality obstetric care in this challenging environment.*

The Durban-based family medicine registrar will use his award to research ways to improve maternal and perinatal care at Bethesda Hospital, a rural hospital deep in northern KwaZulu-Natal, where he has been based for five years.

#### **INSPIRED BY A CONNECTION TO SOUTH AFRICA**

Born in the United Kingdom in 1983 to migrant parents – his father was born in Pakistan and his mother in Poland – Dr Asghar studied medicine at Oxford University and Imperial College London. He completed his internship in West Yorkshire.

“During this time, I developed an interest in global health, and like many others at the start of their careers, had a somewhat romanticised notion of working in a resource-limited setting,” he says. So, he moved to South Africa.





## PURSuing HIGHER-QUALITY CARE FOR PATIENTS

Although his direct outreach work has been limited until now, Dr Asghar has always had a desire to become more involved in engaging and uplifting communities.

“I have always devoted my attention to patients as individuals, rather than members of the community at large. Now that I am a family medicine registrar, my frames of reference are changing, and I look forward to developing more of a community-oriented primary care mindset in myself in the coming years,” he adds.



*What made him develop a special interest  
in obstetrics?*





# Dr VEENA JOHN

{Rural Individual Awards}

“A measles outbreak made me choose paediatrics”

*Dr Veena John realised she wanted to be a paediatrician during her fifth year as a medical student on rotation at Somerset Hospital in Cape Town. That decision is now improving the lives of children in communities in the Eastern Cape, her home province.*

## “PAEDIATRICS CAPTURED MY HEART EARLY”

“I embraced paediatric rotation during my internship and spent a whole year in the paediatrics department during my community-service year,” she says.

She says being a paediatrician can be tough at times, but she has absolutely no regrets in choosing this field. “Children are fun, playful, sincere, honest and very trusting, and that makes me have no regrets. Yes, being a paediatrician is difficult – especially as a registrar. Days can be very rough; calls can be rougher, and there are tears and sleepless nights. But it’s all worth it, because we want to do whatever we can for this little life, no matter how hard it is.”



DR VEENA JOHN

## HIV AND NEWBORNS WITH LOW BIRTH WEIGHT – AN UNDER-RESEARCHED TOPIC

Dr John has always had a passion for small babies. That's why she decided to do research on newborns with a low birth weight. She confirms that little information was available on the topic, but with the help of the Discovery Foundation grant, the project has been a success. The South African Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health has accepted her research for publication.



*Find out more about her journey.*









# Dr JEFF JOHN

{Rural Individual and Institutional Awards}

Double recognition for this  
doctor-cum-author

*Nothing in Dr Jeff John's life happens in singles. He comes from an extended family of doctors, he is working on his second book, and he was the only person in 2020 to receive both a Rural Individual and Institutional Award from the Discovery Foundation.*

Qualified urologist Dr Jeff John has received a Discovery Foundation Rural Individual Award to continue his master's degree research on the change in renal function after removing one of the kidneys in patients who have had cancer. "This was the first such study done in South Africa," he says. His findings were published in the July 2020 edition of the South African Journal of Surgery.

He also received a Rural Institutional Award for leading a team at the Frere Hospital Department of Urology that will write a book aimed at non-specialist doctors across the Eastern Cape to help them deal with patients' urological problems.

## **"YOU WILL NEVER MEET AN UNHAPPY UROLOGIST"**

"Urology is a fantastic surgical discipline. It's a great blend of surgical and medical care," he says. "By attending to the needs of our patients, the quality of life of the patients and their caregivers are significantly improved. Urologists are also the nicest people and, in general, you are unlikely ever to meet an unhappy urologist. They really all love what they do."



## IMPROVING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Dr John wasn't always a research-oriented clinician, but says that doing research has definitely grown on him in the last few years. He encourages the rest of his department to get involved in academics, too.

Dr John previously wrote a 270-page book called *Surgery Survival Guide*, which is widely circulated and deals with common surgical emergencies.



*Find out more about the future  
of urology in the Eastern Cape.*







Part 2:

# DISCOVERY FOUNDATION INSTITUTIONAL AWARDS

This award aims to help improve the quality and delivery of healthcare through a one-year grant to an institution that supports training and capacity development in rural and underserved areas.





# Dr MMAMOLAPI MOLOKWANE

{Rural Institutional Awards}

Making dental surgery possible  
with the bare basics

*The dental department at Van Velden Hospital in Tzaneen provides basic dentistry for patients in Limpopo. It is also the only place in the region where patients can get dentures. These travelling dental healthcare workers have learned how to improvise.*

The dental department at Van Velden Hospital has five dentists, one oral hygienist and three dental assistants. This year, the Discovery Foundation gave a Rural Institutional Award to the hospital's dental department to help train staff and expand its services to communities.

"We are committed to serving our community here in rural Limpopo," says Dr Mmamolapi Molokwane, a dentist at Van Velden Hospital.

## THE REALITIES OF SERVING PATIENTS IN REMOTE AREAS

Villages and clinics don't have dental surgeries. So, how do these travelling dental healthcare workers cope?

"We provide basic extractions on a plastic chair, do oral health screening and education, and conduct a brushing programme for children in the schools and daycare centres," Dr Molokwane explains.

When asked about the difficulties of maintaining infection control for the procedures, she chuckles. "Sometimes, if there is no running water, we soak and wash the instruments in a bucket of water before taking them back to the hospital to sanitise properly."









## HOPES AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

As the costs of private dentistry increase, Dr Molokwane is noticing a steady increase in patient numbers and a demand for a wider scope of services.



*Read about Dr Molokwane's aspirations.*



# PROF ZUKISWA ZINGELA

{Rural Institutional Awards}

Supporting the mental health of young men undergoing ritual circumcision

*When circumcisions go wrong, the mental health risk to the initiates can be enormous, especially when it leads to deformities and loss of function.*

Mthatha-based psychiatrist Prof Zukiswa Zingela has received a Discovery Foundation Rural Institutional Award for her team at Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital to help mitigate these risks. "We faced worrying statistics of initiates who were losing their lives or were affected by trauma," she says.

They will also train primary healthcare workers to recognise mental health conditions in patients living in rural areas.

Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital serves 3.2 million people living in the Eastern Cape. The 60-bed mental health unit serves up to 1,600 patients a month. The staff also train medical students and postgraduate doctors specialising in psychiatry.

But when healthcare budgets are under pressure, patients with mental health conditions may not get the care they need – especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **MAKING MENTAL HEALTHCARE A REALITY IN RURAL AREAS**

"If you cannot recruit more staff, you need to make optimal use of the people that you do have. All healthcare professionals can learn to look for mental health problems in their patients. This needs to be considered a basic skill for any healthcare worker, like the ability to check a pulse or blood pressure," Prof Zingela says.





## THE PANDEMIC: 500 FRONTLINE WORKERS TRAINED

The COVID-19 pandemic halted this year's winter initiation ceremonies. But Prof Zingela and her team realised they could still train 500 frontline healthcare workers to deal with the mental health problems anticipated with the outbreak. Plus, healthcare workers can use these skills more widely over time, including for the mental health of initiates.



**"INNOVATION STARTS WITH A PASSION AND DEDICATION TO SERVE,  
COMBINED WITH A WILLINGNESS TO ADDRESS."**

*Want to know more? Read the full story.*







# DR BRAD WENTZEL

{Rural Institutional Awards}

## Satellites and specialists to improve healthcare in the Northern Cape

*Healthcare workers in remote rural areas of the Northern Cape will soon be able to use technology to get a specialist's advice or to talk them through a procedure, thanks to a new project at a hospital in Upington.*

### **USING TECHNOLOGY TO HELP NURSES, DOCTORS AND PATIENTS**

Dr Wentzel believes that technology will amplify service delivery, teaching and learning in public healthcare.

"We will be able to assist healthcare workers with diagnosis and procedures using high-quality video cameras, satellite connections, MTN and Vodacom network coverage – in short, whatever we have available to us," he explains.

He says while there is no substitute for a clinical examination, technology will connect healthcare workers and provide much needed access to help and information in towns such as Askham, Kakamas, Springbok and Calvinia.



## TRAINING AND RETAINING DOCTORS AND SPECIALISTS IN UPINGTON

“We need to do what we can where we are, with what we have,” Dr Wentzel says. “This means that we need to make full use of the staff we have in the region, and do everything we can to assist them to provide quality care.”

In the Northern Cape, there are fewer than three specialists for every 100,000 people, compared to 33 per 100,000 in the Western Cape, according to a report from the Health Economics Unit at the University of Cape Town.



*How will the new approach work?*







# DR PHETHO MANGENA

{Rural Institutional Awards}

No specialists in rural areas?  
We'll train our own

*Many doctors think about internal medicine as an anchor specialty that supports most other disciplines and specialties. But there is a dire shortage of specialists in regional hospitals across South Africa, and Limpopo is no exception.*

The Discovery Foundation Rural Institutional Award aims to bring more medical expertise to areas in South Africa with limited resources. This year, the grant goes to the Polokwane Mankweng Hospital Complex, which houses the Pietersburg and Mankweng hospitals.

"The proposal would support the hospital to recruit, train, mentor and retain specialists in internal medicine," Dr Mangena says.

The 38-year-old is the only nephrologist at the 500-bed hospital, which gives tertiary care to the six million people who live in Limpopo.

He says it is not unusual for patients to travel 200 km or even 300 km to Polokwane for treatment.



## NO INTERNAL MEDICINE SPECIALISTS AT REGIONAL HOSPITALS

It is a common problem across South Africa to recruit specialists to rural areas and to retain their services at the regional hospitals. Dr Mangena hopes that the Rural Institutional Award will help to train and retain specialists in the region in a new way.



"FIND OUT MORE ABOUT  
DR MANGENA'S AIMS."







Part 3:

# DISCOVERY FOUNDATION DISTINGUISHED VISITOR AWARDS

Distinguished Rural Visitor fellowships aim to build the capacity of institutions and support institutional partnerships in rural parts of South Africa. Through these fellowships, specialists mentor young doctors in under-resourced hospitals and contribute to their training.



DISCOVERY FOUNDATION  
DISTINGUISHED VISITOR AWARDS 2020



# PROF

# KATHRYN CHU

{Distinguished Visitor Awards}

Strengthening surgical systems in SA's biggest and most sparsely populated province

*Prof Kathryn Chu's stellar career stretches across 30 countries, yet she has chosen to help strengthen the surgical system at a hospital in Upington in the Northern Cape. A Distinguished Visitor Award from the Discovery Foundation will help fund her visits.*

#### **A PASSION FOR STRENGTHENING GLOBAL HEALTH SYSTEMS**

"I hope to be able to make sustainable changes in the surgical system. This includes improving the clinical care by updating protocols and referral systems, and strengthening district hospital surgical capacity. I hope to enhance communication of the surgical platforms at all the hospitals in the health district to reduce barriers to surgical care for patients in the Northern Cape."





## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES OF SPECIALIST SHORTAGES

Prof Chu says it is difficult to get specialists to work in rural areas. There are only seven specialists for every 100,000 people in South Africa's rural areas, while there are 69 for 100,000 people in urban areas.

“I realised that improving the surgical capacity of hospitals in rural areas would help many people have better access to care. More importantly, strengthening the surgical system and identifying and reducing barriers to access to surgical care are key components to universal health coverage,” Prof Chu concludes.



*Find out how technology will play a part in the solution.*





# PROF ASGAR KALLA

{Distinguished Visitor Awards}

Sharing medical experience with registrars  
all the way from Cape Town to Polokwane

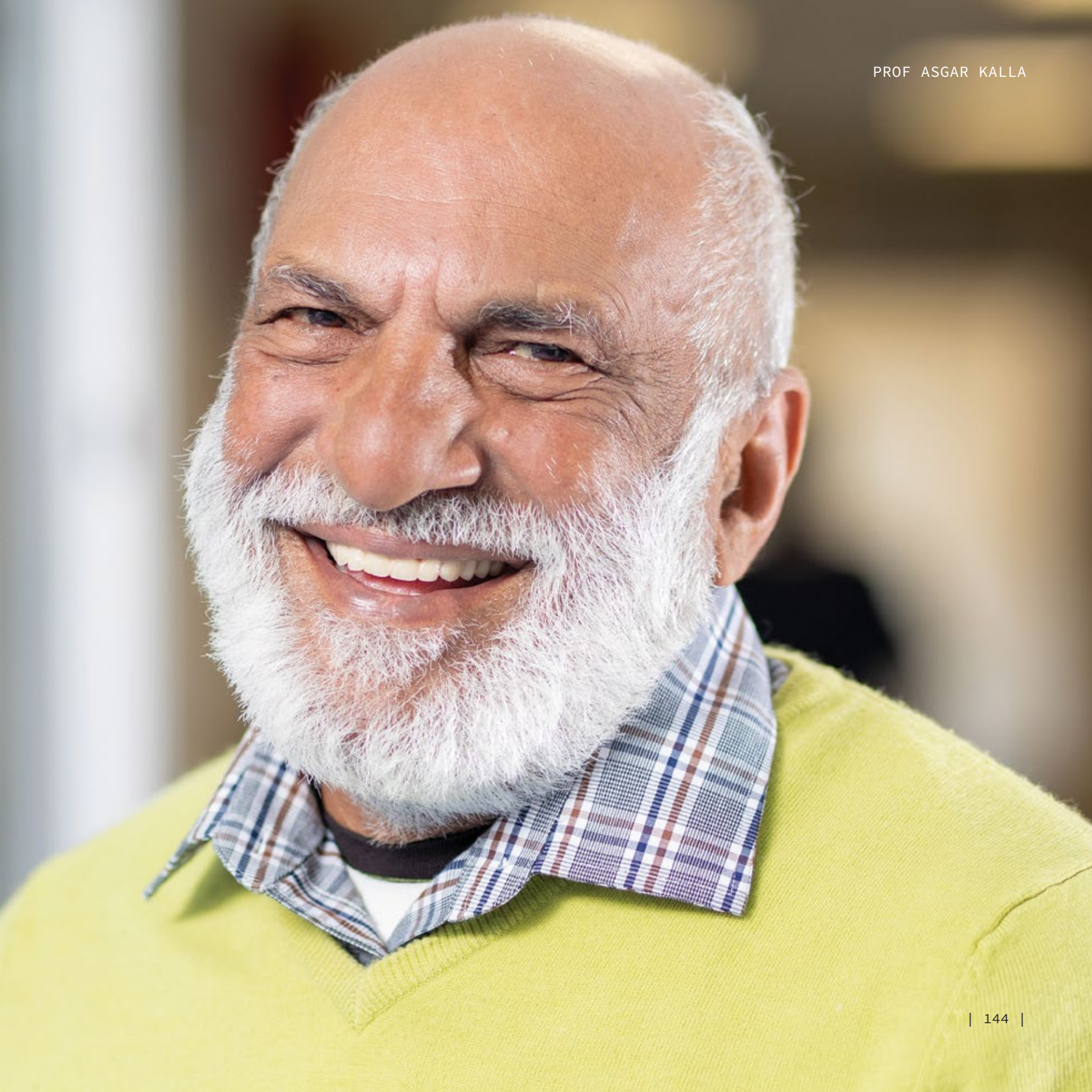
*With over 50 years of involvement in many aspects of the world of medicine, much of it as a rheumatologist, it is no surprise that Prof Asgar Kalla has remained actively involved in teaching after his official retirement.*

#### **VISIT TO BENEFIT STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY**

“Dr Phetho Mangena, nephrologist at Polokwane Academic Hospital, approached me with the idea of a teaching visit, and I was amenable to it. I got to know him when he was training at Groote Schuur Hospital. The aim of these visits is two-fold: to encourage and arrange for different sub-specialists to visit the Polokwane Hospital to teach the registrars, and more specifically, to improve rheumatology services in the area,” Prof Kalla says.

Prof Kalla has worked at Chris Hani Baragwanath and Groote Schuur Hospitals, where he has been engaged in teaching, research in rheumatology and general medicine for many years. He also practised as a rheumatologist, which, after retirement, he is now doing on a limited private basis. He continues to be involved in medical teaching, both in his field of rheumatology and in general medicine, in a variety of capacities.





## THE UPCOMING VISIT TO LIMPOPO

Rheumatologists treat conditions that affect the joints. The fact that there are five provinces in South Africa with no rheumatologists in the public health sector concerns Prof Kalla.

“The main aim during the visits to the University of Limpopo is to train general medical registrars in preparation for the FCP (SA) examinations,” he says. “The idea is to encourage and facilitate visits by other sub-specialists to participate in the programme to impart knowledge to the trainee registrars at the facility.”



*Read more about the plan and visit here.*





# PROF SUSAN FAWCUS

{Distinguished Visitor Award}

Tackling the high maternal mortality rate  
in Limpopo

*Many women still die in childbirth from conditions that could have been prevented. In Limpopo, this happens more often than in other provinces. Prof Susan Fawcus hopes that her visits to hospitals in the area will help to improve the situation.*

"During my career, I have found the vast inequalities in outcomes of women across the globe to be an infringement of their right to health," says Emeritus Professor Susan Fawcus. "I have also found it deeply distressing that so many women die in childbirth due to preventable problems."

A Rural Distinguished Visitor Award from the Discovery Foundation will help Prof Fawcus visit several hospitals in Limpopo, where she will train doctors and nurses in emergency obstetric care. She hopes her intervention will help to reduce the maternal mortality rate in the province.





## A FOCUS ON EMERGENCY OBSTETRIC CARE

“The main aim of the visit to Limpopo is to help reduce the maternal mortality rate and improve the quality of care in maternity services by training and empowering doctors, nurses and clinical managers at various levels in emergency obstetric care,” Prof Fawcus says.

“There will be a particular focus on obstetric haemorrhage after vaginal delivery and safe caesarean section,” she adds.



*Read about her distinguished career.*











# PROF HOFFIE CONRADIE

{Distinguished Visitor Awards}

## A lifetime of enhancing rural medicine

*From running online courses for stressed, burnt-out healthcare workers to trailblazing hands-on rural medicine training in far-flung hospitals, “retired” family medicine veteran, Professor Hoffie Conradie, continues to alleviate pressure for others.*

In 2011, he co-founded the highly regarded Ukwanda Rural Clinical School at the University of Stellenbosch. Hundreds of final-year Matie medical students have spent their final year gaining practical experience in healthcare facilities in the region.

### THE PROFESSOR ON THE MOVE

His Discovery Foundation Rural Distinguished Visitor Award will help him to continue supporting fifth-year medical students at the Walter Sisulu University in Mthatha.

“I make sure they identify the learning needs from the patient they saw and ask them to present their findings and how they addressed these. The rest of the day we do ward rounds and if the other doctors can join, they do,” he explains.

Earlier in 2021, Prof Conradie spent five weeks with family physician registrars at Madwaleni Provincial Hospital and Zithulele Hospital as part of another Discovery grant after their supervising family physicians had moved on.



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## DISCOVERY FOUNDATION ENABLES CAPACITY BUILDING TO CONTINUE

Prof Conradie describes the main aim of this visit: “I want to engage with medical students, student preceptors, clinical associates and other medical officers involved in the teaching of students and the family medicine registrars to build capacity in clinical reasoning, in clinical and procedural skills, and in learning and teaching. I will work alongside students and doctors in the clinical situation in the hospital wards, emergency departments and outpatient departments.”

“I am passionate about facilitating the learning of undergraduate and postgraduate family medicine students in the clinical setting in rural areas. By encouraging healthcare workers to work in rural areas, we help to reduce the inequality in healthcare for rural communities.”



*Read more about the many years of impact Prof Conradie has made.*





# DR NOZIPHO NYAKALE

{Distinguished Visitor Award}

## Championing nuclear medicine in Limpopo

*If Dr Nozipho Nyakale, a nuclear medicine specialist from the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, has her way, more patients at Pietersburg Hospital in Limpopo will have access to the enormous advantages this patient-targeted medicine can offer.*

Dr Nyakale has more than a decade of experience in nuclear medicine. And now, thanks to her Discovery Foundation Rural Distinguished Visitor Award, she has an opportunity to share her knowledge with doctors in Limpopo.

### **NUCLEAR MEDICINE MAKES EARLY DETECTION POSSIBLE**

Nuclear medicine imaging gives doctors detailed diagnostic information that other imaging procedures cannot replicate. It is safe and painless and can identify abnormalities early. This helps doctors to begin effective treatment when a patient's prognosis is still good and increases positive outcomes. Dr Nyakale hopes to bring this highly effective patient-targeted medicine to hospitals in Limpopo, where equal access to healthcare resources remains a struggle.





## MENTORSHIP NETWORK WILL BENEFIT LIMPOPO

With her Rural Distinguished Visitor Award, Dr Nyakale will make regular visits to the Nuclear Medicine Department of Pietersburg Hospital in Limpopo. She will guide and mentor doctors on how to use nuclear medicine to improve patient services.



*Read more about "the biggest challenge facing our country".*

DISCOVERY FOUNDATION AWARDS  
2020

*Read the stories of the photographer's  
journey and experiences in capturing  
these inspiring moments.*

**PHOTOGR**



PHOTOGRAPHER'S STORY

PHOTOGRAPHER'S

BIOGRAPHY

## Shelley Christians

Photography is the interpretation of how we view the world. My work is my way of making people stop and rethink a situation, event or moment. Most people can relate to visuals, and having the power to convey my thoughts and messages through photographs drives me constantly. The highlight of my career was having a conversation with Nelson Mandela after I photographed him. Another was working with Archbishop Desmond Tutu. What an inspiring man – such a character!

*Every day I am humbled by the opportunity of being a part of ordinary people's lives and documenting their hardships and their joys. Being able to tell their stories through pictures is a gift I wouldn't trade for anything.*





The photographer in me was born when I was a high-school student, studying with George Hallet, the South African photographer known for images of apartheid and exiles. There was no doubt about it: for the rest of my life, I would be looking through a lens! After obtaining a BTech Degree at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, I entered the workplace as both a pictures editor and a wildlife photographer. In 2007 I was Deputy Picture Editor at *The Times* newspaper. I then moved to the *Sunday Times* as a senior photographer. I was one of 180 photographers from across the globe who were nominated for the 20th edition of the World Press Photo Joop Swart Masterclass, which was a huge honour. After two years as Picture Editor of *Weg* and *Go* travel magazines, I now freelance, looking at different subjects through my lens.



▲ Kgomotso Neto Tleane

*I am a dynamic South African photographer with the mouldings of rural life and trimmings of fast-paced city living*



## Kgomotso Neto Tleane

Born and raised in Ga-Maja, Limpopo, I aim to create imagery that effortlessly reflects both the grime and glory of the city I inhabit: Johannesburg. I was selected for the 2018 New York Portfolio Review, which gave me the platform and opportunity to receive feedback from global industry giants. I currently work with my business partner and producer, Paresh Shookan, through the team Neto and Shookan. We specialise in film and photography for a range of clients across South Africa and abroad.





Dalton  
Dingelstad

I am a commercial photographer based in Pretoria, Gauteng. My work can be described as a contemporary twist on everyday commercial images. I have the ability to approach my subjects through a fine arts lens, but with added qualities needed for commercial use. A very "photojournalistic" style is noticeable in my professional work, which ranges from construction site photography to catalogue shoots for mobile operators. I am proudest of my work for Discovery's Medical Miracles series.







DISCOVERY FOUNDATION AWARDS  
2020





FLIP OVER TO READ 2021

**DOCTORS  
WITH PURPOSE**

UNMASKED

