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**Nelson Mandela University Alumni Association Annual Alumni Awards  
Ceremony**

**Congratulatory message**

Vice-Chancellor Professor Muthwa

Virtual Event, 26 November 2020

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen. A warm welcome to all our online guests.

A special welcome to our 2020 Alumni Award recipients and their family and friends. We also acknowledge:

- all former award recipients
- Council members,
- senior management,
- the President and the Executive Committee of the Alumni Association
- alumni, colleagues and friends who have all joined us online.

2020 is a most unprecedented year in the history of our University, the country and the world. The global impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is massive. More than one million individuals lost their lives globally and more than 20,000 lives have been lost in South Africa. The social and economic impact has also been devastating.

Although we have gathered to celebrate the achievements of our alumni this evening, let us spare a moment to remember our staff, students, alumni, family and friends who passed on during this period. We spare a special thought for a former Alumni Award recipient, Mr

Cumngce Gawe, our former Deputy Chairperson of Council, who also passed away during this period. I request a short moment of silence in this regard.

Thank you.

We have published a special Covid-19 online edition *Thetha*, our magazine for alumni and friends, where we shared stories of the institutional programmes and actions and the role of staff, students and alumni during this period. Please visit our website and access our various publications and reports which highlight our activities and achievements. We constantly update our stakeholders on our various social media platforms and through the media.

My message this evening will be short and focused on the importance of celebrating achievements as well as calling on all of us to use our expertise, networks and resources to help change the world, especially during these challenging times. This evening we are not only celebrating EXCELLENCE but all our institutional values as lived by those we honour this evening. These values include DIVERSITY, UBUNTU, SOCIAL JUSTICE and EQUALITY, INTEGRITY and ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP.

Our values serve as a compass for our actions and describe how we should behave in the world. In their own unique ways, our award recipients are using their expertise and knowledge to address complexities and challenges in society, making a difference in the lives of those around them.

As alumni of our university you are stakeholders of a special type. You have it within your power to join your university to make a difference. The pandemic and associated economic meltdown has had a huge negative impact on the economy, and on employment. Many of our graduates face a very difficult task finding gainful employment. If you, as alumni, are in the fortunate position to be able to mentor young graduates and to help them find a place in the world of work, please do so. My challenge to the Alumni Relations Office and Alumni Association in 2021 is to develop an effective alumni mentorship programme that will help change the world for our young graduates.

## **Congratulations to Award recipients**

A very important part of my role this evening, is to officially announce the names of the 2020 Alumni Award recipients and in naming them individually, I will also be conferring the Alumni award according to the various categories. Hereafter, the Programme Director, will share the profiles as well as the acceptance messages of the award recipients.

The first category announced is the

### **A. Rising Star Award recipients:**

1. Ms Dumisani Chauke
2. Mr Siyabulela Mandela
3. Dr Sweta Patnaik
4. Mr Conrad van Loggerenberg

Congratulations to the Rising Star Award recipients.

### **B. The Alumni Special Award recipient for 2020 is Nomhle Zako.**

Congratulations Ms Zako.

### **C. Our final category is the Alumni Achiever Award and the recipients are**

1. Mr St Claire Adriaan
2. Dr Theresia Ott

Congratulations to them both.

## **Conclusion**

As I move to conclude, to all our 2020 award recipients, your alma mater is proud of your achievements. We hope continue hearing about your achievements and impact in the future. Please stay connected to Nelson Mandela University.

Tonight is not a platform for long speeches, but it would be remiss of me not to remind you that we are in the midst of a devastating pandemic. We all need to contribute to fighting the disease. Please remember the basics of respecting social distancing, wearing a mask and sanitising. And please remind all those around you to do so as well. If we all follow these simple steps we can break the chain of rapid transmissions.

Enjoy the rest of the online ceremony and continue the journey with us.

Thank you. *Maze nethole*

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