



From left: Refilwe Mofokeng, Alaika Kassim, Julia Sibiya and Brenda Moodley are UKZN's women of science. Photo by Xolile Nkosi

Science women show how to lead the way!

By **XOLILE NKOSI**

WOMEN in science were recognised for the role they play in higher learning.

Representatives from the University of KwaZulu-Natal gathered at the Coastlands Hotel in Musgrave, Durban, to salute its passionate, dedicated and hard-working women scientists.

The event forms part of the university's Women's Month celebrations aimed at encouraging other women to join the sciences and engineering fields.

Sinenhlahla Sikhosana (24), from UKZN's astrophysics and cosmology research unit, told visiting pupils it wasn't easy being a woman in the science field.

"It won't be easy but stand your ground and don't quit," said Sinenhlahla.

"Let us work together to make science trend and make it fashionable."

Refilwe Mofokeng said she became a scientist to change the world and she is living her dream now. "You need to believe that you are enough, and if we help and support each other, then we as women will be enough."

UKZN bioresources engineering lecturer, Alaika Kassim, encouraged the pupils to learn something new every day.

"If you are not willing to learn, then no one will help you," said Kassim.

"But if you are willing to learn, no one can stop you. I'm always seeking new challenges so I can keep learning.

"I encourage all of you, regardless of your background or gender, to follow your passion and dreams, because those are what put us here."

Plant breeder Julia Sibiya said there were many careers in science to choose from.

She said she chose to work with plants, not chemicals.

"Everyone needs food so I do what I can to make sure only quality food gets grown."

UKZN vice-chancellor, Dr Albert van Jaarsveld, said they were proud of the calibre of women the university has produced over the years. "We've seen you grow to be wonder women in science, and we appreciate the role they play at our institution," Van Jaarsveld told the People's Paper.