

■ UKZN

Wonder Women in Science

BUKEKA SILEKWA

UKZN's College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science honoured women in science yesterday as part of the Wonder Women In Science 2019 campaign.

The campaign supports women making waves in the field of science.

Nobuhle Mchunu and Devina Chetty were two of the five women who received awards yesterday.

Mchunu, 26, is a PhD candidate. Her research focuses on TB-HIV co-infected individuals.

She said keeping life running smoothly both career wise and personally was not rocket science.

"I've been in a relationship for nine years and now we have a 10-month-old son. No matter how passionate I am about my maths, I draw the line when it comes to weekends. I value family time and being a new mother.

"Being a scientist can be scary, but it's not that hard as long as there are boundaries. I believe if a person can't control themselves, they can lose their minds because maths has an ability



FROM left: Dr Maria Schuld (who investigates how quantum computers can be used to achieve machine learning by obeying the laws of quantum theory), Devina Chetty (who works in genetics and cell biology), Mbalenhle Gwacela (food security), Nobuhle Mchunu (maths) and Dr Konstantina Velkushanova (environmental engineer) received Wonder Women In Science 2019 (WWIS) awards | DOCTOR NGCOBO

to get to someone's mind and your whole life gets sucked in. Stories about scientists who end up suffering from anxiety are real and true. As a woman, I think raising a child is similar to solving a mathematical problem; you just need the right formula."

Chetty graduated summa cum laude with majors in genetics and cell

biology. Her inspirations are with her daily, and are her mother and father, who she said were also over-achievers.

"Balancing life and work comes easier because I was raised in a family that valued education. I grew up knowing there's personal life and career life, and these have to be balanced.

"I do everything a typical young

woman does, and I have time for family and friends. There's nothing you can't do because you're a woman."

UKZN Vice-Chancellor Professor Nana Poku said National Science Week and National Women's Day shed light on the skills shortage in science, engineering and technology, and the limited female presence in these fields.