

■ STUDIES

Chetty breaks gender stereotypes in science

WENDY JASSON DA COSTA

A YOUNG Durban woman is changing perceptions about science and showing that it can be cool.

This week Devina Chetty, 21, an honours student in genetics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), was acknowledged by the institution's College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science through its annual Wonder Women In Science (WWIS) campaign as part of UKZN's Women's Month celebrations.

At a special event, she and four other women were recognised for their achievements in what is still largely considered a male domain.

Chetty said there were many

misconceptions about women in science but encouraged girls to look for examples around them.

"If you have a goal, go for it," she said. Chetty, who hails from Umhlanga, matriculated from Crawford College La Lucia and went on to study at UKZN.

During her undergraduate year in 2018, she was the best third-year student and graduated *summa cum laude* with majors in genetics and cell biology.

She is currently conducting research on the evolutionary history of a species of earthworm.

However, she wants to specialise in human genetics and will hopefully be able to pursue this at master's level.

She said when it came to pursuing dreams and goals, the question all women should ask themselves was not: "who's going to let me; but rather who's going to stop me?"

Chetty comes from a family of achievers. Her mom is a lawyer, her brother a civil engineer and her dad a chemical engineer. She chose to pursue genetics because "it seemed like something cool".

Chetty said it was important to have several interests or hobbies to maintain a balanced life.

"If you only do one thing that you focus on then you will go nuts." Outside of genetics she enjoys cooking, the gym, table tennis and watching television series.



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