

■ SCIENCE



DR Bongiwe Mshengu



DR Hloniphile Sithole Mthethwa



PROFESSOR Sunna Kassier

# UKZN honours 'Wonder Women'

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FIVE extraordinary women have been selected for the University of KwaZulu-Natal's 2020 Wonder Women In Science campaign – Professor Suna Kassier, Dr Bongiwe Mshengu, Dr Hloniphile Sithole Mthethwa, Dr Lorika Beukes and Dr Joy Adu.

The College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science honours its female scientists throughout August with its annual Wonder Women in Science campaign.

These are passionate, pioneering and persistent heroines who are making waves in the field of science. This initiative is a celebration of national Science Week and national Women's Month.

The Daily News spoke to two of the campaign candidates.

Kassier, 55, an academic leader of



DR Lorika Beukes

teaching and learning in the School of Agricultural, Earth and Environmental Sciences and associate professor of Dietetics and Human Nutrition, said she was grateful to be a candidate as it gave her a platform to promote the importance of young women engaging in Stem subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).

She said Covid-19 underscored the importance of the ability of science to solve global problems.

"To create an awareness of the interplay between science and addressing Covid-19, not only for the immediate future but in the years to come, my research has been adapted to highlight aspects such as the impact of Covid-19 on food security and food choices, as well as the ripple effect it has or will have on the prevalence of malnutrition (both under- and over-nutrition) among South Africans in the years to come," she said.



DR Joy Adu

Mshengu, 35, a senior tutor in the School of Chemistry and Physics and in UKZN's Science Access Programme, said she felt honoured for being nominated and recognised in her field.

Mshengu said with Covid-19, she realised the need for and urgency of groundbreaking scientific research in the world to find vaccines for various diseases more than ever.

She was interested in medicine since the age of 6 after a huge boil developed on her left foot and she couldn't walk. She was taken to a traditional healer, who used herbs to ripen the boil and treat the wound.

"From that day, I appreciated the healing powers of herbs, but I always wondered how or where these powers came from. I thought to myself that I needed to be a doctor to heal people like that. I then chose science subjects in school, since I knew that this was a path to medicine," said Mshengu.