Meet KZN’s youngest doctor

NOSIPHO MNGOMA

KWAZULU-Natal’s youngest doctor says he is proud to carry the baton of hope for his generation.

Today, Dr Sandile Kubheka, 20, will graduate with an MBChB degree from UKZN’s Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine.

The UKZN medical class of 2013 also voted him the next likely Minister of Health.

Kubheka said while some patients were uneasy about being treated by such a young doctor, most told him how proud they were of him.

“In me they see that ours is not a lost generation. This goes beyond my own achievements. It is humbling to know that people are motivated by my story.”

He obtained a distinction in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

He also received the Yashiv Sham Bursary, for having compassion and caring qualities, and the Enid Gordon Jacob Good Fellowship Prize for character and good conduct.

Answering a calling to heal patients suffering from diabetes, HIV and tuberculosis – ailments which plague many South Africans – Kubheka plans to specialise in internal medicine.

“I am fascinated by the endocrine system. Medicine is a profession that is always changing and as a doctor you should always improve your knowledge.”

The last born of five children to a supermarket manager mother, Kubheka said he knew in high school that he wanted to be a doctor.

He matriculated from Siyamukhela High School at age 15, having started school at age 5.

He was promoted to Grade 7 after only three months of Grade 6.

There were not many extramural activities at his boarding school to distract him, he says.

Kubheka spends his free time volunteering at the Happy Valley Clinic and Madadeni hospital.

“I love working in rural communities that do not have easy access to medical treatment. I assisted in registering the Happy Valley Clinic as a non-profit organisation during my student years and will continue to work with disadvantaged communities in the future,” he said.

The self-confessed perfectionist is now serving his internship at Grey’s Hospital in Pietermaritzburg.

He has a balanced life and enjoys watching television.

“I enjoy reality shows like Survivor and the Amazing Race. Like any guy my age, I also love video games and listening to music.”

Kubheka also enjoys time with friends, his age and older.

“My older friends have helped me mature. I do not feel like I have missed out on anything because of my age. I am fulfilling my purpose. God planned my life so that I was able to get to work at such a young age.”

His age is not a factor among colleagues.

They put the profession before age discrimination, he said.