COMMENDATIO'S vir Rektor se Uitstygtoekennings:
vir 12 Oktober 2011:
Rector's Awards for Succeeding Against the Odds

Goeienaand, almal. *Molweni. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen*.

Die aankondiging van die Rektor se Uitstyg-ontvangers is heel bo-aan my lysie van die lekkerste pligte van die jaar omdat die Universiteit op hierdie manier aan studente – wat hulle nie deur moeilike omstandighede laat onderkry nie – erkenning en 'n finansiële hupstoot kan gee om nog beter te vaar.

This encompasses the spirit of the HOPE Project, which is about this University defeating despair through its academic initiatives, through its research excellence, and through making a sustainable difference to people's lives.

The Rector's Award for Succeeding Against the Odds is one of the ways in which we as an institution support student success. Each of the recipients of this award is a role model. They have shown us what is possible despite obstacles in our way.

Our first recipient is ANISKA BRONKHORST:

For Aniska, the past three years – since she first enrolled as a student at Stellenbosch, has been emotionally challenging. She comes from a home environment that, in her own words, includes "sadness and disappointment".

Aniska's mother is the sole financial provider in her family, supporting herself, her husband and Aniska and her two siblings. She has had to work at two jobs to educate the children.

Aniska describes her mother as – quote *– "an amazing woman, and the reason why I have gotten so far and did so well in my studies" –* end quote*. She says her mother "has been a huge motivation in her life."*

Aniska matriculated in 2008 from Groote Schuur High in Cape Town. She received the Dux Learner Award in her final school year. She made first team in both netball and athletics, and was also a member of the school's swimming team.

Aniska can certainly stand her ground – that much we know from the fact that she was a member of a tug of war club, and was awarded provincial colours in this sport.

As a Matie, she has become actively involved at a kickboxing and martial arts academy, where she has done outstanding work as an ad hoc *coach.*

Also, since her school days, she has been actively involved in church outreach work, including regular visits to children admitted to hospital. She became a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society at Stellenbosch University last year.

Aniska is enrolled for a BA degree in Sport Science, specialising in Biokinetics. Since her first year of study at Stellenbosch in 2009, she has maintained a very good study record. For this, and for Succeeding Against the Odds, congratulations, Aniska!

Ladies and gentlemen, our second recipient, WANDILE GANYA, remembers how, as a high school pupil he preferred to spend his lunch-breaks in the library or in the computer laboratory – not only to acquire knowledge, but because he always went to school without lunch or any money to buy something to eat.

Books, knowledge and caring teachers took him away from the harsh reality of being one of six children in a Khayelitsha family with an unemployed father and only a mother's meagre income as a domestic servant on which to survive.

Wandile and his twin brother, Wanele, even had to write their matric exams on empty stomachs. During their final school year, Wanele was often ill with tuberculosis and Wandile then had to care for his twin and teach him the schoolwork that had been missed.

All this enticed them to the idea of furthering their education, as the key to a better future. Wandile's final school results in 2009 were outstanding. He was one of the top matriculants of the Western Cape Education Department and – like his twin – was admitted to the MBChB programme at Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Health Sciences in 2010. Stellenbosch University's Rector's Award for Succeeding against the Odds was awarded to Wanele last year. Now it is Wandile's turn.

He represented his school in debating and cultural activities. He was trained as a Youth Leader for the organisation Love of the World, and was actively involved in youth outreach projects in Khayelitsha. At Stellenbosch University, he was invited to join the Golden Key Honorary Society. He leads a full and active life at his university residence, Huis Kerkenberg, and elsewhere on the Tygerberg campus.

For this, and for Succeeding Against the Odds, congratulations, Wandile!

Dames en here, ons derde ontvanger is HENRY KOEKEMOER wat as kind in Chris Barnard se voetspore wou volg. Hy wou ’n hartspesialis word, want hy het geglo hy – en ek haal aan – “sou mense se harte kon regmaak sodat hulle weer liefde kan hê” – einde van aanhaling.

Dié droom het sedertdien verander, en as BRek-student werk hy nou hard om ’n geoktrooieerde rekenmeester te word. Wel, boeke wat klop maak ook mens se hart bly!

As die enigste een in sy nabye familie wat universiteit toe kon gaan, moes Henry vele hindernisse oorkom. Sy pa het kort ná Henry en sy tweelingbroer se geboorte die gesin verlaat. Henry het hom nooit geken nie, en onlangs eers gehoor dat hy ses jaar gelede al oorlede is.

Toe Henry tien jaar oud was, is sy ma skielik oorlede. Hy moes eers by sy een suster in Pretoria bly en toe by ’n tante in Mpumalanga, totdat sy kanker gekry het. Sy suster het intussen Nieu-Seeland toe geëmigreer en hy het weer by haar gaan bly, waar hy in 2009 gematrikuleer het.

Om sy Stellenbosse universiteitstudies sedert 2010 te befonds, moes hy dikwels tot laat snags studeer nadat hy gewerk het om geld te verdien. Hy het al by ’n aantal ondernemings deeltyds gewerk – ondermeer by ’n rekenmeestersfirma en verskeie restaurante.

Henry was die klasverteenwoordiger vir twee universiteitsmodules, het in die US se Akademiese Belangeraad gedien, is ’n uitvoerende komiteelid van die Studenteraad en ook ’n lid van die *Golden Key International Honour Society*. Op skool het hy veral in hokkie uitgeblink. Hy is ’n gekwalifiseerde hokkie-skeidsregter. Daarby ruim hy tyd in om Sondagskoolklasse aan te bied.

Sy hoofoogmerk bly egter om as student te presteer, en hy sê hy het teruggekom Suid-Afrika toe om op Stellenbosch te studeer.

Hiervoor, en vir die feit dat hy bo sy omstandighede uitgestyg het, geluk, Henry!

Dames en here, ons laaste ontvanger van die Rektor se Uitstygtoekenning vir 2012 is van jongs af gefassineer deur elektroniese en meganiese dinge. WILLEM VENTER onthou hoe sy onophoudelike nuuskierigheid en drif om te verstaan hoe goed werk sy onderwysers “teen die mure uitgedryf het”. Dit was ’n aanhaling.

Willem het dus vroeg al besef hy móét in ’n wetenskaplike rigting studeer. Ingenieurswese sou sy logiese voorkeur wees – maar hy is gesiggestremd. Hy het geweet hy kan nie “met ’n soldeerbout en pen behendig genoeg wees vir die eise van ingenieurswese nie”.

In Suid-Afrika studeer min totaal blinde studente in wetenskaplike rigtings – weens die kompleksiteite om sonder sig wiskunde te bemeester.

Ná gesprekke by die Universiteit Stellenbosch oor toelating tot BSc in Wiskundige Wetenskappe met Rekenaarwetenskap as hoofvak is Willem en nóg ’n gesiggestremde student tot dié program toegelaat ...

... op voorwaarde dat hulle goed verstaan dat gevorderde wiskunde-studies vir hulle ’n geweldige uitdaging sou wees!

Byvoorbeeld, weens probleme met die omskakel van wiskundige teks in Braille, moes Willem eerstejaarswiskunde aanpak sonder direkte toegang tot handboeke. Hy moes weekliks ses uur aan bykomende klasse bestee – en hieroor hy het baie waardering vir – soos hy dit stel – die “briljante” tutor wat hom hiermee gehelp het.

As skrander leerder aan die Pionierskool op Worcester het Willem onder meer gepresteer in atletiek, waarin hy drie goue medaljes op nasionale vlak behaal het en twee SA-rekords geëwenaar het.

Hy het ook as blinde navigator aan tydrenne deelgeneem – van die ouderdom van 11 af!

Op Stellenbosch het hy die afgelope drie jaar akademies en sosiaal uitgeblink. Hy dien in koshuis- en studentekomitees. En, ondanks groot struikelblokke, kon hy baie van sy medestudente in wiskunde uitstof. Hy het modules in Rekenaarwetenskap en in Musiektegnologie met lof geslaag.

Hiervoor, en vir die feit dat hy bo sy omstandighede uitgestyg het, geluk, Willem!