

Live for the moments, not the milestones



In the Zone

MARISELLE STOFBERG

Carla van Zyl is the top graduating student of the faculty of health sciences of the class of 2018 at the University of Namibia (Unam).

This motivated, driven and passionate student has worked hard throughout her studies and recently graduated from Unam.

Van Zyl was born on 7 July 1994 in Windhoek. She matriculated from Windhoek Afrikaanse Privaatskool in 2012 and went on to study medicine at Unam the following year.

"Unlike many others, I struggled to decide what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I tore ligaments in my knee in 2011 and that sparked my interest in medicine. By accident I stumbled across the career that chose me instead of me choosing a career," she said.

Van Zyl believes hard work is the only way to achieve your dreams. "I worked hard every day during my studies to make a success of them. I would never have been able to reach my dreams without the support of the people in my life."

It was the support she received from her loved ones that helped her during all the long nights of studying and hard work.

"There was always someone who would bring me coffee, help to call me



Carla van Zyl with her parents RW and Elsa van Zyl.

awake at 03:00 in the morning to continue studying or working, provide a shoulder to cry on, motivate me and encourage me to never give up."

Laughter was definitely the best medicine for this aspiring doctor to manage the stress during her studies. "When things get rough I take a day off and spend that with my friends and loved ones. Laughing with them and just enjoying their stories helps me when things get too much."

Apart from spending time with her loved ones, Van Zyl enjoys DIY projects and being creative in her free time. "I love creating something beautiful. I also enjoy reading and can easily finish a book in one day."

Namibian ophthalmologist, Dr Helera Ndaipovanhu Ndume has always been one of her biggest inspirations.

"As a Namibian female she has made an enormous impact in the medical field which used to be very male-dominated. She proved to people that everyone is equal and that success is not determined by your gender, but rather your determination and hard work."

Van Zyl is still waiting to start with her two-year internship at a state hospital, which is a requirement for medical students after completing their studies.

"We are still waiting for the positions to open up to allow us to start at the hospitals where we're placed."

Van Zyl encourages young people to pursue a career that they are really passionate about. "Never allow others to determine your career choices, because you need to do this for the rest of your life. This is the one decision where you are allowed to be selfish."

She further wants to encourage prospective students to use every second you are given while at university and also to use the opportunity to make friends. "These friends will help and support you throughout your studies, because no one else will really understand the challenges you are facing better than your fellow students. You can cry and laugh together and with them you can face the workload and achieve success."

"Life isn't a matter of milestones, but of moments. This quote by Rose Kennedy is the motto I try to follow everyday. I live for the moments, not just the end goal or dream. These moments are linked to your goals and make life special," she added.



Carla van Zyl is the top graduating student of the faculty of health sciences at Unam for 2018. PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

FUN FACTS ABOUT CARLA

- She sees herself as a 'kaalvoet plaaskind' and the first thing she does at home is take off her shoes.
- She loves sport and participated in every type of sport available and even played national hockey while in school.
- She's very loyal and believes in high school sweethearts and has been in a relationship with her sweetheart for seven years.
- She believes coffee should never be wasted and drinks hers dark and bitter.
- She's a very neat and organised person, except when it comes to her closet.