

FABI features at the 2007/8 NSTF awards ceremony

Prepared by Osmond Mlonyeni

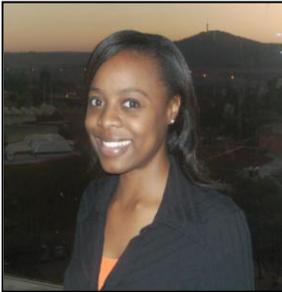
In the 'Science and Technology community' the Annual National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) awards are a platform for acknowledging the contributors of knowledge production. The NSTF awards for 2007/2008 were presented on the 27th May 2008 at a Gala Dinner held at Emperor's Palace Convention Centre, Kempton Park in Gauteng. This event also coincided with the NSTF's tenth anniversary.

The NSTF is a forum consisting of various professional bodies and councils, learned societies, private and government sectors involved in the advancement of science. As part of its mandate the NSTF organizes the NSTF awards. The aim of these awards is to '*recognize and celebrate both individuals and the teams of individuals for their outstanding contributions to the Science, Engineering, Technology and Innovation (SETI) community*' and the effect that such contributions will have on the promotion of sustainable economic growth and the quality of life of people in general and South Africans in particular. These awards fall into ten categories:

- Categories **A**, **B** and **C** were dedicated to individuals who made an exceptional contribution to the advancement and discipline of SET.
- Categories **D**, **E** and **F** were dedicated to individuals or teams that made an exceptional contribution to the advancement of SET through innovative concepts.
- Category **G** was dedicated to two individuals (male and female separately) who have made an exceptional contribution to the successful training and mentoring of black students or researchers in the SET community over the last five to ten years.
- Categories **H** and **J** were dedicated to senior and distinguished young black (< 40 yrs over the last two to five years) researchers. Each of the categories had a male and female recipient.
- Category **K** was reserved for a Science Communicator who in the past five years or less contributed to the elevation of science in the public sphere by publishing in print media, inserts in multimedia (radio and television) in an innovative way.

Although FABI was a finalist in Category **D** for the third successive year, this category was won by FARMOVS-PAREXEL team from the Department of Chemistry, University of the Free State. Their work entails the synthesis of isotope labeled internal standards and metabolites in the support of novel bio-analytical clinical trials for the registration of new medicines locally and internationally. Although FABI did not win this award, Prof Mike Wingfield, Director of FABI said that he was delighted that FABI was selected as a finalist for the NSTF awards, given that 2008 represented the 10th anniversary of an institution that celebrates diversity, multi-culturalism and ten years of research excellence.

In an effort to encourage young pupils to pursue careers in disciplines of SET, the NSTF announced the launch of a new award category for Promising Young Scientists. One of our mentorship students, Fati Thobejane, who is supported through the CTHB was one of two recipients of this new award. She also won a Technology and Human Resources Industry Programme (THRIP) bursary for the duration of her undergraduate studies. The THRIP initiative focuses on developing appropriate human resources in SET by supporting its research and technology development. Through the support of THRIP and NSTF, young students like Fati and Mothibasebo Kganane, the second recipient of this award in 2008 who is a first year electrical information engineering student at the University of Witwatersrand, can reach and exceed their potential.



Fati Thobejane, BSc Microbiology and FABI mentorship student, recipient of the NSTF Promising Young Scientist award and THRIP bursary.



Group of Fabians who attended the NSTF dinner