

Democratic Alliance Young Leaders

- Class of 2010 -



Amanda Ngwenya



Amanda is a law student from Durban who is passionate about social justice and is a keen advocate for the protection of refugee rights and those of displaced persons.

Amanda joined the DA because she believes in a liberal agenda, one that is cognisant of the South African context and which ensures equitable access to opportunities and resources, and recognizes that political freedom is meaningless without economic emancipation.

She has previously served as the Vice-President External of the SRC and is currently the Branch Leader of the Democratic Alliance Student Organisation (DASO) at the University of Cape Town as well as CEO of KHULA- a project of Ubunye that provides work experience and grants to high school learners in under-privileged schools in the Western Cape.

She would like to head up her own empire of companies, as well as being a politician and working for the United Nations Human Rights Commission (hopefully not all at once). Amanda enjoys reading and watching TV and is a fan of horror movies. In her spare time she enjoys reading up on great historical figures such as Elizabeth I.

Chandni Gopal



I am Chandni Gopal, a 20 year old, third year BCom Law student at the University of the Witwatersrand. During the school year I also tutor mathematics part time to grades 4 to Matric at Master Maths.

At the end of my Matric year, I joined the DA. In enrolling at Wits I began to pursue my political endeavours by joining the Democratic Alliance Students' Organisation (DASO). After much hard work during Helen Zille's visit to Wits and the 2009 General Election, I was voted in as DASO President at the 2009 AGM.

I served on various executive committees throughout High School and University. In 2006 I was Secretary General of a committee which coordinated fundraising events to raise R68000 for a charity. In 2007 I was the Secretary General of the Parktown High School for Girls LRC. I received 5 distinctions in Matric, with 96% in History, my favourite subject. In my first year of University I made the Dean's List for my academic results. I was invited to join the Golden Key International Honours Society and in my second year I served as the Academic Director of the society's Wits Chapter.

On a lighter side, I am a self confessed workaholic. I am a bubbly person, but I have a shy side too. I am an avid reader. I'm now hooked on Robert Jordan's Wheel of Time Series. I also paint and draw and love music and movies.



Gordon Mackay



I am a senior consultant at Quindiem Consulting - Ernst and Young's South African alliance partner- where I consult to African governments, governmental development agencies, NGOs, the World Bank, IGOs and local and global banks and insurers.

In 2007, I was awarded the Commonwealth/DfID Scholarship to attend the world's leading centre for the study of Africa, Asia and the Middle-East – the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London - where I completed my Masters in International Studies and Diplomacy, majoring in International Relations, International Law and the politics and governance of Africa.

In 2005-2006, I was selected as the youngest member of the British Council's Pan-African Leadership Development Programme and went on to represent South Africa at the Pan-African leadership conference in Accra, Ghana, where I was pleased to lead a panel discussion on the failure of HIV/AIDS communication strategies in combating the spread of the disease amongst disaffected population groups

I am a recently elected DA public representative serving in the City of Johannesburg and am also member of the DA Youth. In my scarce spare time I like to read (biographies and periodicals mostly), swim, work-out, do some Yoga, go to the cinema and meet with friends over a good lunch or dinner.



Malesela Mothiba



“Mali” Mothiba was born and spent the first 22 years of his life in Johannesburg, born in the South (Soweto), then moving to the West (Kagiso), ultimately spending the better part of his life in the North (Bryanston). He comes from a close family, and is the first born of three boys.

Mali attended three different schools in Johannesburg, namely St. Davids (grades one through five), Montrose Primary (grades six and seven), and St. Stithians College (high school). After School he went to study at RAU, which was subsequently changed to the University of Johannesburg, by the time he had completed his studies.

Upon graduating for university he started working for Citadel Investment Services in their Sandton office, doing a learnership, but four months later asked to be relocated to Cape Town to join the company's investment research team. He continues to spend his days as an Investment Analyst for Citadel. It was while helping during the Citadel community outreach projects that he started helping out in the communities around the Western Cape, building houses, painting orphanages and spending time with the children. He has also through his networks collected toys and educational material for the children.

Some of his favourite things include playing musical instruments, reading biographies, and taking long drives on Sunday afternoons exploring the different pockets of natural beauty hidden in the different corners of the Western Cape.

Megan Adderley



I am a realist-idealist who has lived all over South Africa and believes in the transformational power of story telling. Although small in stature, I am big on delivery. I studied at Rhodes University, completing my BA LLB (cum laude) in 2007. While at University I developed and was involved in a number of community projects. My commitment to these projects was recognised when I was awarded the Rhodes Centre for Social Development Student Volunteer of the Year award (2007) and the Amnesty International Rhodes Woman of the Year award (2007).

I was involved in student governance structures as a member of the Rhodes SRC disciplinary board. After completing my studies I spent a year working as a high school teacher in East London and am currently completing my articles of clerkship at a specialist environmental law firm in Cape Town. I am very interested in current affairs and history, particularly contemporary African history and the history of wars. I have a strong commitment to social justice and I will be reading for a Masters degree in Constitutional and Administrative law at UCT part time next year.

I enjoy running, reading and expressing myself creatively through writing and drawing. My favourite book is *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. I am often found at art house films and live music. My friends call me Ninjapixie.

Michael Shackleton



My full name is Michael Stephen Shackleton, I am 22 years old and I was born in Cape Town. I finished primary school in Cape Town at Camps Bay and matriculated in Johannesburg at Hyde Park High School. I took a gap year in 2006 where I worked in 2 different branches of Exclusive Books and did an internship at a public relations agency called FCB Redline in Sandton.

I began my LLB degree at the University of Pretoria in 2007, and 2010 will be my final year of study. I am presently the Deputy Chairperson of the Democratic Alliance Students' Organisation at the university, and am also Vice-Chair on the DA Youth Regional Executive Committee for Gauteng North. I am certain that I will be elected Branch Leader of the Tuks branch in 2010. It is an ambition of mine to become a City Councillor and possibly even a Member of Parliament one day.

I have also held a variety of other leadership positions – such as being on the Executive Committee of the United Nations on campus, and also that of Law House. I have also acted as the Vice-President of the Student World Assembly on campus, and am currently the Editor of the Law Faculty newsletter (called the “De Facto”).

My father passed away 10 days before I started high school due to a long battle with cancer, and my mother passed away 2 weeks before I began by first semester first year exams due to heart failure.

Nicole Graham



Nicole was born on the Bluff, south of Durban, and has lived there all her life. One of two daughters, she completed her schooling at Grosvenor Girls' High School in 2007. In her matric year, she was elected house captain, a prefect, head of the Learners' Council and softball captain. In 2006 she had also served as the Mayor of the Durban Youth Council, and is currently a board member of the DYC Steering Committee.

Nicole is reading for a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. She is majoring in Political Science and Legal Studies, and plans to complete this degree in 2010.

Thereafter, she plans to pursue a postgraduate Bachelor of Laws, and also continue her studies into Political Science.

She joined the Democratic Alliance in 2007, and has represented the party at eThekweni Youth Council and two Kwa-Zulu Natal Youth Legislatures. She was one of the founding members of DASO UKZN Howard College, and currently chairs this organisation. She is also a member of the Students' Representative Council at the SASCO-dominated UKZN, where she holds the office of Community Development. Nicole also serves as an executive member of the Central Durban Constituency, where she deals with Youth issues. She aspires to become a valuable and contributing member of the DA, where she plans to pursue a career in politics.

Beyond the stats, Nicole is a vibrant young democrat, passionate about her country. An eternal Afro-optimist, she is especially concerned with gender equality and the young South African identity. She enjoys reading, cooking and talking (far too much!), and is also learning isiZulu. Nicole is a passionate and rowdy Orlando Pirates supporter and enjoys learning about and celebrating local culture. She is incredibly excited about the challenges and opportunities offered by Young Leaders, and looks forward to the year ahead

Paul Galatis



I was born at a very young age in Johannesburg in 1980. At the age of 7 we moved to Pietermaritzburg where I attended junior school at Cowan House and high school at Hilton College. I loved my sport throughout school and played tennis, hockey & cricket. In standard 9 I was lucky enough to go the Kings School Canterbury in England on a 3 month school exchange where I was introduced to the field of graphic design.

After school I went to the University of Cape Town where I studied a Bachelor of Business Science majoring in Information Systems. It was at university that I dabbled extensively in graphic design and branding as head of marketing for RAG. After RAG I set up a small design and branding agency at university and became involved in the establishment of Student Enterprises, an organisation that sought to encourage entrepreneurship at UCT.

After university I was approached by Standard Bank to project manage two initiatives: their graduate development programme (which was in dire need of an overhaul) and thereafter the launch of the inaugural season of 20-over cricket (Pro20) on behalf of the bank. On completing these two projects I set up a small design & branding agency in Johannesburg where I worked until 2005 when my girlfriend and I moved to London where I continued working for myself as a branding & design consultant, I became very involved in the online world and from where we began to travel extensively.

In June 2009 we left the UK after 4 great years and set off on our 4.5 month route home to SA which took us to North Africa, Europe, Asia and South America and included a tuk-tuk race in Sri Lanka en route! We have home for a month and are over the moon to be back in SA and cannot wait for 2010.

Phumzile van Damme



My name is Phumzile Van Damme and I am currently employed by the Democratic Alliance as a researcher in the Parliamentary Office.

I was born in 1983 in Nelspruit but spent my early childhood in Swaziland and Belgium.

I attended Pietermaritzburg High School for Girls between 1997 and 1999 where I was elected to Students Representative Council. I completed my secondary education at Lyttelton Manor High School in Pretoria with full academic colours.

I then attended Rhodes University and completed a Bachelor's Degree with majors in Political Science, International Relations and Law. During my time at university, I was actively involved in student politics and was one of the founding members of Kujenga Uchi Upia – a community outreach programme where we encouraged students to give extra lessons to underprivileged children in the local community.

Other than politics my other passions are music, food and film.

Richard McLaverty



Richard was born and raised in the Zululand town of Eshowe in Kwazulu Natal. He matriculated in 2007 from Kearsney College where he was awarded the Dale Carnegie Highest Achievement Award, Honours for Service to School as well as Colours for Drama.

He is going into his third year at UCT where he's majoring in Political Science and Sociology. After previously heading up the Media and Communications Portfolio, Richard is now the Deputy-Chair of DASO UCT.

He currently sits on the SRC, where he heads up the Leadership, Social Responsiveness and Alumni Components. He is also a member of UCT's HIV/Aids Co-Ordination Unit. Richard is a qualified Emergency Care Practitioner, has worked in both the state and private sector and with the London Ambulance Service.

He is also a volunteer for and part of the Comrades Marathon Medical team. Richard is passionate about politics and development and intends pursuing a career in this field.

He enjoys keeping current and engaging in political discussion and debates. He loves meeting and socialising with people, going to the theatre, the outdoors, music and good food and wine.

Russel Brueton



I was born and raised in Johannesburg. I attended Sandringham High School from 2001 to 2005, where I obtained seven distinctions in matric and was awarded by the Gauteng Department of Education in their Excellent Learner Awards for 2005. On completing high school, I registered for a Bachelor of Arts at WITS. In addition to completing courses in History and Philosophy, I triple majored in Law, Political Studies and International Relations, with distinction, and was awarded the Faculty of Humanities Silver Medal for Meritorious Achievement, placing me in the top three of my degree. Although tempted to complete my LLB, I decided to pursue an Honours degree in International Relations. I have since finished my Honours degree with distinction. During my time at WITS University I have also involved myself extramurally, serving as President of the WITS Model UN Society. I was also a co-founder and then Chairperson of the WITS Darfur Awareness Committee. At the end of 2008, I was elected as Treasurer of the WITS DASO, and was again elected as Secretary for the 2009/2010 term. I serve on my local Ward Committee and was recently elected to the Finance Portfolio in the DA's Central Johannesburg Constituency. In 2009, I was awarded the Ford Global Scholars Scholarship and I have spent this "Fall Semester" interning in Washington DC at the International Center for Terrorism Studies. I have also completed a course on the Millennium Development Goals. I believe strongly in the open, opportunity society; and I am confident in South Africa's ability to succeed in the future. I am interested in international humanitarian law, South African development issues and the formulation of public policy. I am a passionate Springbok supporter and I enjoy spending time outdoors.

Seham Areff



I'm an 18 year old student at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. I'm going into the second year of my BA Llb. My majors are Legal Studies, French and Politics. I enjoy reading, cooking, spending time in the sun and having a good meal.

I went to High School at Durban Girls' College and it was there that I got involved in, and became passionate about, debating and I have been ever since.

Currently, I coach the KZN Junior school team and I'm an active member of the UKZN Debating Union, so I love a good debate! I have a 21 year old brother who has turned me into a fanatic when it comes to cricket, soccer and stand up comedy.

I collect old tins, boxes, badges, postcards... anything vintage or antique really interests me. I'm of Arab decent but I was born in Durban, and I've lived there all my life.

Siphesihle Ngobese

My name is Siphesihle (Sihle) Khulekani Ngobese born in Durban, and grew up in the township of Umlazi. I'm the child of a single mother who is physically handicapped, and also live with my grandmother (a retired nursing matron). I attained a good education from government schools from pre-school right up to university, having attended Berea Primary and later Park View Senior Primary school. My years of secondary education were at Hillcrest High School where I played rugby, hockey and was an avid thespian and entertainer, involved with many speech & drama productions. I matriculated in 2004 and entered the University of KwaZulu-Natal, where I graduated with my undergraduate degree having majored in Industrial Psychology and Industrial, Organizational & Labour Studies (IOLS) in 2008. I'm an individual whom enjoys taking initiatives, and starting constructive movements; thus in my final year of undergrad studies I founded and led C.L.A.S.S a student society aimed at developing young HR professionals whilst they studied. I still play rugby, however on a more social club level.

I have recently completed my postgraduate Honours degree in IOLS (2009); having submitted a research dissertation that investigated the effects of the global recession on the logistics sector: with a particular focus on truck drivers. In 2009 having recognized the need for a more effective student political body, I founded and led the Democratic Alliance Students Organization on Howard College (DASO). This was a first for UKZN, and with a strong team having been assembled, we managed to win two valuable seats on the SRC. I am currently completing an internship with Capital Outsourcing Group.

I'm simply vision-led and values driven, as I'm a social thinker with a "can-do" attitude, and enjoy constructive debate.



Skhumbule 'SK' Mpitimpiti



My name is Skhumbule Mpitimpiti, other wise known an SK. I come from Whittlesea a small town near Queenstown. I was born on the 8th of April 1986. I did my schooling at Queen's College and I matriculated in 2004. I then came to Port Elizabeth and did two years of media studies at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. I have always been interested in studying law so in 2007 I enrolled for LLB at the same university. I am now on my forth year of studies towards an LLB degree.

I am an optimistic, motivated and reserved person. I am also a firm believer in second chances. I like to speak less and listen more and I am a big fan of education in whatever form it may come. My interests are politics, Greek mythology, history and travelling. I also have a keen interest in African cultures and I plan to visit most of the African countries before I reach the age of thirty two.

I enjoy going out, socialising, meeting new people and hearing new life stories. I am also a sports fan, I enjoy playing and watching soccer so you can guess how exited I am about the world cup.

I am inspired by all young people, our differences, our similarities and the colourful dreams we all have. I am also amazed by the spirit of resilience, determination and the hope that all young people share. I try to live my life according to a quote from Thoreau, it says "go confidently in the direction of your dreams and live the life you've imagined".

Daniella Ebenezer



An ambitious communication practitioner Daniella strives for excellence in the communications industry, holding a Btech Honours Degree in Public Relations Management.

Leading a team of ten members, as Deputy Director of Communications & Customer Relations at the provincial Department of Local Government and Housing, she believes that communication is a strategic and essential function for brands, as reputations are managed and images are built in the minds stakeholders.

Daniella cut her teeth in the industry in marketing before progressing into public relations, at age 24 she was successful in attaining her current position.

Daniella is a newly wed and enjoys spending time with her husband and cats. In her down time she enjoys the simple things in life, reading, exercising and watching documentaries.