

Dr Matome Eugene Makgopa  
22 Feb 1985 – 9 Sep 2020



It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Dr Matome Eugene Makgopa late on Wednesday 9th September 2020 after a prolonged illness.

Dr Matome Eugene Makgopa was a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences. He obtained his BSc in Human Genetics in 2005, and his Honours in Genetics in 2006, both from the University of Pretoria. He obtained his MSc in Industrial and Commercial Biotechnology from the University of Newcastle, UK, in 2009, and then his PhD from UP in 2014. During his PhD he studied in Prof Christine Foyer's group at Leeds University (UK). After a 10 month postdoc at the ARC he joined the staff of the department as a Lecturer in June 2014, being promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2017.

His particular research interests lay in plant biotechnology, especially in cysteine protease inhibitors and the role they play in helping the plant (notably soybean) respond to biotic and abiotic stress. He was a research leader within the Molecular Plant Physiology research group in the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI), and recently joined the Grain Research Programme. At the time of his passing he was growing his research group and expanding his collaborations, and had graduated five postgrad students. He was a rising star at UP and in South African academia, and was, for example, nominated for election as a council member of the South African Association of Botanists.

As a lecturer and teacher, Dr Makgopa was widely respected, and he taught biotechnology-related content at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> levels, as well as Honours courses. His students often gave rave reviews of his teaching and he was considered open, friendly and approachable.

He always had a ready smile and quick joke, and was quietly professional. He loved cooking for his family and friends, and was a great fan of local soccer teams. He leaves his partner Mvelo Gogo, and a young daughter, Hope. His passing leaves a large hole in all our lives.

Rest in peace, Eugene.

Prepared by Prof. Nigel Barker, Prof. Dave Berger and Mr Calvin Mophuting.