



MERCURY NEWS

# Durban doctor awarded Oxford University's Rhodes Scholarship, joining the ranks of Justice Edward Cameron and former US president Bill Clinton



*Dr Kapil Narain has been awarded the prestigious Rhodes scholarship to study at Oxford University in 2023. Picture: Supplied.*

Written by

[Karen Singh](#)

**Durban - Dr Kapil Narain has been awarded the prestigious Rhodes scholarship to study at Oxford University in 2023.**

Narain, who is from Durban and graduated from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's (UKZN) 2020 medical class, intends to read for a DPhil in Clinical Medicine, focusing on HIV immunology.

UKZN said all recipients of the scholarship are people of outstanding intellect, character, leadership, and commitment to service.

UKZN lists some of the former recipients of the scholarship:

- Astronomer Edwin Hubble, Nobel laureate.
- Australian pharmacologist Lord Howard Florey.
- Founder of the Fulbright scholarship James William Fulbright.
- Olympic gold medalist William Warren Bradley.
- Former US president Bill Clinton.
- Justice Edward Cameron, retired judge of the Constitutional Court.
- Bram Fischer, anti-apartheid Struggle Icon.
- Trudi Makhaya, current economic adviser to President Cyril Ramaphosa
- Kumi Naidoo, human and climate rights activist.

Narain said he is honoured and ecstatic to be selected as a Rhodes Scholar.

"This is testament to my academic, leadership and activist endeavours, to combat injustices. I aim to utilise this opportunity to its fullest and will continue to strive and contribute towards a better South Africa, Africa and World," he said.

He said he would like to be a high impact African scientist, who is not only contributing to the scientific body of literature but designing and leading work that will be clinically significant and change practice.

"Furthermore, as a medical student and junior doctor I have mentored many students throughout Africa. I hope to continue to expand on this and further train students from Africa in research and aim to ultimately reverse the brain drain," added Narain.

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According to UKZN, Narain is a multi award-winning youth leader, One Young World ambassador, medical doctor, one of Mail & Guardian’s Top 200 Young South Africans where he was the youngest in the health category and a recipient of the prestigious Abe Bailey Travel Bursary in 2019.

“Narain is passionate about academia and has 15 publications in peer-reviewed journals. More recently, Narain was selected to publish an editorial in the Official Journal of the World Health Organization (WHO), ‘The Bulletin’. The journal is amongst the top 2.4 % of journals internationally,” said the university.

The university said his article, “Strategies for malaria vaccination during the Covid-19 pandemic in African countries” focused on mechanisms governments and stakeholders can adopt to ensure a successful roll-out of the Malaria vaccine amid Covid-19 in Africa.

In addition, UKZN said Narain has presented and attended conferences extensively in Africa and Europe

Other awards include:

- Winner of Rising Star award as an Inaugural recipient – awarded by the South African Clinician Scientists Society (2021).
- Leadership award from Operation Smile South Africa as part of their Taskforce (2021) which raised funds for 10 children to receive cleft lip and palate surgery.
- Discovery's Best Emerging Leader Award in 2018.

Narain, who also served as a Centre for the Aids Programme of South Africa (Caprisa) trainee during his medical studies, intends to return to South Africa and become involved in vaccine development and trials.



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