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PRESIDENT'S SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT MILAAN VAN WYK



Milaan Van Wyk came to NMT in 2021 from Rehoboth, Namibia - as a transfer student from New Mexico Highlands University in 2020 – as the first recipient of the NMT Coach's Choice Scholarship

(article at www.nmt.edu/news/coachs_choice_first_scholarship.php).



After graduating with his NMT B.S. in Mineral Engineering in May 2024, he is pursuing his M.S. here in the same discipline, with an expectation of completing his degree in December 2025.

He's passionate about learning about different types of mineral engineering. As an undergraduate, he interned at a surface copper mine in Arizona in 2023-24. As a graduate student, he's researching two thesis topics related to underground mining health and safety conditions: improving algorithm efficiency for optimization of a safety evacuation route for miners, and human machine interactions for robots in mine search and rescue. In the long term, Milaan is interested in uranium extraction (Namibia is a major producer) and global nuclear reactor development.

While an undergraduate rugby player, Milaan played fly-half (position 10) and served as team co-captain for the 2021 and 2022 seasons. He was selected for the National College Rugby Men's All-American team in 2021 and 2022 and was a member of the NMT team during their 15s and 7s championship seasons in 2022. In addition to his academic pursuits, Milaan is President of the New Mexico Tech Society of Exploration Geophysicist student club; he also now works as assistant NMT rugby coach.

As an international student located halfway around the world away from his family, Milaan noted that starting at New Mexico Highlands University, a very small school, during COVID worked in his favor. He had time to adapt to a foreign country and culture as well as acclimate to. He cited a favorite quote, "You shouldn't focus on the top of the staircase – take one step at a time."

As the first member of his family to attend college, Milaan is grateful for the financial support provided by NMT scholarships. The President's Tuition Assistance Scholarship is helping him to focus on his education and the experience of being a college student. It also has allowed him to excel on many fronts. And it has lightened his financial burden. He says, "Thank you to alumni and donors who support this scholarship fund. Thank you for the education, the experiences, and the opportunity to make my family proud."

