

# Five years in jail for fraud accused Schumacher

**By LUVUYO MEHLWANA**

A FORMER city official who pocketed R439 000 meant for litter pickers has been sentenced to five years in prison.

Former Nelson Mandela Bay community liaison officer, Pumeza Schumacher, appeared in the Port Elizabeth Commercial Crimes Court on Thursday.

Her sentencing came after she pleaded guilty to fraud in September.

The 38-year-old created ghost litter pickers and set up two accounts for the money to be paid into.

Payments were made from October 2013 to September last year. The money was meant for workers to clean Nelson Mandela Bay wards as part of the expanded public works programme.

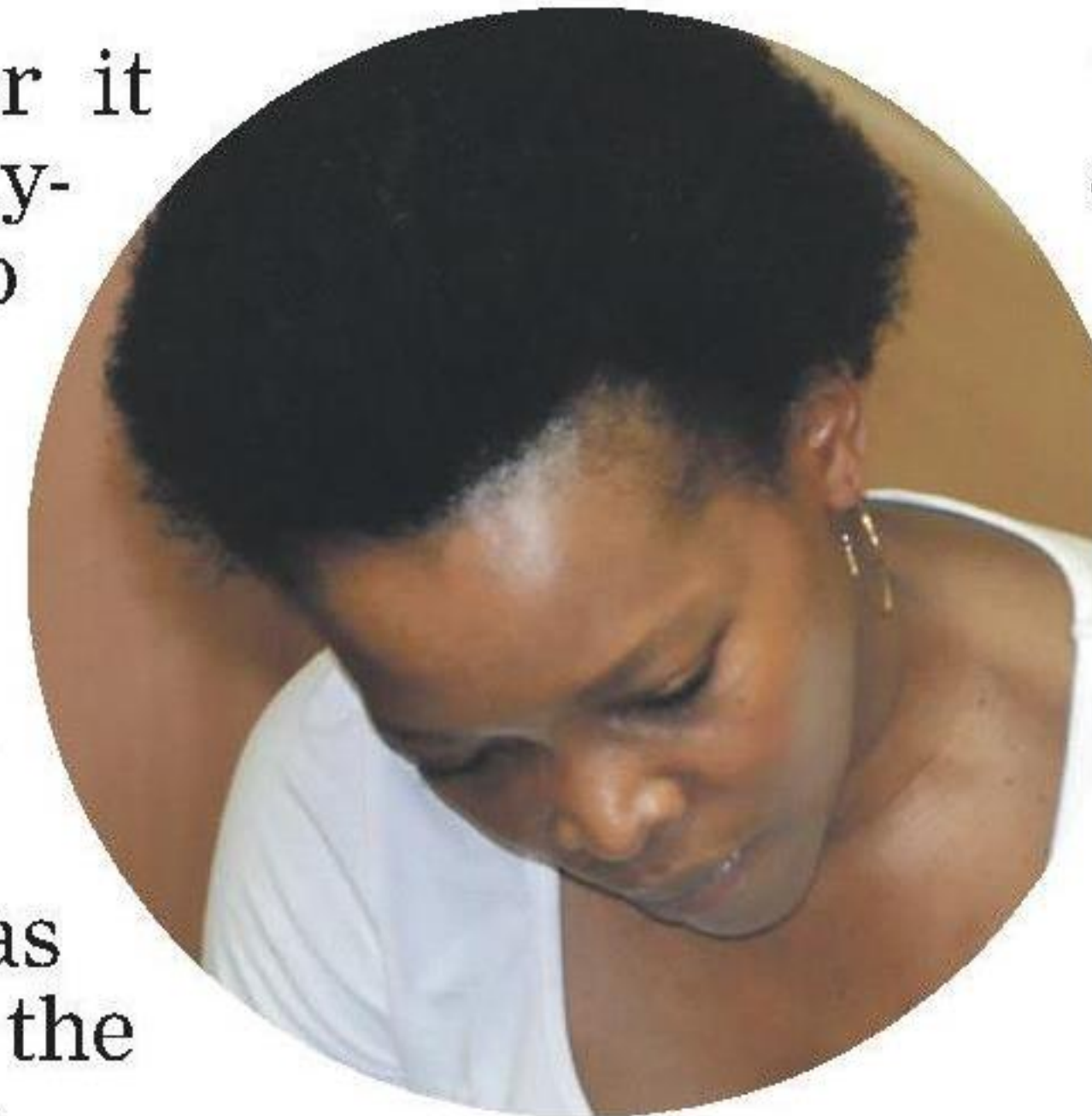
The fraud was uncovered during an in-

ternal municipal audit after it was noticed that irregular payments were being made into the two accounts.

Handing down sentence, Magistrate Johannes Claassen said Schumacher had abused the trust of her employer and the community.

“The money you stole was put aside for the poorest of the poor who earn meagre wages to feed their families,” said Claassen.

“You spent the money not on necessities but used it for clothes and entertainment. It gives me no joy to sentence you today but justice must prevail.”



**Former official Pumeza Schumacher in court on Thursday.** Photo by

*Luvuyo Mehlwana*

“You committed a very serious offence, but you took this court in your confidence by pleading guilty and showed remorse.

“That leads me to sentence you to five years direct imprisonment.”

He also ruled that Schumacher was unfit to possess a firearm licence.

Following her sentence, Schumacher’s parents, friends and family – who were present in court – broke down in tears.

Schumacher started working for the municipality as a depot clerk in 2007.

She was promoted to community liaison officer in 2013.