

GCB Awards

The third annual awards evening of the General Council of the Bar was held at Nedcor Bank, Sandton, on 3 October 2002. At the event the Sir Sydney and Lady Felicia Kentridge Award for Service to Law was presented to Dr Wallace Mgoqi for his contribution on the Land Claims Commission. The Pius Langa Scholarship was presented to Ms Praveena Sukraj, a pupil candidate at the Durban Bar. Special guests of honour were retiring senior judges from the Supreme Court of Appeal and the Constitutional Court.

Sydney and Felicia Kentridge Award

Dr Wallace Amos Mgoqi is the third recipient of the Sydney and Felicia Kentridge Award for Service to the Law, set up by the GCB in 2000. In his tribute the chairman of the GCB concluded that Dr Mgoqi, who is presently Chief Land Claims Commissioner, "... symbolizes a land restitution programme which functions in the often tenuous divide between emotion and reason. In conferring the award on him, the GCB recognises the crucial role he plays in sustaining respect for the rule of law in this country."

Dr Mgoqi was born on 7 June 1949 in Goodwood, Cape Town. When he was six years old, his family was forcibly removed from their home in that suburb. They settled in Nyanga where he started his primary schooling in 1957. After matriculating at Healdtown High School in Fort Beaufort in 1970, he went on to Fort Hare University with a bursary from the Geffen family through the South African Institute of Race Relations on condition that he studied social science. He was expelled from that university in October 1973, a month before he sat for his final year examinations, for protesting with a group of 59 students against the expulsion of another group of students. He resumed his social work studies by correspondence through Unisa, and it took him three more years to complete the same degree

which he had been due to complete a month before he was expelled.

After graduating in 1976 he worked for the Cape Flats Committee for Interim Accommodation, an NGO mobilising homeless people. He subsequently received a Netherlands bursary to study law. After obtaining the LLB degree, he joined the Legal Resources Centre until February 1995, and also qualified as an attorney. His life's work as a professional lawyer was dedicated to representing the homeless. He spent considerable time and effort in furthering his own training, particularly in mediation and negotiation, by attending a variety of international courses, programmes, and workshops. In 1994 he was appointed commissioner for the new IKAPA Municipality, the local authority for Langa, Nyanga, Gugulethu, New Crossroads and KTC.

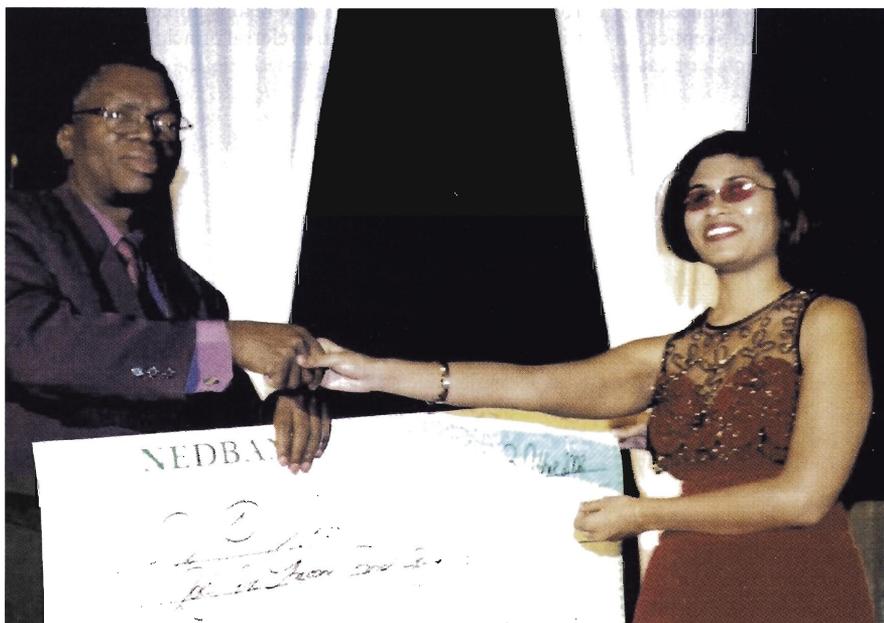
He was appointed Deputy Chief Land Claims Commissioner for the Western and Northern Cape in March 1995. The first land restitution claim – by the Elandsloof community – was finalised on 16 of December 1996. On 31 March 1999 Dr Mgoqi was appointed Chief Land Claims Commissioner. By the end of December 2001, the number of settled land restitution claims had reached 29 000 – up from 41 when he was first appointed Chief Land Claims Commissioner.

Dr Mgoqi has received many awards, including the Ubuntu award from the



The third recipient of the Sydney and Felicia Kentridge Award, Dr Wallace Mgoqi, centre, with Mrs Mgoqi and Chris Liebenberg, chairman of Nedcor.

African community in the Western Cape (1993); the Ithemba Civic Leadership Award to "... honour those largely unsung heroes who keep the spirit of hope alive in our community" (1998); an award in recognition of his long-standing support for rural development at the 10th anniversary of the Itireleng Educational Project, a rurally based community development and education project in Phalaborwa (1998). In 1996 he was appointed honorary president of the Business Skills and Development Centre, a project he had co-founded in 1987, training young Black women in a broad range of business skills. In February 2001 Dr Mgoqi was made life governor



Constitutional Court Justice Pius Langa congratulating Praveena Sukraj of the Natal Bar on receiving the Pius Langa Scholarship from Nedcor.

of the University of Cape Town Board of Governors. In 2002 the UCT conferred an honorary doctorate in law on him.

Pius Langa Bar Scholarship

The Pius Langa Bar Scholarship is awarded annually by the GCB to the most meritorious pupil advocate in the National Bar Examination. This year the award went to a pupil from the Durban Bar, Praveena Sukraj. Praveena, who is visually impaired, matriculated with four distinctions and an A-aggregate in 1995. She obtained the

degrees of BSocScience (1998) and LLB (2000) at the University of Natal. She received several scholarships and awards in the course of her academic career. She has served as tutor in law and social science and is currently working on her masters degree in social science.

Praveena is also a keen swimmer.

Retiring senior judges

The immediate past chairman of the GCB, Jeremy Gauntlett SC, proposed a toast to the retiring senior judges: Joos

Hefer, Johann Kriegler, Peet Nienaber and John Smalberger (who was unable to attend). He sketched the career of each, and their remarkable individual contributions. Although they had now reached what Holmes (Neville, not to be confused with Oliver Wendell) called the age of statutory senility, it was to be expected that each would enjoy a vigorous post-judicial life. Recent events in Zimbabwe brought home the vital contribution of judges to sustaining a constitutional democracy, and the need to resource and support them. 

IBA Conference: opening ceremony

Contributed by AJ Dickson SC, Durban Bar, member of the honorary host committee

The opening ceremony of this prestigious conference on 20 October 2002, the first IBA conference held on African soil, was an impressive and rich experience; throbbing with African rhythms and the promise of a new Africa committed to the rule of law and democratic institutions.

The delegates and their families assembled in the main hall of the ICC, Durban, to hear Henry Cele announce the arrival of the dignitaries. He gave way to the national anthem and Richard Loring's African Footprint. This internationally acclaimed show is a celebration of the African Renaissance ideal, a recurring theme throughout the evening. An ensemble cast thumped, drummed, danced and sang their way through a musical journey exploring South Africa's colourful diversity. It was exciting, vibrant and emotional and it had the international audience clapping enthusiastically to the beat.

Master of ceremonies, Malcolm Wallis SC, spoke for all us locals when he announced how proud he was to be a South African.

He introduced the leaders of the IBA, Dianna Kempe QC, president of the IBA, and Jacques Buhart, chair of the IBA Business Law Section, who both took as their themes the effects of September 11 on the global community and how lawyers were going to address these.

Deputy President Jacob Zuma welcomed the delegates to South Africa and wished them well in their deliberations. He committed South Africa to the attainment of the objectives of NEPAD and the maintenance of the rule of law.

At the Barristers' and Advocates' Forum



From left to right: Hoosen Gani (Durban), Sally Curtain, Frank Clarke SC (Ireland), David Curtain SC (Australia), Glen Martin SC (Australia, and co-chair of the Barristers' and Advocates' Forum).



SCA retired Judge Peet Nienaber, Colin Campbell QC (Scotland), Paul Sreenan SC (Ireland), and Douglas Shaw QC, Durban, panelists of the appeal advocacy session. See p.37.

The delegates were then welcomed to Durban by Ashwin Trikamjee, the chair of the conference host committee. The other special guests included the Minister of Justice and the premier of KwaZulu-Natal.

This was a joyful and impressive opening ceremony embraced by a large receptive audience of about 10 000. This, as an opener, was a true indicator of what has been a wonderful conference in all respects. 



Well-known advocacy trainers, Rashid Vahed SC, Durban, and Chris Marnewick SC, formerly of the Durban Bar and currently teaching at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, Auckland, New Zealand.