

Free State

By Henriette Murray, Bloemfontein

Members

Well, what we've all been dreading for the past few years has finally happened: the FS Bar has 'split' - fortunately only figuratively! With two of the 60 Bar members already sharing one office and the Supreme Court of Appeal still occupying the entire third floor of the Iustitia Building, the five 2009 pupils, Lawrence Manye, Berna Smal, Danita de Kock, Willem van Aswegen and Mike Louw, who took chambers on 1 December 2009, had no other option than to rent premises in the Metropolitan Building on Aliwal Street. With not an inch of extra space remaining, 2010 mentors perforce have to accommodate the pupils in their chambers. The five new arrivals are: Altus Kitching (Cape law firm), Anchen Coetzee and Stelios Tsangarakis (from EG Coopers, Bloemfontein), Denise Greyling (from Webbers, Bloemfontein) and Almé Stanton (from the FS Law Society).

As to further Free State pastimes: some of our members actually prefer to relax in their spare time and, astonishingly, find the time to create beautiful things from the Free State flats and further. Two such colleagues are Bertie Fourie and Henri Benade, both with a passion for nature and wood.

Bertie has crossed seven African countries in his 4X4 photographing trees and collecting seeds and trees and rocks, from the Tsodilo

Hills in Botswana to the Fish River Canyon in Namibia, to create an amazing bonsai collection of baobab, wild olive, batleja, Kei-apple, white stinkwood (Cape Laurel), acacia, maple and ficus trees, to name but a few. In four of the five well-known bonsai styles, he patiently twists and prunes and shapes and styles for three years per tree, the bonsai roots and trunks into a fairy-land of 'dwarf trees' some of which, like the baobabs, have to be nurtured and protected against the harsh Free State winters by being kept indoors, some even in his closet, to be replanted in the spring. And whenever a bonsai dies, Bertie recreates it into beautiful polished wood and gold fountain and ballpoint pens, such as the photographed set made from a dead wild olive bonsai.

And Henri? Elegant hand-crafted cabinets, tables and intricate wooden boxes in stinkwood, mahogany, blackwood, iron wood and more adorn his chambers where his latest masterpiece, a majestic mini-grandfather clock, cheerfully keeps the occupants of that corner of the fifth floor on their toes, sounding its silvery chimes every hour on the hour and thrice in between. And just for fun, to pass whatever is left of his spare time, Henri makes knives, and in between studying the latest law reports and finding new books for the Bar library, ponders the geological and archeological phenomena of our continent.



Bertie Fourie with some of his bonsai collection.



Gold fountain and ballpoint pens made by Bertie Fourie.



Henri Benade's mini-grandfather clock. 

Northern Cape

By Lizanne van Niekerk, Kimberley

New Bar Council

The members of the newly elected 2010/2011 Northern Cape Bar Council are: Johan van Niekerk SC (chairman), Chris Botha (deputy chairman), Lizanne van Niekerk (honorary secretary), Willem Coetzee, Jacqui Henriques, Dries van Tonder (additional members).

Acting appointments

Jacqui Henriques of the Northern Cape Bar held an acting appointment in the Durban High Court during the first term. Chris Botha from the Northern Cape Bar held an acting appointment in the Northern Cape High Court during the second term.

Advocate arrested!

On 28 January 2010 Sharon Erasmus, a practising advocate at the Northern Cape Bar, was arrested by police in her office. Some of

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her colleagues were prepared to take on the police in her defence. However, it seems that their loyalty was to no avail and Sharon was removed from her office and subsequently incarcerated at the Galeshewe Police Station, Kimberley.

Sharon was allowed to speak to her attorney. Within a short time the Northern Cape Bar raised her bail. Two colleagues, Lizanne van Niekerk and Dries van Tonder, secured her release.

Sharon found herself in good company in jail. She shared accommodation with, amongst others, the city manager and the mayor of the Sol Plaatje Municipality and a number of high-ranking police officials. All of those arrested have subsequently been released on bail. It appeared that the 'scam' was arranged by the members of the Kimberley branch of CANSAs as part of the annual 'Jail and Bail'-fundraiser.

Social weekend

The weekend of 26 February 2010 the members of the Northern

Cape Bar and their spouses enjoyed at the Good Hope Game Reserve outside Barkly West in the Northern Cape. The initial idea for the weekend was a river rafting trip on the Vaal River, but as the Vaal River was flooding, it was not safe, so we had to think of something else that would give the adrenaline junkies an adequate rush. The members and their spouses decided on a quad-bike 4x4 route. With all the rain that had fallen the previous week it proved to be a challenging and muddy trip. The day ended with a game drive and a beautiful sunset over the Vaal River.

Legal Golfdag

Everyone in the legal profession was invited to attend the annual Golf Day on 5 March 2010, arranged by the Circle 16 of the Cape Law Society. Attorneys, advocates and judges attended the day. After the golf there was a social get-together where prizes were handed out. 

North West

By John Stander

South Africa's first lady Judge President: Monica Leeuw

On 29 April 2010 Mashangu Monica Leeuw, a former member of the North West Bar Association (1991 to 1997), was appointed as the first female Judge President in South Africa.

Born to Joe Andy and Elizabeth Betty Mhangwane of Lady Selbourne, Pretoria, in 1952, Judge Leeuw matriculated in 1970 at Hwiti High School, Pietersburg. She obtained her BProc degree at Turfloop in 1976 and her LLB at the erstwhile University of Bophuthatswana in 1987.

Judge Leeuw began her career as a legal assistant at the Ga-Rankuwa Magistrates Court before prosecuting in the Mmabatho Magistrates Court. She was appointed control prosecutor at that court before becoming control prosecutor for the Regional Court (West Division), Bophuthatswana. Thereafter in 1987 Judge Leeuw was appointed as state advocate in the Bophuthatswana High Court before resigning to serve her pupillage at the Pretoria Bar in 1991. Judge Leeuw was apparently the first black female advocate to serve pupillage at that Bar. 'I was told,' Judge Leeuw said, 'that it was going to be tough on me, but I succeeded.'

Judge Leeuw then practised as a member of the North West Bar until 1997, when she turned her talents to training students at the University of Bophuthatswana as a lecturer in the Department of Practical Legal Training. From that position she was elevated, in 1999, to judge of the High Court in the former Bophuthatswana Provincial Division (now the North West High Court). Judge Leeuw has also acted in the Labour Court and was, in 2007, appointed as judge of appeal in the Labour Appeal Court. She has acted twice as Acting Judge President in the North West High Court, in 2005 and since October 2009 respectively.

Judge Leeuw is married to Sello Andrew, a pharmacist, and they have three children, Tumelo, a medical doctor and a registrar in paediatrics, Themba, an information technology graduate (diploma) and businessman and lastly, Tshenolo, a law graduate presently serving her articles.

Judge Leeuw is an avid soccer fan (I am not allowed to disclose

who her favourite team is) and her other preferred sport is tennis.

Of her appointment Judge Leeuw said: 'It is both an honour and a challenge. My previous acting appointments have helped me to adjust.'

About her vision and plan for the future of the North West High Court, Judge Leeuw said: 'We need to manage cases more effectively. To this end the Case Flow Management System will be emphasized in this court and the judges will be pro-active in order to expedite matters. I also see the need for uniformity between the Practice Directives of the various divisions of the High Courts. This too must be followed up.'

We wish Judge Leeuw success in her tenure as Judge President.

New member

Thabile Mpshe, who graduated at the University of the North West in 2006, has joined our Association. Thabile, who served as a researcher at the Constitutional Court in 2007, was a pupil advocate at the National Prosecuting Authority (2008) before completing her pupillage at the Johannesburg Bar in 2009. Thabile joined us with effect from March this year.

All work and no play

One day a member at our Bar was overhead to say to another, 'We work far too hard. We need to socialise a bit together.' Overheard by another the member was duly deputised to organise the spit braai for local attorneys and our members to be held in the garden adjoining our chambers. An occasion of this sort had often been discussed, but had never materialised.

So on Friday, 16 April, briefs were put away while we and our guests enjoyed a sunny afternoon in the garden. Thanks go to Gerrit Maree to whom the duty of organising the function was delegated. Gerrit not only arranged the excellent spit braai and salads, but also a variety of liquid refreshments, all tastes being catered for. A job well done and if anyone left hungry or thirsty it was their own fault. A vote of thanks also to Cecile, Ria, Hendrien, Karen and Rosemary who added all those little finishing touches (flowers, chocolates, etc...) which I am told, men never appreciate.

Must do this more frequently ... heh Gerrit? 