

GETTING TO KNOW

Constitutional Court Justice
Leona Theron

Judges Matter/Oupa Nkosi



When you started out as a lawyer, did you always aspire to be a judge?

I always aspired to be a lawyer. The idea of becoming a judge took root when I was already in practice.

What would you say to your 20-year-old self now?

Listen more and take time to respond.

What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about so many things. I am passionate about life. I try to live my life to full. I am passionate about my family, my work.

What's your favourite art work at the Constitutional Court and why?

The blue dress. It symbolises the struggle of so many people, known and unknown, who fought for justice and freedom in our country. It symbolises ultimate bravery – being prepared to die for the ideals you believe in.

JSC interviews can be tough and also fun - which interview or moment in an interview stands out for you and why?

In the 2015 interviews when I was asked, whether if appointed, I would be the first 'coloured' person appointed to the Con Court. I had great difficulty answering that question. 'coloured' would be a person of 'mixed blood'. How could I honestly say who did or did not have 'mixed blood'. It shows, to some

extent, the arbitrariness of racial classification by the previous regime.

Which person has had the biggest impact on your legal career - as a teacher or mentor - and why?

My parents. I saw them struggle to make a life for themselves and their children with almost nothing. They taught me almost all I know about life. They taught me to be honest, to have compassion. They taught me the value of education and hard work. They taught me not to complain about life and the situation I found myself in but to do all I can, every day, to improve my life and where possible the lives of those around me.

What are you reading at the moment?

My Own Liberator

Best three books of all time?

The Bible. Lean In – Women, Work and the Will to Lead by Sheryl Sandberg. Boundaries – When to say YES When to say NO by Dr Henry Cloud and Dr John Townsend

When CJ gives just 30 minutes for lunch break during a hearing, what do you eat?

Crackers, cream cheese, avocado, fruit.

Chiefs or Pirates?

Neither really. I love cricket.