

Changes at Group 21

by **J Moorcroft**

Nkuta-Nkontwana J's elevation to the bench

Ms Portia Nkuta-Nkontwana accepted an appointment to the bench of the Labour Court with effect from 1 July 2017 after a few acting stints. Nkuta-Nkontwana J qualified with a B.Juris LLB from the University of Zululand and obtained a Certificate in Industrial Relations from the University of the Witwatersrand Business School. She previously sat as a Commissioner in the CCMA during the period 1996 to 2000, and she joined the Johannesburg Bar in 2003. Her practice at Group 21 was focused mainly but not exclusively on Labour Law.

Change at the top

After seven years at the helm Robbie Stockwell SC handed the group leadership over to Trevor Ohannessian SC at the group's annual general meeting on 14 November 2017. During his tenure Stockwell SC made transformation of the profession a priority. He also led the expansion of the group into a second building within the Sandown Village Complex that saw its membership increase to 120 members, including 22 silks.

In 2017 the group established security of tenure at Sandown Village through a new lease with built-in options which should take the group well into the new decade.

Stockwell SC and the Social Committee also introduced the successful innovation of a biennial weekend away at a game lodge for members and their partners.

Ohannessian SC paid tribute to his predecessor and thanked Stockwell SC for his tireless work and the countless hours spend on the group's behalf over the years, which enabled him to take over the leadership of a group on sound financial footing, a diverse and transformed membership, and secure home in the Sandton CBD. [A](#)



Nkuta-Nkontwana J during her interview before the JSC.



Lars Haefner

The Young Bar Council

by Nthabiseng Thokoane

The Young Bar Council (YBC) is an initiative adopted by the Johannesburg Bar Council pursuant to a seminar presided over by former Deputy Chief Justice, Dikgang Moseneke, on the role of the Bar in civil society.

The principal aim of YBC is to ensure continued education and development of The Young Bar. This the YBC does through facilitation of seminars presented by senior advocates, senior judges and retired judges. The YBC also provides a platform for junior advocates to discuss challenges they encounter in their respective practices with ease, appreciating that they are among their peers.

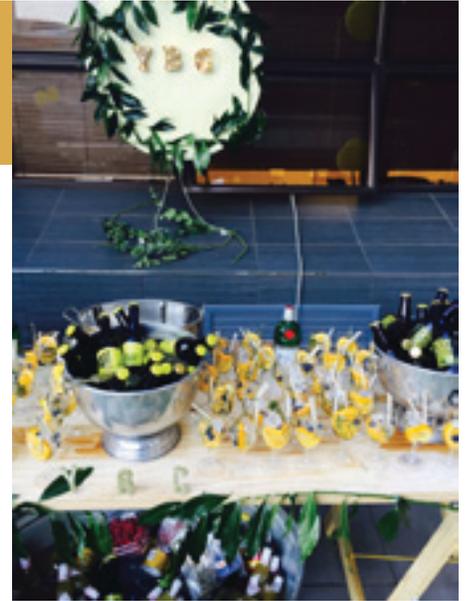
Four seminars have been conducted since the inception of the YBC. A seminar on arbitration, presented by Michael Kuper SC, two seminars on cross-examination, presented by retired Justice Kriegler and Wim Trengove SC, and a seminar on Persuasive Advocacy presented by David Unterhalter SC.

All four seminars enjoyed an immense attendance by juniors, including juniors with more than 5 years seniority. This indicates a great desire for development by The Young Bar. Profuse appreciation was expressed by those who attended the seminars.

The YBC intends to cover various topics in 2018 including:

- What's expected of a junior?
- What do attorneys expect?
- Appellate advocacy
- The handling of experts
- Cross-examination
- Practice Management - invoicing, taxes, reasonable fees, costs
- Prescription
- Wellness at the Bar, managing life at the Bar
- Medical negligence
- Mining & Environmental Law
- Family Law
- Criminal trial
- The practice of Labour Law

The current membership of the YBC are juniors who volunteered to be members,



understanding their own need for development as advocates, but also aspiring to facilitate the development of their peers.

The YBC initiative is envisaged to contribute positively, not only to The Young Bar, but to the Bar in general, through contributing towards the proper equipment of our young advocates to enable them to discharge their duties with diligence and proficiency, thereby ensuring justice for their clients.

The Young Bar is urged to embrace this initiative and may propose topics for discussion, participate in the seminars, and give their feedback where possible. [A](#)

