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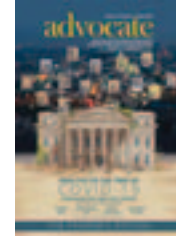
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Dzhenala ya dzangano la vhaadivokati vha Afrika Tshipembe
Die Suid-Afrikaanse Balietydskrif ■ The South African Bar Journal
Kgatisobaka ya boadifokata ya Africa-Borwa
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FROM THE EDITOR

Whenever I write for *Advocate* — here, or in my column — I mildly fret about the timelapse between me writing in June and your reading in August. When one is a journalist, things must be current above all else. I always ask myself ‘will this be dated by August/December/April?’ I try to write something that could still be of interest or relevance in a few months.

It’s never an easy task but right now — as the Covid-19 pandemic spirals alarmingly — it is impossible. I cannot even predict what will happen tomorrow, let alone have any confidence that anything written in June will be of relevance by August. We know very little about anything right now.

When the editorial committee met early this year to discuss the submissions for the April edition, we also planned the August edition. We had a theme and all, but that all fell by the wayside when the Covid-19 pandemic hit us. The April edition — planned and laid out in the pre-Covid world — was the first *Advocate* to be published initially only on the GCB’s website, as our printers were closed (it’s a great edition in my view and print versions have hopefully finally got to you by now).

This August edition required an emergency meeting, a rapid reassessment of what we wanted and a valiant effort by the editorial team to commission and edit in record time. We asked specific members to write and write quickly — they all did and we are grateful — about specific topics on law and practice in a pandemic. We reached out to members individually — through a survey — as well as the bar leaders and the judiciary to ask how their practices, bars and courts had been affected and how they had responded.

I am exceptionally grateful to the committee for this edition — even Jean got his stuff to me in time, an occurrence so rare that I began to panic that indeed the world must be coming to an end. We also welcomed a new member to the committee, Muhammad Zakaria Suleman from the Durban Bar, who jumped in and rolled up his sleeves immediately.

This special bumper Covid edition of *Advocate* reflects on the impact the pandemic has had on the functioning of our courts, with Judge Glenn Goosen and GCB chairman Craig Watt-Pringle SC flagging some of the challenges and achievements of the courts in this time. The pandemic has also thrown up varying new legal questions — a fascinating overview of some of these has been penned by Frank Snyckers SC. There is an excellent assessment of the impact on our human rights framework by Dr Nick Friedman. We spoke to Justice Kate O’Regan, appointed as the designated judge monitoring the government’s track and trace initiative. We have fantastic practical lessons from Anna Anandale SC and Richard Moultrie on virtual hearings and electronic document management.

Members speak in numbers in this edition — describing how their practices have been affected. Some of the stories are heartening, others heart-breaking. I hope that by the time you are reading this, things are better and you are still at the Bar.

At this time, in June, it feels like the special edition we had planned. Whether it will have any relevance in August is impossible to tell. However, at the very least I hope it will give you an accurate, sometimes searing snapshot of an extraordinary moment in time. **A**

The editor contributes to *Advocate* as an autonomous author. The views she expresses are entirely her own, and do not purport to represent any view or position of *Advocate* or of the GCB.