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Dzhenala ya dzangano la vhaadivokati vha Afrika Tshipembe
Die Suid-Afrikaanse Baltydskrif ■ The South African Bar Journal
Kgatisobaka ya boadifokata ya Afrika-Borwa
Jenali ya magwetha ya vaavanyisi van Afrika-Dzonga



FROM THE EDITOR

In my last *From the Editor*, writing in October last year, I said that we were hoping against hope that we had seen the back of the Covid-19 pandemic. I was entirely unprepared for the second wave that swept through South Africa in December, felling whole families and leaving most of us bereaved in one way or another.

This edition of *Advocate* is full of tributes, as was the last. It is a sad edition. But we felt it was important to record and honour our own.

The team in this edition – particular thanks to Jean Meiring this time round – went out of its way to seek out the names of those members we have lost and to record those losses on our pages. If we have missed any colleagues, please do let us know.

Author Milan Kundera said: “The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.” In this way, remembering, recording, bearing witness, is an act of struggle. When people die in numbers, when we can’t even attend their funerals (this was the hardest part for me), it is particularly important to remember them as individuals.

For my part, I loved reading Marumo Moerane’s tribute to KK Mthiyane – “a gentleman” said former Chief Justice Pius Langa to me once and one of those figures in the legal community who seemed to be loved by everyone. Moerane has captured his warmth, compassion and gentle soul so well. I feel like I know Willie Burger, so evocative is the tribute we received from Jeremy Gauntlett.

Covid took people from us and also changed practice. This edition we run a piece on how the Covid-19 lockdown – perhaps, speeding up the inevitable – contributed to massive changes in the practices of RAF lawyers and we touch base on the housing issue.

I was thinking of Kundera because this week (as I write) journalist Karima Brown died of Covid-19.

In 2010 when I was still a fairly junior reporter at *Business Day*, I reported a judgment on polygamous marriages. The judgment – per Bertelsmann J – held that unless there was a court-approved contract regulating the future matrimonial property regime, a second marriage under the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act would be invalid. It was widely criticised by women’s rights organisations.

I had initially reported it fairly blandly and dryly. But of course *Business Day* being a newspaper, and not this venerable publication, my editors wanted to know: what did this mean for the status of the marriages of the country’s most famous polygamist?

Ugh, so I had to call an ANC spokesperson, who proceeded to – there’s only one way to describe it – k** on me from a dizzy height and hang up. I was almost in tears when Karima, who was political editor at the time, saw me. When I told her what happened, she called him. And boy, did she ever give him hell. Within five minutes, he had called me back, apologised and politely refused to answer my questions.

Advocate may seem a strange place for me to be paying tribute to Karima. She was not a lawyer and she used to joke about my “legal things”. But I would perhaps not be the editor of *Advocate* if it were not for her encouragement and guidance during the very early days of my journalism career.

I’m not the only one. In amongst the hate and criticism (some fair criticism also) for Karima that we saw on social media, are the voices of all the women journalists she raised – generations of us.

I hope readers don’t mind me taking this space to say, as she used to often say: Go gently, Karima. Shukran. **A**

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