

Polokwane Bar

THE POLOKWANE BAR IS DEVELOPING

by Maria Marupeng Malatji

The Polokwane Society of Advocates (Polokwane Bar) was established during 2015 with chambers at 39 Voortrekker Street, opposite the High Court building in Polokwane. The founders of the Polokwane Bar were mainly from Johannesburg and Pretoria Bars. The incumbent Chairperson, William Mokhare SC, is also the founding chair and has led the Bar's development and growth from the start.

Members of the Polokwane Bar do not merely concentrate on running their practices but are also interested in developing Limpopo communities, and when the new Limpopo Division of the High Court, Polokwane became operational in 2015, the Polokwane Bar established the Pupillage Programme in 2016. This training program has been of enormous benefit to Limpopo Province.

The first Pupillage Programme Training intake at Polokwane Bar was during 2016 and since then, the Bar has not looked back. From its inception until the present day, members of Polokwane Bar have been committed to assisting pupils in the pupillage programme. These members drive to and from Polokwane from other centres (mostly Gauteng) just to give classes and this is a great sacrifice on their part.

The Judge President of the Limpopo Division, Justice Makgoba, together with his team of judges and court staff, have also played – and continue to play – a major role in the pupillage programme.

In 2018 Judge President Makgoba made the High Court Building accessible for pupillage training. Currently, the Bar uses both the space at the High Court building and its own Training Centre at 5 Dimitri Crescent in Bendor, Polokwane.

The pupillage programme commenced with 17 pupils during 2016 and produced a 47% pass rate. In 2017 there were 26 pupils with a pass rate of 57%, the 2018 class had 43 pupils with a pass rate of 95%, the 2019 class had 44 pupils with a pass rate of 86% and in 2020 the class had 43 pupils with a pass rate of 79%.

Due to Covid-19, 2020 has been the most difficult year to date. However, despite the restrictions, arrangements were made for classes to be conducted on Zoom and, against all odds, the Polokwane Bar produced a high pass rate. The best years for the Polokwane Bar so far are: 2018 (95% pass rate), 2019 (86% pass rate) and 2020 (79% pass rate).

Between 2016 and 2020, the training program has added 139 members to the profession. The Polokwane Bar currently

has 229 members. The ever-increasing number meant that the chambers at Voortrekker Street became too small for the Polokwane Bar.

Larger premises were soon found at Platinum Office Park, 5 Dimitri Crescent, Bendor, Polokwane and the Bar Council offices moved there in July 2020.

Interestingly enough, some of the members proposed the introduction of the group system, and this was approved by the Bar Council.

The first group to be approved was the Platinum Group; their group leader is Stevens Mathabathe and their chambers are at Platinum Office Park.

The second group to be approved by the Bar Council, the High Court Group, is also housed at the same premises as the Bar Council at 5 Dimitri Crescent, Bendor, Polokwane, and their group leader is Gift Shakoane SC.

The third group is the Thabure Group of Advocates. This group has chambers at 10 Biccard Street, Biccard Highest Building, Unit 2, Polokwane and their group leader is Euphodia Tsatsi SC.

The fourth group is named G20, and is housed at 17A & 17B Schoeman Street, Polokwane. Their Group Leader is Malose Monene. **A**

Kimberley Bar

KIMBERLEY CALLING

by Albert Eillert

Given the small size of the Northern Cape Bar, currently consisting of a total of 15 members, the coffee-time chatter in this first term of the year has become slightly subdued due to the absence of a number of our colleagues who are currently acting as judges at the Northern Cape High Court. Lawrence Lever SC was the first to answer the call, followed by Albert Eillert and Alme Stanton.

In January 2021, Nomonde Ngwenya became the youngest member of our Bar. Nomonde graduated from the University of the Free State in 2018 and was admitted as a pupil at the Bar in 2019. After unfortunately not achieving success the first time around, Nomonde was given another opportunity last year and in the face of the well-known difficulties of 2020 succeeded in passing the Bar Examination in 2020.

There is a bitter-sweet ending, though. A job opportunity arose that Nomonde could not refuse and our Bar will be minus Ms Ngwenya from 26 February 2021. We wish her all the best in her new endeavour!

No new pupils were taken in this year, due to the uncertainties associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and accreditation of the General Council of the Bar by the Legal Practice Council. **A**