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FROM THE EDITOR

Regular readers of *Advocate* will know that this is the last segment of the journal that gets written – I write *From The Editor* when the journal has already been laid out and is about to go to the printers because I like to see it all together and ready. As I write, Coreth Naudé SC, from the Pretoria Bar, is in hospital having survived what appears to be a shocking assassination attempt on her life due to her work in several high level tax inquiries.

Statements from the General Council of the Bar, Advocates for Transformation, the minister of justice and other legal organisations condemning the shooting have poured in. Due to our layout and printing deadlines, we have not been able to accommodate them in this edition, but they will be published in the December edition. Let me say for now that *Advocate* joins its voice with all those who have condemned the shooting. We wish Ms Naudé a speedy recovery; our thoughts are with her and her family at this difficult time.

The GCB's statement said the attack on Ms Naudé was an "attempt to undermine the rule of law and foster a culture of impunity within South Africa, contrary to the principles and values of our Constitution".

In this edition of *Advocate* we pay tribute to two giants of the legal community, Justices Yvonne Mokgoro and Laurie Ackermann, two of the founding justices of the Constitutional Court who spent their lives building a nation founded on the rule of law. We are privileged that the tributes we have come from those who knew them and their work best – Justices Kate O'Regan and Johann Kriegler, their colleagues on the first bench of our apex court.

Their tributes give us a sense of the immense contribution these two justices made to our jurisprudence and of who they were as people. But they also tell us much about the values and principles that the GCB refers to in its statement, values and principles that Justices Mokgoro and Ackermann infused into our law and into the institutional culture of our apex court.

In a democratic, constitutional state, no one should have to risk their lives in pursuance of the rule of law. It is an indictment on the state of our nation that we are here. Worse, Ms Naudé's case is not an isolated one.

The rule of law may appear sometimes as a lofty, abstract ideal. But if this dastardly action shows us anything, it is that individuals – each and every one of us, in big and small ways – are its guardians. Reading the tributes to Justices Ackermann and Mokgoro again today, as Ms Naudé fights for her life in hospital, serves as a timely reminder – to take courage, even in the face of what sometimes feels like insurmountable challenges. We have come far.

Yes, we have far to go. But if each of us, wherever we are, does our little bit, we can protect the rule of law. It is not someone else's job. We should all try to emulate the excellence, the integrity, the diligence and the compassion of Justices Mokgoro and Ackermann, like Ms Naudé did.

In my little corner of the world, as editor of this publication, I have tried to build *Advocate* as a space for open and robust debate, so I was gratified that we had a letter taking issue with our last edition. I was, and remain, proud of the April edition but I am even prouder that a reader who did not appreciate it took the time to express his views on our pages.

Two other articles in this edition, Peter Kroon SC's tale of his trip to Ireland for the World Bar Conference – it sounded like such a treat of a trip – and Noel Graves SC's thoughts on silk, engaged with some of the debates and issues that have been raised in past editions of *Advocate*. This also pleased me – that things we put on our pages have been food for thought and subsequent comment. Please keep your letters and submissions coming. **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.