

Gqeberha Bar

Contributed by James Ramsay

SENIOR APPOINTMENTS

The Society is delighted to congratulate the following new senior members who were nominated for silk in 2021, and received their letters patent in February 2024.



MZAMO NOBATANA SC

Mzamo Nobatana SC matriculated from Newell High School in Port Elizabeth.

He obtained his BA

honours degree in political science and LLB degree from Durban Westville. He undertook an MA thesis through Rhodes University and was awarded the first Pius Langa Scholarship. He also studied through Lund University in Sweden where he completed a diploma in Advanced International Human Rights. Mzamo completed his articles at Burman Katz in Gqeberha, whereafter he became an assistant state attorney in Bhisho. He has also worked as a legal advisor for the department of agriculture in the Eastern Cape. Mzamo was admitted as an advocate in 2000 and became a member of the Cape Bar in 2001. In 2005 he returned to the Eastern Cape and became a member of the Eastern Cape Society of Advocates, where he has consistently demonstrated a steadfast commitment to justice.

IDRIS DALA SC

Idris Dala SC matriculated from St Thomas High School in Gelvandale in 1989, whereafter he commenced his studies at UPE in 1990. He went on to obtain four degrees from UPE, being a BA, BA (Hons), BJuris and LLB. He thereafter commenced pupillage and was admitted as an advocate in 2000. Following his admission, Idris became a member of the Eastern Cape Society of Advocates and has represented clients in a wide array of complex legal matters with precision and dedication since. He has a passion for justice, equality, and

inclusivity, and has been committed to achieving societal change by ensuring that the legal system serves as an instrument of equity and progress.



GRAHAM RICHARDS SC

Graham Richards SC was head boy of Grey High School, where he matriculated in 1969.

He thereafter obtained

an international High School Diploma from La Serna High School in Whittier, California, USA. Graham studied at Rhodes University where he was awarded a BA degree in 1974 and an LLB (*cum laude*) degree in 1976. After completing his studies, Graham worked for the department of justice, as a State Advocate until 1979. In 1980 he began practising as an attorney at Rushmere Noach in Port Elizabeth, where he subsequently progressed to being a director. Graham has always had a passion for politics and transformation and in 1985 he was elected as the municipal councillor in Port Elizabeth. In 1996 he was appointed as the chief executive officer of the Port Elizabeth municipality, where he played an instrumental role in the transformation of local government and the establishment of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality (NMBMM). In 2000 he was appointed as the first interim municipal mayor of the newly established NMBMM. In 2002 Graham commenced and completed his pupillage, whereafter he became a member of the Eastern Cape Society of Advocates. In 2003 he was approached by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) to be the provincial director in the Eastern Cape, and left the Bar to take

up the position. In 2004 he became the Executive Director: Governance, Intergovernmental Relations & Municipal Services at SALGA, and in 2006 he was appointed as the City Manager in the NMBMM. In 2011 Graham returned to the Bar, where he has since critically applied his wealth of knowledge and experience to the advancement of justice through the meticulous application of the law. Graham has always been a keen sportsman with a particular focus on triathlon events. He was recently selected to compete in the SA Champs and has been to the World Champs on a number of occasions. Graham recently celebrated his 46th wedding anniversary with his loving and supportive wife, Baubie Richards.

JEAN NEPGEN SC

Jean Nepgen SC matriculated from St Andrew's College in Grahamstown in 1993. He thereafter studied at Stellenbosch University and was a resident at Simonsberg Men's Residence. After being awarded his BCom and LLB degrees, Jean returned to Port Elizabeth to take up articles at Goldberg & Devilliers Inc. After completing his articles, Jean went on to practise as an attorney before deciding to do pupillage in 2005. He has gained extensive experience across numerous fields of law and has a diverse civil and commercial practice. He is dedicated to legal excellence and is passionate about advancing the Bar through mentoring and guiding junior advocates. Outside of work Jean enjoys mountain biking, and has raced in various events across the country. Jean is married to his wife, Lienkie, and together they have two daughters and a son.



A TRIBUTE TO RAWJEE SC

by Lilla Crouse

In March 2024 Anusha Rawjee (Anu as she is generally known) became the third female silk at the Eastern Cape Society of Advocates and the first female silk of Indian descent.

As was recognised by her appointment as a commissioner in the Phiyega Commission of Enquiry, her legal acumen is rather impressive. However, it is not her legal knowledge or articulacy alone that makes her an outstanding advocate and a wonderful colleague.

Anu did her pupillage and joined the Bar in 2007. She states: "I am mentored by Justice Yvonne Mokgoro who advised me to join the GCB and the Eastern Cape Society of Advocates to assist with the transformation efforts at the Bar. Mentoring black juniors is my duty and passion and my mentor's ongoing instruction to me. Without Justice Mokgoro's guidance and early intervention, I would have commenced practice as an independent advocate as the GCB was labelled an old boys club. Justice Mokgoro said to me that this perception needed to be changed. During her time on the Bench she said, she found that there was an excellence in the practice of law which prevailed amongst the GCB members, and she wanted this excellence to spread to all legal practitioners. I bought into her idea, and Justice Mokgoro and I started on this path."

(Justice Mokgoro sadly passed away on 9 May 2024 after my interview with Anu.)



At the Bar Anu is friend and mentor to colleagues and pupils alike. She states: "I enjoy mentoring the junior advocates at our Bar. The mentoring is ongoing, and I maintain an open-door policy. The mentoring, in particular for my female mentees, extends to advice of managing relationships at home, maintaining cultural traditions and some tips on balancing the family and work life as a practising advocate. Nothing pleases me more than to witness their growth, development, and successes in particular ensuring that they sustain their practices."

As an opponent, Anu is fair and kind and without any sideshows. An example of this is a fond memory of her being my opponent in the SCA a few years ago. Just before the presence of the judges graced us, she came to my side of the podium, hugged me, kissed my cheek, and said words to the effect that she hoped the hearing would go well. It was unexpected but at the time I had just lost my husband and I think she knew I needed encouragement. This type of time-honoured collegiality which sees an opponent as a friend rather than an enemy or someone to conquer, makes the Bar unique, and is instrumental in protecting the bench's (time) resources, colleagues' reputations, and saving litigants' costs, but it is sadly a fast-disappearing value at the Bar.

Anu is also a mediator of note. Until recently she had a 100% success rate. She states:

"My experience as a mediator includes being the co-lead mediator in the Fees Must Fall protest actions at NMMU. In this capacity, we were requested to draft weekly reports to Plasket J as to the status of the mediation. There was no violence at NMMU from the commencement of mediation. I did this mediation on a *pro bono* basis."

At home, Anu is a wife and mother. She and her husband have an adult son. They are family-orientated, with strong family ties to their extended families.

Anu has acted as a judge in the High and Labour Courts. I have had on occasion appeared before her. Even on the bench, her kindness and "humaneness" are visible. Her comfort in who she is makes her well-suited as a judge and she commands respect on the bench.

Anu currently holds dual membership of the GCB and the Pan African Bar Association of South Africa. She held and/or is holding leadership positions at the local Bar, AFT and Nadel.

Her noteworthy philosophy is to bring the law and justice closer together and to serve people. This she does with her characteristic display of joy and zest for life.

My best wishes accompany her as she continues to achieve this and serve as an example to us. [A](#)