

Pretoria Bar

Contributed by Megan Moodley

NEW SILKS AT THE PRETORIA BAR

by Megan Moodley

The reference to “silk” derives from the fabric of the gowns traditionally worn by senior counsel. Silk fabric was originally produced centuries ago in China and is still highly regarded as one of the most valuable fabrics due to the effort required to produce a single metre. 3000 silkworms must consume

104kg of mulberry leaves to yield sufficient raw silk cocoons, which must be painstakingly processed to produce at least 25 metres of silk. Similarly, the time, effort and diligence required for counsel to acquire the necessary experience before he or she may be conferred the honour of “silk” is a painstaking one

and a reflection of their value to the profession.

Recently, after a prolonged wait, 15 members of the Pretoria Bar, and one former member now turned judge, Judge Linda Retief, were conferred the honour of “silk” when they were presented with their Letters Patent.



James Stone SC
Brooklyn Chambers
Date of Admission: 24 August 1993
Date of Membership: 25 August 1993



Coreth Naudé SC
Parc Nouveau Chambers
Date of Admission: 18 April 2000
Date of Membership: 1 July 2000



Wilhelm Bekker SC
Club Chambers
Date of Admission: 13 October 1998
Date of Membership: 15 January



Johan Botha SC
Associate Member
Date of Admission: 27 January 1998
Date of Membership: 29



Lindsey Kilmartin SC
Club Chambers
Date of Admission: 10 April 2006
Date of Membership: 16 January 2006



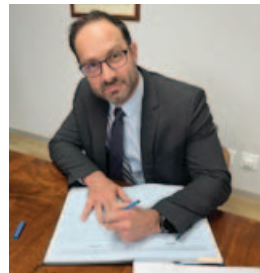
Ilse Vermaak-Hay SC
Club Chambers
Date of Admission: 18 March 1997
Date of Membership: 7 July 1997



Jonathan De Beer SC
Club Chambers
Date of Admission: 22 February 2001
Date of Membership: 1 July 2001



Dikeledi Chabedi SC
Circle Chambers
Date of Admission: 7 May 2007
Date of Membership: 15 January



Stefan Maritz SC
Club Chambers
Date of Admission: 27 February 2006
Date of Membership: 16 January 2006



Jaco Vorster SC
Group 33
Date of Admission: 6 February 2003
Date of Membership: 24 January 2011



Sarel Myburgh SC
Groenkloof Chambers
Date of Admission: 21 April 1998
Date of Membership: 2 February 1998



Andries Els SC
Group 33
Date of Admission: 31 January 2002
Date of Membership: 01 April 2002



Paul Van Ryneveld SC
Club Chambers
Date of Admission: 2 April 1991
Date of Membership: 2 April 1991



Johann Hershensohn SC
Club Chambers
Date of Admission: 15 May 2001
Date of Membership: 16 January 2006



Johan Smit SC
Group 33
Date of Admission: 13 May 2004
Date of Membership: 18 August 2018

A “METHOD” TO THE MADNESS

by Azraa Vally (Pupil Member)

The niche of an advocate is being able to master the art of legal storytelling in the most persuasive, concise and, of course, correct, way possible. Part of the pupillage programme at the Pretoria Society of Advocates is tailor-made workshops that equip budding advocates with the foundation needed to build effective courtroom practices. This type of training goes beyond the theoretical knowledge pupils are tested on during their National Bar Exams and rather engages in hands-on exercises within a simulated court environment. In this way, pupils of the PSA are able to gain real-world experience that would otherwise only be had in their first year of practice.

The PSA programme consists of six compulsory workshops, which are: divorce, criminal litigation, motions, civil litigation, appeals and legal writing (which was introduced for the first time in 2024 and focuses on drafting techniques). The structure of each workshop has been adapted from that of Advocacy Training, a well-established course which many of our advocates on the training committee have been privy to, mainly drawing on “The Method”, which I will discuss below.

Preparation, preparation, preparation! Emphasised in training is the idea that preparation is just as, if not more important than the court performance itself. Days before the workshop, pupils are furnished with a brief which they are required to read and prepare as though they were actually going to move the matter in court. They are given an opportunity to draft necessary documents for the court’s benefit – be it a draft order, heads of argument, notice of amendment or practice note, and in the final stage of preparation, pupils are split into groups and attend a case analysis session hosted by various advocates. These sessions focus on tackling various approaches to analysing a case; which include REDE (Relief, Elements, Dispute and Evidence) and IFSO (Introduction, Fault, Solution and Order).

The thinking behind “The Method”



Performance Coach Michelle McDonald addressing pupils before the Civil litigation workshop.



Pupils at Motions Proceedings Workshop at the Pretoria High Court.

draws on the concept of learning-by-doing. Advocate John Mullins SC has aptly described that human beings are more “video” than “audio”, meaning we learn better when we are able to engage both our sense of sight and our sense of hearing, which these workshops heavily rely on. On the day of the workshop, each pupil is given a chance to address the “court” (trainers) on their matter. A trainer will stop the pupil halfway through and give them a headnote summing up their performance so far. The trainer will then do a “playback,” which allows the pupil to view their performance from a different perspective, a rationale is given as to what the pupil should change, followed by a demonstration of how it should be done instead. The pupil will then do a “replay” of that portion, taking into consideration the techniques just shown to them by the trainer.

The learning curve between the first performance and the replay is palpable and is testament to the value of these workshops and “The Method”. Pupils are appreciative of the knowledge imparted on them in this way and are shown to have greater confidence and a better understanding of court practices by the time they are admitted as advocates, compared to those who have not received such training.

The Pretoria Society of Advocates pupillage programme embodies a structured, practical approach to legal training – doing its best to mitigate the madness that is pupillage. By focusing on active learning and meticulous preparation, the programme bridges the gap between academic knowledge and practical application. The approach instils confidence and competence in future advocates, which in turn helps develop our legal universe as a whole. **A**