

Free State Bar

Contributed by **Amelia Swanepoel**



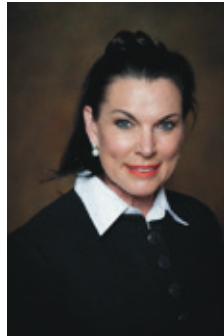
Tiaan Pienaar SC



Henri Benade



Cobus Buys



Suzanne Boonzaaier



Henco de la Rey SC



Lawrence Manye

MEMBERS SERVING ON THE BENCH

During the previous two terms, the Free State Bar was honoured to have the following members acting as judges in the Free State Division of the High

Court: Tiaan Pienaar SC, Henri Benade, Cobus Buys, Suzanne Boonzaaier, Henco de la Rey and Lawrence Manye. These members have more than 100 years of

experience between them. They are congratulated on the privilege to serve the people and the law, while upholding the integrity of the judiciary.



Tiaan Pienaar SC, Neil Snellenburg SC (chairperson of the Free State Bar) and Henco de la Rey SC.

HANDOVER OF LETTERS PATENT

In the previous edition it was reported that Tiaan Pienaar SC and Henco de la Rey SC have been confirmed as senior counsel. On 19 June 2025, the FS Bar in accordance with its tradition, handed over letters patent to the new silks and celebrated the confirmation of their silk status. The FS Bar congratulates these members on their well-deserved achievement.



Sipheleke Nongqotho, Qasha Moletsane and Peter Masihleho.

HAVING FUN

The FS Bar's members have diverse interests outside work. In this edition we focus on the members who play soccer. These members partake in local soccer leagues or otherwise play friendly games on a regular basis. Although these advocates say they play "for fun", they take their "fun" very seriously which is evident from the injuries that they sometimes sustain. The photo includes only some of the members who play on a regular basis.



Neil Snellenburg SC delivering a farewell message to Corrie Ploos van Amstel SC on behalf of the members of the FS Bar.

BIDDING FAREWELL TO AN ICON

Corrie Ploos van Amstel SC is a well-known and respected member of the FS Bar, not only because of his extensive and in-depth legal knowledge and experience, but also for his general knowledge regarding the practices and traditions of the FS Bar.

On 19 June 2025, the FS Bar bade farewell to Ploos van Amstel SC, fondly known as “Ploos” by his colleagues. He served the profession as an advocate for 42 years, of which he practised as a senior counsel for 30 years.

Ploos van Amstel SC joined the FS Bar in February 1983 and was conferred silk status in December 1995. Prior to joining the FS Bar, he gained invaluable experience as a prosecutor and magistrate in Cape Town, Vredendal and Kroonstad, as well as an attorney in Welkom. He acted as a judge on numerous occasions.

Ploos van Amstel SC attended Welkom Gymnasium High and studied at the University of the Free State. He has been married for 51 years to Esther (née Schaffer) and they have one son, PC Ploos van Amstel. PC is also a member of the FS Bar. According to PC, he was not only privileged and honoured to have practised with his father at the FS Bar since 2014, but he was also fortunate that his father admitted him as attorney during one of Ploos van Amstel SC’s stints as an acting judge. Ploos van Amstel SC also moved the application for PC’s admission as advocate.

In true Ploos style, he entertained the FS Bar members during his farewell speech with many stories and anecdotes of his career. One of the values that he stressed, was friendship at the bar. He said: “Although we are often opponents and confrontational in court, one forges lifelong friendships. One gets to know and appreciate the peculiar idiosyncrasies of our fellow advocates.”

He also reminisced about traditions of the past and present. One of the traditions at the FS he thoroughly enjoyed was that once a year the FS Bar booked a train to take all the advocates to Immigrante Station some 70 km outside of Bloemfontein. The train was booked exclusively for the advocates. The advocates played cards on the trip, which would take about an hour, had a braai at the station and then return to Bloemfontein. Another tradition of which Ploos van Amstel SC is very proud, is the 15-year rugby game between the advocates and the attorneys. The first game was played in 1966, the second 15 years later in 1981, then 15 years later in 1996 and the last one in 2011. Next year, 2026, will be the fifth game in the series. The advocates won the first two games, and the attorneys won the last two games. Ploos van Amstel SC urged the members of the FS Bar “to get fit and ready”.

In conclusion and in line with tradition, Ploos van Amstel SC proposed a toast to the Republic of South Africa. Generally, the toast is the privilege of the most senior member of the Bar present at the proceedings.

The FS Bar bids Ploos van Amstel SC farewell. He will be missed. We wish him well on his journey ahead. **A**



Zimbini Nyezi handing over a gift to Corrie Ploos van Amstel SC.

THE ANNUAL TOAST

It is a longstanding tradition of the Bar to propose a toast to the Republic of South Africa at the Bar’s traditional Black-Tie Dinner or year-end function. This toast is akin to the Royal Toast of Great Britain and is most commonly composed solely of the words: “The Republic of South Africa”.

The toast is initiated and recited by the most senior member of the Bar present and repeated in unison by the assembled guests. Etiquette dictates that the traditional toast be given following the opening remarks, that it be the first toast given, and that a glass of any beverage other than a cocktail be used.

In carrying out the toast, the event’s host will rise and request the audience’s attention. The host will announce the senior advocate and request him/her to perform the toast to the Republic of South Africa:

- The senior advocate will address the audience: “CHARGE YOUR GLASSES! May I request you to join me in a toast to the Republic of South Africa. Please all rise.”
- Once the guests are standing, the senior advocate raises his or her glass and recites the toast without any other words or music: “Please raise your glasses and repeat after me: ‘The Republic of South Africa!’”
- The audience then respond to the toast by repeating the words: “The Republic of South Africa!” in unison, drinking the toast.
- The senior advocate will then declare: “This concludes the ceremony. You may be seated.”
- The audience responds by seating themselves once more.

[The lawyers of Lincoln’s Inn traditionally take the toast sitting down, a custom dating to the reign of British King Charles II when they bumped their heads on the rafters of a rocking ship when they stood up to perform the toast].

C Ploos van Amstel SC