

Johannesburg Bar

Contributed by **Sibongile Mathe**



WHEN TWO WORLDS COLLIDE

Enhancing advocacy skills through advocacy training for Lesotho lawyers

by **Khululiwe Khweswa**

Introduction

From 12 to 14 September 2025, members of Lesotho's legal fraternity participated in an intensive advocacy training initiative, jointly organised by Advocates for Transformation and the General Council of the Bar, facilitated by Myron Dewrance SC, with Jean Meiring as course director, assisted by Vashi Harisunker and Timothy Smith. This programme was conceived to elevate the standard of advocacy among legal practitioners, foster cross-jurisdictional knowledge exchange, and promote the integration of contemporary legal practices. The event benefitted from the expertise of distinguished facilitators and an emphasis on both theoretical foundations and practical application, marking a pivotal advancement in the professional development of Lesotho's legal sector. It further encouraged the participation of junior advocates Sydwell Malibe, Lerato Malefane and Malerato Kiangi, who equally benefitted from the training.

Day One: Foundational Principles and Professional Ethics in Contemporary Practice

The proceedings commenced with a plenary session conducted by Meiring, who introduced the participants to the Hampel Method by which advocacy training is done. By demonstration, Khululiwe Kheswa and pupil-advocate Lovey Sithole as the pupil and trainee, provided an overview of the course's objectives, structure, and methodology using the Method. Their presentation underscored the importance of systematic advocacy training and established a collegial environment conducive to rigorous scholarly exchange and experiential learning.

The agenda further included a substantive examination of ethics in the legal profession. The interactive session led by Andre Gautschi SC, joined by Sibongile Mathe and Linda Zulu, facilitated an in-depth discussion on ethical duties, with special reference

to the impact of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in legal practice. Participants engaged meaningfully with the challenges and responsibilities posed by technological advancements, emphasising the imperative for ethical vigilance in a rapidly modernising field.

Day Two: Mastery of Legal Writing and Case Analysis

Day two was dedicated to cultivating legal writing and analytical skills. Professor Eleanor Cornelius of the University of Johannesburg commenced the day's proceedings with an authoritative lecture on the use of plain language in legal documents. Prof Cornelius articulated the distinction between primary and secondary discourse, highlighting the acquisition of language as foundational and the learning of legal language as a step toward precision and clarity in communication. The advantages of plain language were clearly delineated, including enhanced user preference,

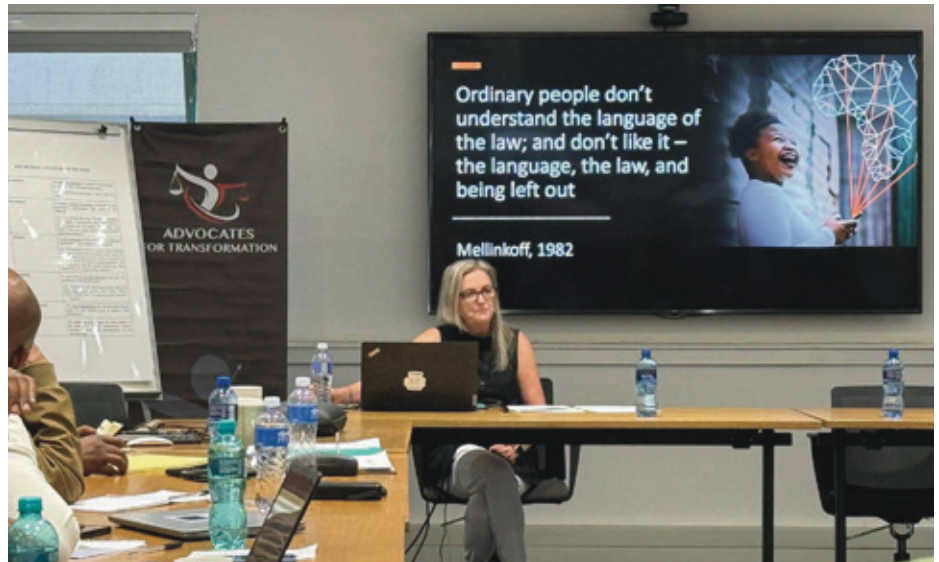
increased efficiency, improved compliance, heightened public participation, safety considerations, and a more competitive marketplace.

Participants subsequently engaged in practical legal writing exercises, with individualised feedback provided by senior advocates. This segment allowed attendees to refine their drafting skills and to implement best practices, reinforcing the values of clarity and precision in advocacy.

A key feature of the day was a session led by David Ochieng, an international trainer from Zimbabwe, who shared advanced techniques in legal writing and oral advocacy. Mr. Ochieng's expertise introduced participants to international best practices and practical strategies for persuasive legal communication – competencies fundamental to both written submissions and oral arguments before court.

The afternoon featured a collaborative session on case analysis led by Christopher Whitcutt SC and Mr. Ochieng. This workshop enabled participants to examine legal cases from multiple jurisdictions, identify salient facts, and develop cogent arguments, thereby strengthening their analytical acumen and advocacy techniques. When the two worlds collided, they produced a masterpiece in advocacy.

Day two concluded with a plenary session by Meiring, who offered critical reflections on effective legal writing. Emphasis was placed on the necessity of clearly identifying the purpose of each document, the intended audience, and the desired outcome – a discipline central to effective legal practice.



Day Three: Advanced Oral Advocacy

The final day of the programme concentrated on oral advocacy, a cornerstone of legal representation. Under the guidance of a panel comprising Ciska Bezuidenhout SC, Mmusi Seape, Bongive Mkhize, Luyanda Mtukushe, David Ochieng, Adrian Thompson, Trish Ternent and Samantha Martin, participants participated in rigorous practical exercises. These activities were designed to enhance courtroom presence, argumentation skills, and adaptability under scrutiny.

The training underscored that excellence in oral advocacy is characterised not solely by eloquence, but by clarity, logical structuring, and responsiveness to judicial enquiry. These competencies are essential to the advancement of clients' interests and the upholding of legal standards.

Conclusion

This advocacy training programme represents a significant advancement for legal practitioners in Lesotho. Through collaboration with international and regional experts, and the facilitation of practical, skills-based learning, participants acquired substantive tools to elevate their advocacy practice. The integration of plain language initiatives, ethical considerations in the context of technological innovation, and comprehensive advocacy training equips Lesotho's lawyers to serve their clients and the broader community with enhanced professionalism and integrity. As the legal profession continues to evolve, such programmes will remain indispensable to the pursuit of legal excellence, ethical probity and expanded access to justice.



WOMEN'S DAY REFLECTIONS

Advancing transformation in the legal profession

by **Risima Ngobeni**

The Advocates for Transformation (AFT), the Law Society of South Africa (LSSA), the Women's Desk, and It Takes a Village hosted a Women's Day celebration on 23 August 2025, which was an event of remarkable intellectual depth and practical significance.

The programme was designed to interrogate critical issues affecting women in the legal profession and to chart pathways toward meaningful transformation.

The first session, "Owning the Room: Leadership, Voice, and Influence in Male-Dominated Spaces," explored the systemic and cultural barriers that inhibit women's ascension to positions of influence. The discussion advanced strategies for cultivating an authoritative presence without relinquishing authenticity. It underscored the importance of confidence, articulation, and deliberate visibility in environments historically structured to privilege male leadership.

The second session, "Boundaries with Power: Saying No to Bias, Harassment, and Career-Limiting Roles," addressed the pervasive challenge of negotiating professional boundaries within hierarchical structures. It provided a robust framework for resisting gendered expectations, refusing assignments that compromise professional standing and confronting harassment through legally sound and institutionally supported mechanisms.

The third session, "Intersectionality in Action: How Race, Gender, Class and Other Identities Shape Women's Experience in Law and Society," offered a nuanced examination of the compounded marginalisation experienced by women who occupy multiple subordinated identities. The discourse emphasised that equality initiatives must be grounded in an appreciation of these intersecting oppressions, as a singular lens fails to capture the full scope of systemic exclusion.



The programme concluded with a mini dialogue titled "Sisterhood that Shifts: Systems Building Alliances for Measurable Change". This conversation situated solidarity as an instrument of structural reform rather than mere symbolism. It called for intentional alliances, collaborative advocacy, and measurable commitments to dismantle institutional barriers that perpetuate inequality.

This was not merely a commemorative occasion. It was an intervention, an intentional effort to equip women with the intellectual and practical tools necessary to navigate, disrupt, and ultimately transform the legal profession. The themes interrogated throughout the day reaffirmed an unassailable truth: the advancement of women in law is neither incidental nor optional. It is indispensable to the integrity of justice itself. **A**