

Eastern Cape Mthatha Bar

Contributed by **Chuma Gqetywa**

2025–2026 ACTING JUDGE STINTS

The Mthatha Society of Advocates (MSA) has, with great enthusiasm, observed members going to the bench for continuing acting stints. The following members had an opportunity to serve as acting judges in the last term of 2025 and the first term of 2026: Amelia da Silva SC, Vuyani Kunju SC, Apla Bodlani SC, Zintle Ncalo and Lesley-Ann Brauns. Their acting re-appointments ensure that there is efficiency in the administration of justice and continues to foster harmonious relations with the judiciary. The MSA is proud of the enduring presence of its members on the bench.



Azola Dalikhaya Mchiza



Andisiwe Zimela



Ziyabukwa Ndlovu

2026 PUPILS

Four candidates made the cut to be selected as this year's pupil advocates namely: Mkuseli Nondlazi, Oyama Ngo-mana, Visizwi Songca and Lonwabo Phelo Nonabe. We are delighted to welcome this year's group with these words: "If you do not sacrifice for what you want, what you want becomes the sacrifice." We wish them all the best and urge them to apply themselves diligently in this journey.

ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS

Having successfully completed an arduous year of pupillage in 2025, it is with pride that the MSA welcomes its newly admitted members: Andisiwe Zimela, Azola Dalikhaya Mchiza and Ziyabukwa Ndlovu. May their journey in practice be filled with prosperity and accomplishment.

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Luyolo Ntikanca with Apla Bodlani SC

“PASSING THE BATON”

The origins of “passing the baton” is said to stem from relay racing, which is literally the process of one athlete passing a rod-like object to the next athlete, ensuring the continuation of a particular race. The red bag is symbolic of passing the baton within the advocates’ profession and a “rite of passage” tradition that has stood the test of time.

Mbongeni Rili was bestowed

such honour by Grace Goedhart SC a few years ago. During 2025, the red bag featured not once, but twice, at the Mthatha Bar, the first occasion being when Lesley-Ann Brauns was bestowed this honour by Vuyani Kunju SC and the second being Luyolo Ntikanca by Apla Bodlani SC. The reverence associated with the red bag is that it simply cannot be purchased off-the-shelf, save when senior counsel intends bestowing it



Vuyani Kunju SC with Lesley Brauns

upon a junior who has reached certain milestones in his or her career and has exhibited attributes that speak to growth, skill and work ethic. As Bodlani SC said in a written message to Ntikanca, the red bag was a “mark of appreciation of the outstanding and diligent lawyer in you. You’ve always demonstrated your thirst for justice and knowledge whenever we collaborate”.

MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE TRAINING WALLENBERG 2026

The General Council of the Bar of South Africa (GCBSA) hosted a medical expert witness handling, intermediate advocacy training course at Wallenberg in Stellenbosch from the 7th to 11th January 2026. Members of the MSA were in attendance, including Apla Bodlani SC as group tutor, Zuko Badli as group helper and Sihle Mzileni as a participant. Mzileni described the experience as “difficult and challenging, but thrilling” and he described the trainers as “highly experienced in personal



Apla Bodlani SC with some of the trainers, Zuko Badli and trainee Sihle Mzileni.

injury claims and very patient”. He now feels equipped at “how to handle medical experts from consultations and examination on medical evidence in court”.



Sihle Mzileni

HONG KONG ADVOCACY TRAINING COUNCIL'S PUPILS' COURSE

The Hong Kong Advocacy Training Council took place from 8 to 13 February 2026, with the Mthatha

Bar's Zuko Badli attending as a trainer. Barrister Martin Wong, pictured on the far right, was the group leader in

organising and running the course.



Zuko Badli with pupils from his group.



Barrister Robert Pang SC, Zuko Badli, barrister Sabrina Ho and barrister Martin Wong.



Luyolo 'Bullz' Ntinkinca pictured during the Chicago Marathon, which he finished recently.

'BULLZ' IN CHICAGO

Bullz, as he is fondly known at the Mthatha Bar, and which moniker has absolutely no correlation to the basketball team based in Chicago, participated in the Bank of America Chicago Marathon in the fourth term of 2025. The marathon, a 42,2km road race that began in 1977, was his third major marathon and he aims "to have all six by the end of 2027".

Bullz started running in June 2023 due to issues with his "weight and health", circumstances which forced him to change his lifestyle and join the Vukani Multi Sports Club in Gqeberha.

Bullz's running has not only impacted his health positively but has also contributed to his mental agility and acumen, if his receipt of the red bag is anything to go by. We wish him the best in his pursuit of the upcoming marathons and have no doubt that he is set to hit the bullseye. **A**



Richard Smith