

Press release:
Law Society elects new
President and Vice-Presidents



PRESS RELEASES BY THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) has elected Jan van Rensburg as President, and Mabaeng Denise Lenyai and Mvuzo Notyesi as its Vice-Presidents at its conference and AGM in Kempton Park on Friday 9 April 2021.

Mr Notyesi is the previous President of the LSSA and Mr van Rensburg and Ms Lenyai are both previous Vice-Presidents.

Jan van Rensburg is a long-serving member and sits on several committees of the LSSA. He is also a former Co-Chairperson of the LSSA.

Mr Van Rensburg has the BCom (University of Pretoria) and BProc (UNISA) degrees as well as an Advanced Diploma in Labour Law from the University of Johannesburg. He was admitted as an attorney in 1984 and is also a notary and conveyancer. He practises as a sole practitioner at Jan van Rensburg Attorneys in Brits.

Mabaeng Denise Lenyai is an attorney and director at Mabaeng Lenyai Inc in Pretoria. Ms Lenyai holds the BProc and LLB degrees from the University of Limpopo and the University of KwaZulu Natal respectively.

Ms Lenyai is currently acting as a Judge at the Gauteng Division of the High Court in Pretoria. She was admitted as an attorney in 1998 and is also a notary and conveyancer. She has been a council member of the LSSA since 2015. She was also the Chairperson of the BLA, North West branch for six years. Since 2018, she has been a member of the National Executive Council of the Black Lawyers Association, and she is currently the General Secretary. She is also a council member of the Community Education Training Centre in Mmakau and she is a legal adviser for Motswedding FM.

Mvuzo Notyesi is an attorney and director at Mvuzo Notyesi Incorporated in Mthatha. He is President of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers. He holds the BProc and LLB degrees from the University of Transkei and was admitted as an attorney in 1999 after completing his articles and attending the LSSA's School for Legal Practice in East London. He has practised as director at Mvuzo Notyesi Incorporated since 1999.

Mr Notyesi has acted as judge at the Eastern Cape Division of the High Court in Grahamstown. He has been a member of the House of Constituents and a member of the Executive Committee of the LSSA for five years. He previously represented the LSSA on the Judicial Service Commission and he is currently an alternate. Mr Notyesi has a passion for education and has been a part-time lecturer and an instructor at the

LSSA's School for Legal Practice in East London. He is also an examiner for the Attorneys Admission Examination. Mr Notyesi is Chairperson of the Notyesi Foundation, which awards bursaries to disadvantaged students to attend university.

Key discussions at the LSSA Annual Conference

Newly elected Legal Services Ombuds, Judge Siraj Desai, was the keynote speaker at the LSSA conference, which was held under the theme 'financial sustainability.' Judge Desai said that the Legal Services Ombuds Office is separate from the Legal Practice Council (LPC) and that it has different functions all together. He highlighted that he cannot and will not interfere with the functions of the LPC.

Judge Desai added that his office is the highest body of oversight within the legal services environment and that it aims to protect and promote public interest in relation to the rendering legal services and ensuring fair, efficient and effective investigation of allegations of misconduct against legal practitioners. Judge Desai highlighted that his office is not an office of first instance, and that it must be approached if the complainant has tried the regulatory body, the LPC and has a grievance with the outcome of their case.

Judge Desai said that since December, he has received many calls from people with all sorts of complaints. He added that the ball was in the Justice Minister's court and that the Minister will announce an operational date adding that the date will be announced once the office has been capacitated. Judge Desai urged legal practitioners to make themselves available to do the front-line work.

On his appointment in December 2020, the then LSSA President said in a statement: 'This appointment is long overdue and should have coincided when the Legal Practice Council came into effect on 30 October 2018. I encourage the Department of Justice to ensure that the Ombud's office is fully capacitated as soon as possible so that the Ombud can become fully operational. The Ombud in terms of the Legal Practice Act is independent and only answerable to the Constitution and the law'.

The LSSA also committed itself to support the work of the Ombud's office, in the broader interests of the profession and society.

Also discussed at the conference was the structure, financial sustainability, and governance of the LSSA and the provincial attorneys' associations. This House of Constituents has referred some of the constitutional and governance aspects to the LSSA constituent members.

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, JAN VAN RENSBURG

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