

Semenya SC. The Bar Council has appointed a full-time secretary, Ms Terry Bald, to assist him for a period of six months.

The Transformation Committee is concentrating on particular issues such as briefing patterns, the library (which now has a presence both in town and in Sandton) and accommodation for new members. An initiative currently in the pipeline is the formation of a pioneer new group which is expected to take up chambers in Sandown Village under leadership of Patric Mtshaulana. In order to redress imbalances in briefing patterns, a pilot project is being formulated involving the introduction of junior members from previously disadvantaged (PDI) groups to attorneys, on the basis that these junior members will have mentors appointed from the ranks of more established counsel. In addition many senior counsel have adopted the Bar Council policy of bringing young juniors into matters at no extra cost to the client, but with the fee being deducted from the silk's fee. This has resulted in young PDI juniors being given work, exposure and the transfer of skills from senior members.

In order to deal with the workload of the Bar Council, several members were co-opted to serve on the council and this year, several of those who resigned last year, have now taken up their seats on the Bar Council.

See also 'Update on transformation' by the Johannesburg chair, Hilton Epstein SC, below.

Advocacy training

In addition to the compulsory pupil workshops conducted by the other Bars in

SA, the Johannesburg Bar has embarked upon conducting continuing practical skills training after pupillage for juniors and once again conducted an advocacy skills workshop for juniors in May 2003. The juniors who attend have found the workshops to be of enormous benefit as appears from articles that have been published in *Advocate*.

Johannesburg Bar cycle challenge

Several members of the Johannesburg Bar attempt to counteract their sedentary working conditions by taking up the sport of cycling. A fair number of them participate in amongst other races, the Argus and 94.7 cycle races. In future, this contingent will enter teams under the name of the Johannesburg Bar and other Bars are invited to do the same. Interested participants are requested to contact Hennie Smith (011 290 4000 – hsmith@counsel.co.za) or Dana du Plessis (011 290 4000 – dana@counsel.co.za) in this regard.

Nedbank Prize

The Nedbank Prize of R30 000 for the pupil who achieved the best results at the Johannesburg Bar in the National Bar Examination was awarded to Ms Dhesni Pillay. The prize was handed over to Dhesni at a function at the Nedbank Head Office on 10 April 2003. In his address Hilton Epstein SC, chair of the Johannesburg Bar, said, inter alia: 'The prize which Nedbank gives serves to alleviate the plight of pupils, a plight which is not well known or appreciated outside Bar circles. Pupils emerge from a five-month pupillage period during which they have earned no money. Moreover, there is no money available immediately after pupillage. Newly admitted members must first be briefed and there are certainly no briefs waiting for them on their first day as admitted members of the Bar. Even after being briefed, the norm is that they will only be paid some three months later.'

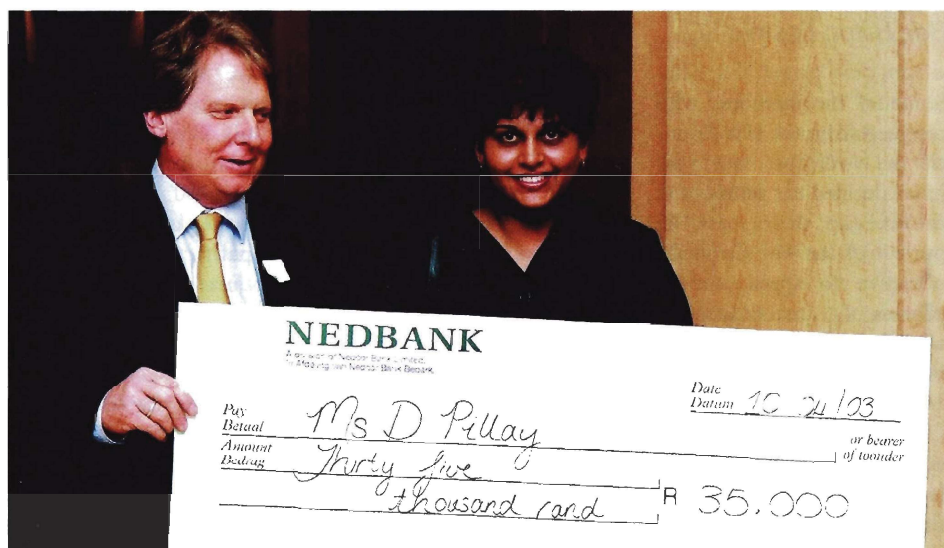
The Johannesburg Bar is a bastion of our society which

espouses justice, fairness and equality. By supporting the Johannesburg Bar, Nedbank's real reward is its contribution to developing our society as we strive to achieve the objects of the Constitution.'

Judge F Blackie

The Johannesburg Bar hosted a tea for former Zimbabwean Judge F Blackie on 9 May 2003. In his address Hilton Epstein SC, chair of the Johannesburg Bar, said that conditions in Zimbabwe were shocking and untenable. 'The policies and laws of the present (Zimbabwean) government, some of which are draconian, have not only caused economic hardship but also violations of human rights.'

Judge Blackie has been charged in Zimbabwe with defeating the ends of justice. We do not comment on the merits of the case against him. That the courts will deal with. We do however speak out on the high-handed manner by which members of the judiciary in Zimbabwe have been treated and whose dignity, and therefore that of



The chair of the Johannesburg Bar, Hilton Epstein SC, handing over the Nedbank Prize to Ms Dhesni Pillay.