

Celebrating the contribution of the legal profession

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Once again, on 6 September we celebrated the extraordinary work being undertaken by lawyers, the media, the NGO sector, students and others in promoting human rights and the interests of the poor and marginalised.

Not only did this third award ceremony mark great achievements, but it marked our 10th anniversary. And anniversaries are significant. Our 10th anniversary coincides with the 60th anniversary of the women's march, the 40th anniversary of June 16 and the 20th anniversary of the Constitution. These are all significant events and we are proud to be able to place amongst them ourselves and the attorneys, advocates and others who do such important work.

This year's guest speaker was Dali Mpofu SC, Vice-Chairperson of the Johannesburg Bar Council. He mentioned the new Legal Practice Act presently being implemented, where pro bono work is being addressed in the category of community service. Only a small percentage of South Africans can afford even the most basic legal services and without such services the values in our Constitution of equality, the rule of law and the restoration of human dignity cannot be realised. He added that if the profession gets the exercise right, it would go a very long way in addressing the present frustration experienced by the poor and economically disadvantaged, who are mostly black people, women and other economically vulnerable groups.

He also stressed the importance of all legal practitioners doing pro bono work and congratulated those who had

ANNUAL PRO BONO AWARDS CEREMONY 2016



been nominated as finalists.

It was very pleasing to see a marked increase in the participation of small law firms in the awards this year.

Six independent judges chose the finalists and winners in each category:

- Alice Brown, a human rights activist
- Professor Jonathan Klaaren, Professor of Law at the Wits Law School
- Clive Ramathibela-Smith, well known radio personality and businessman
- Nomboniso Nangu, Director of the National Association for the Development of Community Advice Offices (NADCAO)
- Nic Swart, CEO of the LSSA and LEAD
- Jonathan Berger, an advocate of the High Court and a member of the Johannesburg Bar



Awards finalists

1. The most impactful case or initiative

- Webber Wentzel – for the Southern Africa Litigation Centre and the Helen Suzman Foundation in the matter of the failure of the South African government to arrest Sudanese president Omar Al-Bashir when he visited the country in June 2015.
- Hogan Lovells – for the police brutality legal clinic it runs in conjunction with ProBono.Org.
- Norton Rose Fulbright SA – for the Arthursstone Village Community v The Amashangana Tribal Authority case which restored land to a community evicted by a tribal authority.

The winner was Norton Rose Fulbright SA



L-R: Dali Mpofu, Liesl Williams, Moray Hathorn and Krevania Pillay (Norton Rose Fulbright SA)

2. Firm without a dedicated pro bono department

- Cullinan & Associates, Cape Town – for an environmental case involving the rights of AmaPondo communities on the Wild Coast.
- Garlicke & Bousfield, Durban – for their work with the ProBono.Org office in Durban.
- David Masilela – for his work with community advice offices and at help desks, and training of practitioners on areas of law affecting poor and vulnerable people.

Congratulations to the winner, Cullinan & Associates.



Dali Mpofu with Danjelle Midgley (Cullinan & Associates)

3. Firm with a dedicated pro bono department

- Fasken Martineau – for the domestic violence, refugee and housing matters it took on in 2015.
- Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr – for its work at the ProBono.Org Refugee Legal clinic and several high profile matters.
- Hogan Lovells – for its partnership with Probono.Org at the Police Brutality Legal Clinic and its involvement in clinics dealing with the rights of women and children.

Fasken Martineau was the winner in this category



L-R Dali Mpofu, Candice Pillay (Hogan Lovells), Sushila Dhever (Fasken Martineau), Tricia Erasmus (Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr)

4. The constitutionalism award

This award went to media players who advanced social justice through their work. There were two winners in this category - freelance journalist Niren Tolsi, and Sipho Kings, environmental reporter for the Mail & Guardian.



Niren Tolsi, Sipho Kings

5. The advocate award

- Isabel Goodman. Advocate Goodman appeared in the Al-Bashir matter mentioned above and acted for the Legal Resources Centre in a matter interdicting a mining company from entering community land and threatening people (part of a larger dispute relating to the attempt by an Australian mining company to mine titanium along the Wild Coast).

- Donrich Jordaan. During 2015, he acted as counsel in a number of cases on a pro bono basis that involved cutting edge legal developments including the law on surrogacy.
- Luke Kelly was selected for his outstanding contribution to the work of Corruption Watch over the last three years. In the EFF and DA cases against the National Assembly the powers of the Public Protector were clarified in what could be considered to be a landmark decision.

The winner was Isabel Goodman.



Dali Mpofu with Isabel Goodman

6. The Juta award to a student at a university law clinic.

This award celebrates the dedication and commitment of students in assisting poor and vulnerable people.

- Mikhaile Brookes (Wits Law Clinic)
- Lindie Hein (University of Pretoria law clinic)
- Ashley Seckel (University of Johannesburg law clinic)

The award went to Ashley Seckel



Lindie Hein, Ashley Seckel, Mikhaile Brookes

7. Legal Aid South Africa (LASA) award

- LASA selected a pro bono practitioner or service provider that showed dedication and commitment to undertaking pro bono work for Legal Aid SA during 2015. The practitioner award went to Tsepiso Matubatuba.
- The service provider award was given to DNAbiotec®, which offers

a screening service to legal professionals for section 212(4) (a) affidavits containing DNA evidence. The firm formalised this into an official pro bono service for Legal Aid South Africa a few years ago.



Antonel Olckers, Brian Nair, Patrick Hundermark

8. Law Society of the Northern Provinces Award

- LSNP President, Anthony Millar, presented the LSNP award to Juvon Prinsloo, who has taken on pro bono matters enthusiastically since opening her own firm.



Juvon Prinsloo, Anthony Millar

9. National Director's Special Mentions

- Ngwako Raboshakga, co-ordinator of the Alexandra Law Clinic run by ENSafrica. This clinic offers an invaluable legal service to residents of Alexandra.
- Bricks Mokolo for his work in the community advice office sector, particularly at the Orange Farm Human Rights Advice Centre .
- Henk Strydom who spends many pro bono hours and days on emotionally draining children's matters and has taken on almost 40 cases during the past four to five years.
- Bait seng Rangata of Maponya Attorneys for the many hours of work undertaken for communities in and around Pretoria.



Tshenolo Masha, Bricks Mokolo

- Jeff Phahlamohlaka of Bowman Gilfillan - for his legal clinics, outreach work and SMME development work.
- Advocate Kate Hofmeyr, who has undertaken cases involving hate crimes and attempts to muzzle the press amongst many others.



Ngwako Raboshakga, Erica Emdon



Henk Strydom (centre) with his family

NGO social justice stories

At this year's awards, we launched a new initiative to highlight the work of NGOs doing significant social justice work. We have dedicated a page on our website to their stories and we invite you to visit NGO Links on the site and see the important work that they are doing, ranging from environmental activism, protection of abused women, the right to education and strategic litigation on human rights and the rule of law. We hope to add more of these stories on the page as time goes on.



Dali Mpofo with some of the ProBono.Org staff and friends

Award sponsors

Our major sponsors this year were Legal Aid South Africa, the Law Society of the Northern Provinces and Juta.

Our other generous sponsors were Spoor & Fisher Attorneys and AJS Business Management Systems.

LexisNexis and without prejudice provided financial as well as in-kind trade sponsorship. Auditors Grant Thornton once again audited the nomination and judging process.

Spier donated wine, and The Hill provided the venue free of charge.

Thanks also to the following service providers:

Michele Dean of Limeblue for the design work; Lloyd Piater of The Natural Agent for digital assistance, Freshly Minced for production assistance; and Yolanda van der Stoep for photography.

Pro Bono Law on Radio Today

For the past nine years ProBono.Org, in partnership with Norton Rose Fulbright SA (NRF), has had a half-hour slot on Radio Today every second Thursday evening. The aim of the programme is to inform the public about the Bill of Rights and to discuss broader constitutional issues. We have been fortunate to have had a wide range of expert guests from law firms, academia and civil society who have covered topics from consumer rights, children's rights, labour and housing law.

We are particularly grateful for the fact that Patrick Bracher of NRF has been the host of this show since its inception in 2007. His knowledge of the law and the Constitution, his dedication to the programme and his ability to draw out and put our expert speakers at ease contribute enormously to the success of the show.

We would like to thank NRF for promoting the work of ProBono.Org in this way, for bearing the costs of the time that Patrick puts into the programme and the advertising costs.

Here is a sample of the guest speakers and the topics we have covered so far this year:

- 9 June: **Karabo Ozah, an attorney at the Centre for Child Law at the University of Pretoria**, discussed the importance of children's rights and how some of the rights are currently being violated.
- 23 June: **Nikhil Deeplal, Chair of Students for Law and Social Justice (SLSJ)**: The relevance of June 16th 1976 to today's students and whether the rights demanded then have been realised, even though they may be written into the Constitution, e.g. the right to education, the right to protest, the right of freedom and security of the person and the right to equality.
- 4 August: **Lisa Vetten from the Wits Institute for Social & Economic Research (WISER)**: Rape and sexual harassment, with reference to the current frustrations at South African universities and other institutions around the lack of policies and procedures for reporting and dealing with complaints against alleged perpetrators.
- 15 September: **Bulelwa Mabasa, Werkmans Attorneys**: Can the right to property coexist with land reform?

Radio Today is broadcast on 1485 AM, on DSTV audio channel 869, www.1485.mobi or www.1485.org.za. The show airs from 18:30 to 19:00 on alternative Thursdays.

Podcasts of all our programmes can be found on the ProBono.Org Facebook page.



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www.probono.org.za