

Mabula meeting

An informal meeting of some leading members of the judiciary, magistracy, profession as well as government officials took place on 19 January 2002 at Mabula in the Northern Province.

The meeting was organised along the lines of the Magaliesberg meetings during the 1980's and 1990's. Chatham House rules applied: those attending do so as individuals and what they have to say is on an "off the record" basis.

Chief Justice Chaskalson, Deputy Chief Justice Langa and Justices Mokgoro and O'Regan were Constitutional Court judges in attendance. Acting SCA President Hefer and Judges Harms and Mpati came from Bloemfontein, with Judges President Ngoepe and Zondo and Deputy Judge President Traverso making up the judicial ranks. Magistrates were also repre-

sented, as were the senior ranks of the Department of Justice (including the DG and Deputy DG), and a number of attorneys. The GCB was represented by the chairman, Jeremy Gauntlett SC and the deputy and vice-chairmen, Willem van der Linde SC and Justice Poswa SC.

The Minister of Justice attended throughout.

Discussions focussed on two main issues: whether there is a need for restructuring of the superior courts; and problems in the appointment of judges.

There was general consensus that the debates were frank and useful. A follow-up gathering is under consideration.

The gathering was organised by the GCB, with financial assistance from Brait (former judge Mervyn King SC) and Michael Katz (Nedcor).

Wigs may go as courts court Europe fashion

No doubt impressed by the trim appearance of European lawyers acting in Slobodan Milosevic's trial, Lord Chief Justice Woolf has quietly submitted proposals to ditch the UK's traditional barristers' garb in favour of a more modern look.

Woolf has written to a selection of our top legal eagles, asking for their views on the abolition of wigs and the adoption of a new 'Eurogown'. The deadline for their replies is March 1.

'It's ridiculous that all these old bufties are so desperate to hang on to the old ways', says one young moderniser. 'Hopefully, now that Lord Woolf has taken this step we'll

be able to ditch the old gear altogether. The Euro-gowns look a lot more up-to-date: they're shorter and more practical'.

The old guard aren't giving up without a fight, though. 'People don't want to be represented by some scruffy-looking oik' says Rum-pole's creator, Sir John Mortimer QC. 'At least a wig and a gown allows some baby-faced barrister to look like he knows what he's doing. And the European Justice system is vastly inferior to ours, so why on earth do we want to start dressing like these people?'" From the *Weekly Telegraph* 20.02.02.

Pius Langa Scholarship

Applications are invited for the Pius Langa Scholarship for 2002.

A scholarship is awarded annually in the July intake to a pupil of any constituent Bar of the GCB to enable him or her to complete pupillage. The scholarship is awarded on the grounds of outstanding candidacy and taking into account the need to redress the balance of race and gender at the Bar.

The selection committee comprises the chairman of the GCB, a representative of the chairman of Nedcor and a nominee of Justice Langa.

Application forms are obtainable from:
The Secretary of the GCB,
PO Box 2260,
Johannesburg
2000.
Fax 011-336 8970.

Closing date for applications:
15 June 2002.

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