


## Sydney and Felicia Kentridge Award for 2007

The General Council of the Bar of South Africa has awarded the Sydney and Felicia Kentridge Award for 2007 to former Chief Justice MM Corbett. The award, in the name of Sir Sydney and Lady Felicia Kentridge, is made annually by the GCB to recognise exceptional dedication and excellence in the service to law in Southern Africa.

Judge Corbett has served the law and the legal profession in South Africa with distinction over a period of nearly five decades. He joined the Bar in Cape Town in November 1947. On 1 February 1963, when he was only 39 years of age, he was appointed as a judge in the Cape Provincial Division of the Supreme Court of South Africa. He was elevated to the Supreme Court of Appeal in 1974 and was appointed Chief Justice of South Africa on 1 February 1989, a position which he held until his retirement on 31 December 1996.

The presentation of the award was made at a gala dinner hosted by the General Council of the Bar in Pretoria on 20 July 2007. 



At the GCB's gala dinner.

Seated: Mrs Alna Eksteen, former Chief Justice MM Corbett, Mrs Margaret Corbett, Pretoria Bar chair Seth Nthai SC.

Standing: Andrew Corbett, son of Judge Corbett and member of Namibia Bar, Deputy Chief Justice E Moseneke, Chief Justice PN Langa, Transvaal Judge President B Ngoepe, GCB chair Jannie Eksteen SC.

Reports on the GCB's annual general meeting in July 2007 will be published in the December issue of *Advocate*.

## Second IBA Bar Leaders Conference

The second International Bar Association Bar Leaders Conference was held in Zagreb, Croatia, on 16 and 17 May 2007. The Bar Leaders Conference provides a very interesting and rewarding programme particularly relevant to the activities of the Bar. The conference was well attended by Bar leaders from across the world.

Jannie Eksteen SC, who attended the conference on behalf of the GCB, reports as follows:

In a showcase session on the rule of law, Francis Neat, former chair of the International Bar Association Bar (IBA), postulated that the legal profession has two separate and very different functions in promoting the rule of law. The first relates to 'public education.' Neat suggests that more often than not it is the country's government itself that is most in need of education on this subject. Educated support for the rule of law amongst the population at large, so Neat argues, is essential if the rule of law is to become embedded in a society. The responsibility of the profession to speak out on the subject of the rule of law is accordingly an onerous one.

The second function in promoting the rule of law requires of the profession to take concrete steps in order to build legal capacity. The legal profession was accordingly urged consciously to devise a strategy in order to create greater legal capacity.

A second session was directed at the benefits and burdens of self regulation. This debate, which is very much alive in South Africa, was prompted by the concerns expressed by Bar associations across the world relating to the perceived threat to the independence of the legal profession created by governmental reform of the manner of regulation of the profession in many jurisdic-

tions. This provided a stimulating debate on the obligation of the profession to regulate itself in the public interest and in the interest of the promotion of the independence of the individual practitioner.

Further sessions in this conference addressed matters of advocacy training and of complaints procedures. A draft guide to establishing and maintaining complaints and disciplinary procedures has been developed by the IBA and has been forwarded to members, including the GCB, for consideration and comment.

The Bar Leaders Conference was followed on 18 May by the IBA Spring Meeting. 