KwaZulu-Natal Bar

By Sarah Linscott

The annual general meeting of the KwaZulu-Natal Society of Advocates was held at Makaranga Lodge in Kloof. The lodge is surrounded by picturesque gardens that are scattered with elegant art sculptures and cascading waterfalls.

Of significance at the meeting was the election of the new Bar Council for 2012/2013, which is constituted as follows:

A K Kissoon Singh SC,
A E Potgieter SC,
P D Hemraj SC,
R G Choudree SC,
C Snyman,
A D Collingwood,
D Ramdhani,
T G Madonsela,
H S Gani,
M M Chithi,
C Sibiya, and
R Ramdass.

The new members of the council are congratulated on their appointment and wished well for the forthcoming year. Below are the biographies of the chairman and deputy chairman of the council.

Kissoon Singh SC (chairman)

Ahditya Kumar Kissoon Singh was elected as chair of the KwaZulu-Natal Society of Advocates at its AGM held on 1 September 2012. He matriculated at the Gandhi Desai Secondary School and obtained his BA LLB at the then University of Durban Westville. He commenced practice at the Durban Bar in July 1981 and in 2000 the status of senior counsel was conferred upon him.

He has been an admitted advocate of Lesotho since 1983 and has prosecuted for the Crown in Lesotho. He has always been an active member of the Society of Advocates of KwaZulu-Natal, having served in various capacities over the years, including pro-deo secretary, assistant honorary secretary, honorary secretary, honorary treasurer and council member. He is the immediate past chairman of the Durban Club Place Advocates Association, a position he held from 2002 until September 2012. He has served as the KwaZulu-Natal Convenor for the National Bar Examination Board since 2001. He has recently been appointed as the vice chairman of the South African Sugar Industries Appeals Tribunal. He is a member of the KwaZulu-Natal Blind and Deaf Society and has been a council member of the Association for Persons with Physical Disabilities (KwaZulu-Natal). He is married to May, and educator, and resides in Reservoir Hills.

Avril Potgieter SC (deputy chairman)

Avril Potgieter was born on 27 August 1960 and matriculated at Afrikaans Hoër Seunskool in Pretoria. He obtained the BJuris and LLB degrees at UNISA. He was employed by the Department of Justice, as it then was, from December 1980 to February 1991 as a clerk, prosecutor, regional court prosecutor and state advocate. He commenced pupillage at the Pietermaritzburg Bar on 1 March 1991 and started practice on 1 July 1991.

Avril has a varied practice which consists of general high court civil litigation in commercial, family, third party and other delictual matters. He also acted as a judge on a number of occasions. He was a member of the Bar Council of the Society of Advocates of KZN previously and served on the Pietermaritzburg Bar committee.

Outside the profession he has been the chair and member of governing bodies of schools in Pietermaritzburg for a number of years. He has received a merit award for his involvement in the cultural activities of his community in Pietermaritzburg and nationally. He is a conference speaker of a national Christian organisation and addresses conferences in the RSA and as far as Namibia and Zimbabwe. He is a worship leader of a multi-cultural congregation Grace Generation Church in Pietermaritzburg.

He has represented the advancing of the rights of individuals and groups since 1990 and has been an active member of the Black Lawyers Movement and the National Bar Examination Council. He has also served as a convenor of the National Bar Examination.

One of his most notable contributions was his service as a member of the Judicial Service Commission from 1994 until 2010. He served as the vice chairperson of the Competition Tribunal of South Africa and as a member of the South African Airways board of directors.

He has also served as a council member of the Interim Medical and Dental Council and the Health Professions Council.

He frequently represents the South African Government and was part of the team that represented the Constitutional Assembly before the Constitutional Court to have South Africa’s final Constitution certified.

He has represented the advocates’ profession at numerous conferences and seminars both locally and abroad. He has also chaired several commissions of enquiry.

Moerane SC has also acted as a judge on several occasions.

He served as a trustee of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation and is presently a management trustee of the Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund.

He is married to Nokhano who is the head of legal services for the Ethekwini Municipality.
Five new members of the KwaZulu-Natal Society started off their first year of practice with a very welcome boost. Nhlanhla Mfeka, Andrew Matlamela, Bonginkosi Nduli, Veli Sibeko and Veryan Reding were selected by LexisNexis as the recipients of the Durban Enterprise Development sponsorship. At an event held in the Society Boardroom on 25 January 2013 these five newcomers were presented with a laptop, a 3G card (for older readers that means access to the internet) and a year’s subscription to the LexisNexis Platinum package. All of us know how rocky the first few months of an advocate’s practice can be so to have such major expenses taken care of will help ease the pressure of what can be a rather hair-raising experience.

LexisNexis CEO Billy Last addressed the gathering and advised us that this was part of a country-wide initiative being rolled out in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria and which they envisioned being an annual event. LexisNexis is a global organisation which has invested heavily in its online research system. It is expanding into Africa and aims to be the premier provider of legal information to lawyers and professionals. The e-books and other online library products already available are proving to be extremely popular with LexisNexis striving to create the most user-friendly online research environment.

New members
Noe-Noe Sieberhagen and Diederick Jankowitz joined the Northern Cape Bar in January 2013 after completing their pupillage at the Northern Cape Bar. Noe-Noe and Diederick before starting their pupillage at the Northern Cape Bar, respectively practised as attorneys at Honey Attorneys, Bloemfontein, and Duncan & Rothman Inc, Kimberley.