
LAW

LETTER
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■ *Personality Profile*

FIONA STEWART holds the degrees of B.SOC.Science (UCT), LLB (*cum laude*) (Wits), and LLM (UCT). After serving articles at Fairbridges she was admitted as an attorney in 1993, and became a director of the firm in 1997. She also has postgraduate qualifications in administrative law, environmental law, maritime law and tax law. She has an extensive practice covering a wide field of commercial, administrative and maritime law. She has handled high-profile litigation in the High Court, Supreme Court of Appeal, Special Tax Appeal Court and the Competition Tribunal. She has drafted subordinate legislation for local authorities, including graffiti and signage By-laws, and has been involved in environmental due diligence assignments. Her clients include local and offshore corporations and high-profile private personalities.



Fiona is a proud wife and mother, an active outdoors sports person, with wide interests. Her clients greatly value her intelligence, energy, qualities of leadership, independent thinking and sense of humour. She continues to make a significant contribution to the firm's executive management, training and recruitment, strategic planning, technological development and marketing.

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■ *Room for a View*

“AS EVERY ADVOCATE knows, a statement of what the law is, is a statement of opinion.”

– *Professor R H Christie* – The Law of Contract in South Africa.



■ *In the Global Spotlight*

IN THE LATEST EDITION of the **International Bar Association** news magazine, which is circulated worldwide, an article entitled *Transforming South Africa's Legal Landscape* quotes an interview with Fairbridges' managing partner Dick Cheeseman. He draws attention to the need to manage the skills drain in the legal profession due to emigration, head-hunting by the corporate world, the perceived effect of empowerment and transformation on career advancement prospects for young lawyers, and the difficulties in growing the pool of legal talent when sandwiched between the ever-increasing cost of remaining competitive in technology and training, on the one hand, and pressure to reduce the cost of legal services to make them more accessible to a broader market.



■ *Law of the Prophets*

"THE BILL OF RIGHTS is the bedrock of South African society; it is the reason we have a democracy."

– Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, who holds the degrees of BA LLB, PhD, and is an admitted advocate (September 2007).



■ *Court and Bold*

"AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS must stop undermining the integrity and independence of their judiciary and oversight bodies, in order to strengthen good governance and fight corruption."

– Thaninga Shope-Linney, General Manager:
Communications and Marketing, Nepad
(New Partnership for Africa's Development) (June 2007).



■ *Speaking Truth to Power*

“I AM A LIBERAL who adheres to old fashioned ideals such as the rule of law, universal franchise, free elections, a free press, free association, guaranteed civil rights and an independent judiciary. Those are my guiding principles – they always have been and always will be.”

– *Veteran Member of Parliament, Helen Suzman, in 1986.*



■ *The High Road*

“OUR CONSTITUTION represents our collective quest for renewal. It reaffirms our common conviction that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, that the choice we make is of a democratic and open society in which every citizen is equally protected by the law.”

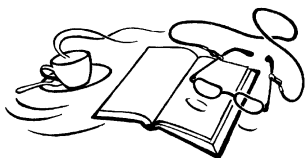
– *Deputy Chief Justice Dikgang Moseneke (February 2008).*



■ *Too Little Learning*

“THERE ARE COMPLAINTS from many quarters, including the judiciary, that the standards are not as they used to be. I am particularly referring to the younger generation of practitioners. Of concern to some of us is whether the public, that is the community, get their money’s worth. But what do you expect when a post-graduate degree is produced and ends up being nothing more than a glorified junior degree. You may not compromise quality to open up a profession. Other ways could have been found.”

– *Transvaal Judge President Bernard Ngoepe, commenting on the reduction of the LLB law degree from five years to four (November 2007).*



■ *Silence in Court*

“AS EMILY came into court, past the many men in black gowns writing with their quill pens, she did not at first see judge, jury, or prisoners. Her eye was caught by the face of the Clerk, where he sat below the Bench. It was an old and very beautiful face, cultured, unearthly refined. His head laid back, his mouth slightly open, his eyes closed, he was gently sleeping.”

– from the novel *A High Wind in Jamaica*, by *Richard Hughes*
(first published 1929).



■ *Acid Rain*

“I DO NOT wish to speak ill of any man behind his back, but I believe the gentleman is an attorney.”

– *Samuel Johnson* (1709 - 1784).

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