

BIOGRAPHY OF CHRISTELLE OLIVIER WITH REGARD TO HER INVOLVEMENT IN MATTERS PERTAINING TO CHILDREN.

Mrs Olivier is currently a Magistrate in the Khayelitsha District Court.

She obtained the B.luris degree in 1985 from the University of the Orange Free State and the LL.B degree during 1987 from the University of Stellenbosch. She also successfully completed the Commercial Mediation training at the University of Cape Town during 2015.

After completion of her B.luris and LL.B degrees, Mrs Olivier worked exclusively in the Criminal Justice system for a period of well over 30 years - initially as a prosecutor in the District and Regional courts (1987 - 1992) and later as a State Advocate in the Cape High Court (1992 - 1995). From 2000 until September 2015 she was called to act as an Assessor in Criminal trials by various Judges of the Western Cape High Court. She was appointed as an Acting Magistrate in Khayelitsha during October 2015 where she is currently still working. In her private capacity, Mrs Olivier continued an active interest in children by serving on various governing bodies.

Her ability to communicate with trust and empathy towards victims of crime and her positive and easy rapport with children resulted in her being assigned to the juvenile court at an early stage of her career as a District court prosecutor in Wynberg. Equally, during her tenure as a Regional Court Prosecutor in Wynberg, most cases regarding sexual offences where the victims were children, were assigned to her. It was at a time when the legal system provided little or no protection for child witnesses. Mrs Olivier innovated and creatively introduced the use of anatomically correct dolls and also started making extensive use of social workers during consultations as well as during the presentation of evidence of children - in this regard she persuaded the defence attorneys to agree that the social worker could remain in close proximity of the child witness while the child had to give evidence in court with excellent results.

Upon Mrs Olivier's appointment as State Advocate with the Attorney General in Cape Town during 1992, one of her portfolios was the establishment of a Special Sexual Offences court. She was also tasked to act as spokesperson of the Attorney General at all meetings of NGO's regarding sexual offences and matters pertaining to children. Mrs Olivier was a key member of a multi-disciplinary team that led to the establishment of the first Sexual Offences Court in Wynberg on 2 March 1993. This pilot project attracted national and international attention and ultimately led to the establishment of the Special Sexual Offences Courts countrywide. Mrs Olivier selected and trained the prosecutors who were placed in the first court and also worked closely with the Department of Health and Welfare with regards to the selection and training of the first intermediaries for the new court. Due to the success of this project, she was requested by the University of Cape Town to present a paper on "The role of the court in cases of sexual abuse of children" at the Second African Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect from 6 until 11 September 1993. The University of Durban - Westville also requested her to present a paper on "Closed circuit television, intermediaries and specialised court settings in the Western Cape" during the South African National Conference on Sexual Offences against children at the University of Durban - Westville from 6 until 8 July 1994.

With the birth of her first child during 1995, Mrs Olivier took a leave of absence and resigned from her position at the Attorney General's Office. She was actively involved in the upbringing and education of her two children and also served as Chairperson of the Greenfield Girls' School Governing Body where she continued her interest in the wellbeing of children. She assisted between 2007 and 2011 in a wide range of matters regarding the current legal framework governing our schools. Key topics that were addressed during her term as Chairperson was the impact of the Constitution, school admission policies and practice, freedom of religion at school, the powers of school governing bodies, state funding and school fees, learner discipline, learner safety and bullying.

During 2000 Mrs Olivier was called to act as an Assessor in terms of section 145 of the Criminal Procedure Act no 51 of 1977 in the Cape High Court. Mrs Olivier proceeded to act as an Assessor in criminal matters with various judges of the Cape High Court until September 2015. She acquired extensive experience in the critical analysis of facts for purposes of writing judgements and also gained priceless insight into the devastating impact crime have on the victims who were in some of the cases, very young children.

Mrs Olivier was appointed as an Acting Magistrate in Khayelitsha from October 2015 and apart from her normal duty to adjudicate justice, she was selected by the Senior Magistrate to also assist in matters of the Children's Act 38 of 2005. She established an excellent working relationship with all role players regarding matters in terms of the Children's Act, ensuring that the best interests of all children brought to her are the overriding concern. Mrs Olivier furthermore headed the Domestic Violence court in Khayelitsha for two years where she endeavoured to create awareness amongst the court staff of the obligations of the State towards ending violence, especially against women and children. She made sure that all clerks and role players are fully aware and sensitised about the vulnerability of the victims, of the many forms of domestic abuse and ensured that everybody was aware how a child can get a protection order, either in terms of the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 or in terms of the Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011.

Mrs Olivier actively participates in the community and served as a member of the board of St Michael's Child and Youth Care Centre, Plumstead from 2015 until 2016 and has been a trustee of the Western Cape Dance Teachers Benevolent Fund since 2013 until present. Mrs Olivier lives in Claremont, Cape Town.