

## Biography of Joy van der Heyde

Joy is a practising attorney at Schuld Inc in Pinelands, where she specialises in matters affecting children's rights. She has a long history advocating for the rights of all children, including those with disabilities. Joy first started off in the legal fraternity as a candidate attorney in December 2000 and was admitted as an attorney in March 2003. She held various positions in the legal fraternity until she was employed by the Justice Department in April 2006.

It was during her ten-year tenure with the Justice Department that she travelled the Western Cape extensively learning about the various challenges faced by our communities and educated them on issues pertaining to child maintenance, domestic violence, children's rights and various other aspects of the law. As part of the management team within the Justice Department, her duties included the training of court staff in various pieces of legislation such as Maintenance, Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, Child Justice, Children's Act, Domestic Violence, to name but a few.

Below are some of the highlights during her tenure within the Justice Department which impacted positively upon children's lives:

- She was involved with various intergovernmental task teams some of which dealt with trafficking in persons, gender equality, issues pertaining to the LGBTI community, the protection of children in need of care and protection, children in conflict with the law, as well as the tracing and bringing to book of maintenance defaulters.
- She chaired the Western Cape Child Justice Forum, an intergovernmental task team, aimed at ensuring that children in conflict with the law are assisted expeditiously and correctly in the criminal justice system. The Forum ensured that these children were not held in correctional facilities pending the finalisation of their criminal matter, but correctly placed in a Child and Youth Care Centre, that they had legal representation, and were treated with dignity. As part of her duties as the Chairperson, she ensured that each department and stakeholder in the criminal justice system complied with their duties as envisaged in the Child Justice Act, as well as the Children's Act.
- She was part of the intergovernmental team that shaped the drafting of various pieces of legislation before it was signed into law, such as the Children's Act, Child Justice Act, Protection of Harassment Act and amendments to the Maintenance Act.
- She was the project leader in Operation Isondlo, an intergovernmental project aimed at (i) the tracing and arrest of maintenance defaulters with the aim of recovering maintenance due and owing; and (ii) tracing maintenance beneficiaries who have monies due to them and have failed to collect same.

Currently, as an attorney, Joy specialises in various matters affecting children and is often approached by the media for her expert opinion on these matters. Some of her most recent legal matters involve compelling the Department of Home Affairs to issue unabridged birth certificates for children, the suspension and/or termination of parental responsibilities and

rights in instances where children require protection, the relocation of children with one parent to another country and the re-establishment of contact between a parent and a child.

Joy has acquired valuable experience and skills in managing various projects within a human rights culture from the initiation of legislation right through to the implementation thereof. She has built up good relationships with, as well as knows and understands the roles of, each stakeholder within the various spheres of government, community and the non-governmental organisation sector within the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster.

Joy's passion for advocating for the rights of children stems from her own personal experiences growing up in a historically disadvantaged community. Her work thus far has had and will continue to have a wide-reaching influence upon future generations.