

Fearless Azanian

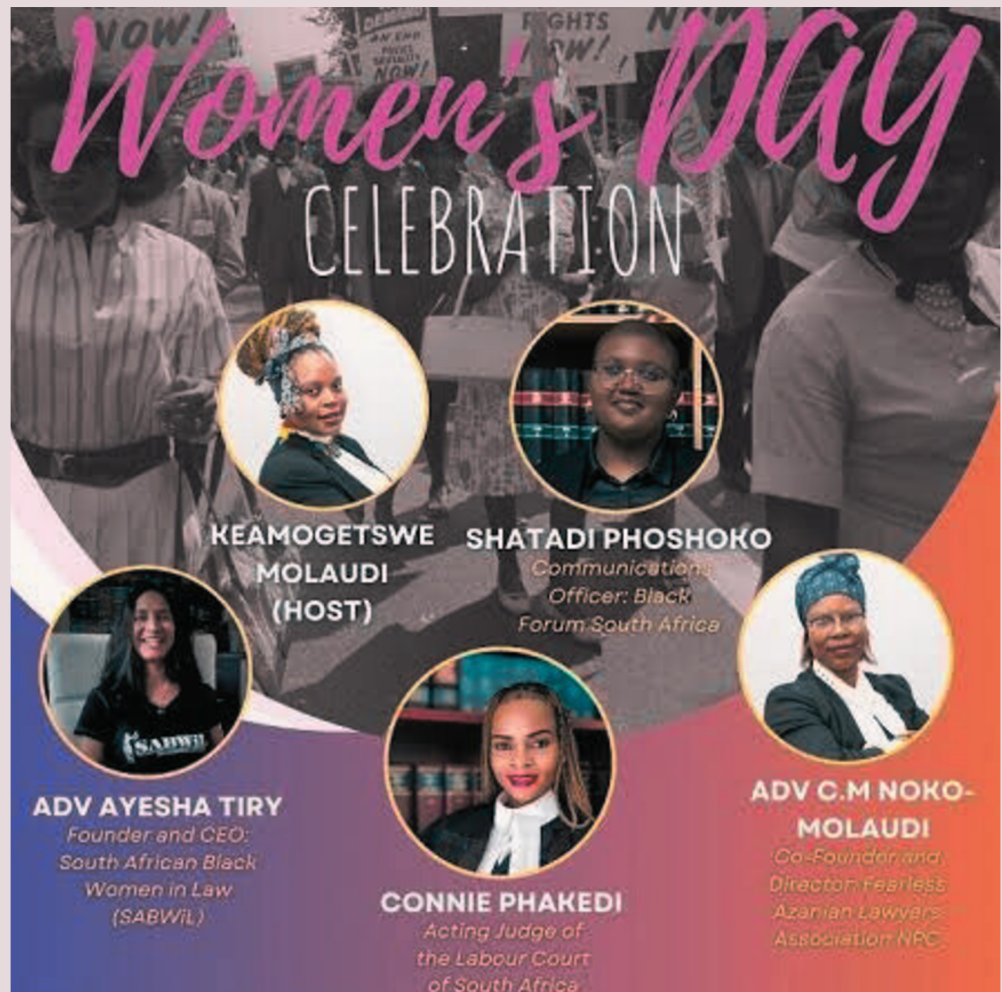
EMPOWERING VOICES

"Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception!"

– JUSTICE RUTH GINSBERG

Wathint'imbokodo

In commemoration of our 1956 imbokodo and those manifesting, the Fearless Azanian Lawyers Association hosts a momentous Women's Day Celebration including South African Black Women in Law (SABWiL) and Black Forum, featuring distinguished lawyers who offer profound insights into the role of women in the legal field. This discourse includes Candidate Attorney Shatedi Phoshoko, Attorney Connie Phakedi, Advocate Ayesha Tiry, and Advocate Christinah Noko-Molaudi. Our Mbokodo share unique experiences and perspectives on leadership, empowerment, and the ongoing quest for gender equality, underscoring the diverse ways women are reshaping the legal profession and addressing systemic barriers.



Authentic Leadership

Advocate Christinah Noko-Molaudi contributes to the dialogue by emphasizing the critical need for mentorship and support networks for aspiring female legal practitioners. Counsel discusses the ongoing challenges women face in achieving greater representation and transformation within the legal profession and highlights the importance of dismantling patriarchal systems to create opportunities for authentic leadership. Advocate Noko-Molaudi's insights underscore the necessity of continued efforts to support and mentor emerging female lawyers, reflecting a commitment to fostering the next generation of leaders in the legal field.

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Candidate Attorney Shatedi Phoshoko delivers a compelling address that reflects on the historical contributions of women in shaping legal and social frameworks. She spotlights the pivotal role women play during the Congress that formulated the Freedom Charter, particularly Helen Joseph's advocacy for provisions that relate to housing, security, and healthcare for mothers and children. Ms. Phoshoko emphasized that these contributions marked significant victories for women's rights and laid a foundational framework for future advancements. Her reflections illuminates how these early efforts challenged patriarchal norms, paving the way for a more inclusive legal landscape and underscoring the transformative impact of these achievements.



Candidate Attorney Shatedi Phoshoko

Finding Balance

Attorney Connie Phakedi, founder and director of Phakedi Attorneys Incorporated and a recently appointed Acting Judge of the Labour Court of South Africa, shares her inspiring journey from humble rural beginnings to her current esteemed position. She discusses the numerous challenges faced, including overcoming self-doubt and the difficulties of balancing work with further education. Despite these obstacles, Attorney Phakedi's ascent to an Acting Judge exemplifies her dedication to personal and professional growth. These reflections underscore the importance of resilience, self-belief, and mutual support among women. We are urged to push forward with confidence and pride in our achievements, advocating for continuous personal and professional development as a means to overcome barriers and achieve leadership roles.



Attorney Connie Phakedi

A key theme in Attorney Phakedi's message is that leadership and empowerment begin with utilizing available resources and asserting oneself in male-dominated spaces, rather than waiting for opportunities to arise. She addresses the slow pace of transformation within South Africa's legal profession, where Black women often find themselves competing against minority groups for positions. Attorney Phakedi advised against viewing gender as a limitation, advocating instead for women to compete equally with men and be recognized for capabilities, rather than gender.

Strong Women
stand together when
things are **rough**, hold each
other up when they
need **support**, and **laugh**
together when there's
no reason to.
WomenWorking.com

Attorney Phakedi lauds Chief Justice Mandisa Maya, a leading South African jurist who is the country's first female Chief Justice since 1 September 2024. Chief Justice Maya's pioneering achievements include being the first Black woman to serve on the Supreme Court of Appeal and our appellate court's first Black woman deputy president and president. Chief Justice Maya's consistent leadership and ground-breaking achievements serve as an inspiration for women and aspiring lawyers. Attorney Phakedi emphasizes that Chief Justice Maya's journey illustrates that leadership begins long before reaching the highest ranks, with the importance of starting to lead with the resources at hand and striving for excellence. Chief Justice Maya's achievements are a testament to her unwavering commitment to advancing gender equality in the judiciary and provide a powerful example of how perseverance and dedication can reshape professional landscapes.

Ubuntu



Advocate Ayesha Tiry

Advocate Ayesha Tiry, seasoned advocate and SABWiL Founder, brings a profound perspective to the discussion by highlighting the critical role of women in legal advocacy and leadership. Advocate Tiry celebrates the milestones achieved by pioneering women like Chief Justice Maya, using the analogy of rocks cascading down a cliff to illustrate how individual achievements and collective action drive significant and unstoppable change. Advocate Tiry lauds *Ubuntu*, an African philosophy of interconnectedness and humanity, underscoring its role in shaping South African law. Adv. Tiry advocates for the explicit inclusion of *Ubuntu* in the Constitution, reflecting its essential contribution to fostering a more equitable legal framework that embodies values of humanity and dignity.

Advocate Tiry honours late Justice Yvonne Mokgoro, reflecting on Constitutional Court Justice Mokgoro's elevation as South Africa's first Black woman judge in the Constitutional Court. Esteemed Justice Mokgoro's experience under apartheid profoundly influenced judicial philosophy, leading the late Mbokodo to champion *Ubuntu* as a core constitutional value. Advocate Tiry highlights the late Justice Mokgoro's impact through landmark rulings, such as the abolition of the death penalty in *S v Makwanyane*, showcasing how Mbokodo Justice Mokgoro is part of the infusion of African philosophy into our nation's legal system. Advocate Tiry's tribute underscores Justice Mokgoro's legacy of ensuring that the law reflects the lived experiences and values of all South Africans, particularly those historically marginalized, and emphasized the continued relevance and potential of *Ubuntu* in contemporary legal contexts.

Advocate Tiry highlights a pivotal moment when South Africa's President of the Supreme Court of Appeal, appointed 1 June 2023, the erudite Justice Molemela, and the visionary Constitutional Court Justice Mhlantla, represent our judiciary at monumental meeting of African women judges in Gabon. This historic gathering led to the Libreville Declaration, a strategic document addressing the challenges faced by women in the judiciary across the continent. Advocate Tiry lauds the dedication of the judiciary to overcoming obstacles and emphasizes that even at the peak, the judiciary continues to work collaboratively to lift those still striving and promote gender equality within the legal system fostering constitutional values.

Lessons

Candidate Attorney Shatedi Phoshoko, Attorney Connie Phakedi, Advocate Ayesha Tiry, and Advocate Christinah Noko-Molaudi collectively address the importance of sustaining momentum in the fight for gender equality, graciously convened by Fearless Azanian Lawyers Association. These legal luminaries acknowledge the progress made and stress that continued effort and collaboration are essential for advancing inclusivity within the legal profession. Our Imbokodo encourage us to advocate for systemic change, support each other's professional journeys, and maintain a united approach to overcoming remaining barriers.

As the event concludes, the collective contributions proffer a hopeful vision for for days to come, celebrating past achievements while acknowledging the ongoing effort required to advance gender equality and inclusivity. Our shared commitment to addressing barriers and fostering leadership reflects a dedication by our Mbokodo of today, those to come and those of yesteryear, to create a more equitable and just legal landscape for future generations.

'Ukup'uzenzele'.



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6th SABWiL President
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16 September 2024



What a Woman's Month,
our wondrous bloom into a
Spring like no other.
Malibongwe Mbokodo
Mandisa Maya
Chief Justice
1 September 2024

We did it.
South Africa did it.
Chief Justice Maya did it,
for us, for every women,
for the blood and love of
Solomon Mahlangu,
with the grace of
God.

*Igama lamakhosikazi
malibongwe!*



SABWiL
Igama lamakhosikazi malibongwe

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