

October 9, 2013

Louisiana Judicial Council/NBA
Scholarship Foundation

The South African Legal Exchange Program

Several years ago the Louisiana Judicial Council/National Bar Association Foundation instituted a program of sending Louisiana Law Students to the Republic of South Africa to introduce them to the South Africa Legal and Judicial System. As a continuation of this program, and the next step in developing a relationship to foster understanding the differences and similarities of the legal systems, it is our goal to further develop relationships by exchanging visits between the respective Judges of both countries.

In that regard, it is proposed that the current Chairman of the Louisiana Judicial Council/National Bar Association arrange travel to South Africa with the intent of meeting with Judges, Law School Officers, Local Officials and Bar Members to further the relationship between the Louisiana Judicial System and the South Africa System. The Chairman will pay for his transportation to the Republic of South Africa and will issue a report upon his return outlining the goals and results of the trip. The foundation will provide expenses as determined by the foundation board.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN LEGAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM TRIP

November 4 – 16, 2013

By: Judge Edwin Lombard

The trip to South Africa began in Cape Town, South Africa. The initial meeting scheduled was with Judge Dustan Mlambo, Judge President of North and South Gauteng High Court. Because travel information of the appointment was transmitted after the time set, our first visit was with Evance Kalula, Professor of law and Deputy Dean at the University of Cape Town. Our discussions were centered on student and judge exchange and how we could best accomplish this. He explained to us the difference in legal Education in South Africa and the United States and how his office can assist us in our developing a project of exchange.

As Dean of Internationalization and Outreach, Professor Kalula is a valued asset and very agreeable to help. He recommended that we talk to Judge Dennis Davis, who is in addition to his duties as judge, also set on many commissions and is on the faculty at the law school and a international lecturer. Judge Davis met with us at the High Court in Cape Town. He is a very generous man and spent considerable time describing the South Africa Court System. Judge Davis described how his court works and while there he was manually correcting one of his opinions. He emphasized the need for technology and docket management and expressed interest in our new technology.

Our final meeting in Cape Town was with Dr. Iqbal Surve'. Among his many investments, Dr. Surve's owns 35% if not all the daily newspapers in South Africa. He was the personal physician of Nelson Mandela and is a close associate of the current South Africa President, Mr. Jacob Zuma. Among the issues we talked to Dr. Surve' about his support of the Judges Exchange Program and its benefits. It is our hope that we can get Dr. Surve' to get involved in sponsoring some of the Exchange Judges.

Our next visit was to the capital of South Africa Pretoria. We decided to visit the court without an appointment. Upon visiting the Clerk's Office at the Palace of Justice, we found an antiquated system of court filings similar to those I found in the Clerk's Office in New Orleans 40 years ago. The system was a paper driven court. We were lucky enough to have the Chief Registrar (Clerk in Louisiana) meet us and talk about the court system and the need for reform and technology. During this meeting we were informed that the Chief Justice of South Africa and Judge President Mlambo was in Pretoria for an important meeting. We told him that we missed an appointment with the Judge President and asked if he could inquire if we could meet him and the Chief Justice. We were indeed fortunate that Judge President Mlambo agreed to meet with us. At this meeting, Judge President Mlambo indicated that the Chief Justice could not attend the meeting and apologized. He

said that their main issue is Docket Management and that he believed that an Exchange Program between the Judges of South Africa and Louisiana would be of great benefit to bring his court into the 21st Century. Judge President assured us that he would be amenable to taking the lead in assisting us with putting the program together.

Our next meeting was with Ann Van Zyl, Head of Academy at Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls and Rebecca Sykes, President of Oprah Winfrey Charitable Foundation (a native of Shreveport, Louisiana). We are among the few outsiders allowed to visit the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls. We discussed the Academy and its High Educational Students and how it prepares the young girls for the next level of education. We talked about student exchange with Louisiana and how this could facilitate letting the young ladies experience the legal environment through the National Bar Association/Louisiana Judicial Council. One of the young ladies that was chosen to escort us, Ms. Remoabetsure Letlape, (a Native Zulu, who spoke no English upon arrival at the school) indicated that she wants to pursue law and asked if I would be her mentor, of course, I agreed. Her dream is to become the first female Zulu Judge in South Africa.

Our final meeting was with Mr. Michael Chabeli, General Counsel for Coca-Cola Eurasia & Africa. Mr. Chabeli whose office is in Istanbul, Turkey was home in Johannesburg on a personal matter and agreed to meet us. He was briefed on the reason for our visit and agreed that it was a worthy effort, and that we should develop the program and its goals and present it to him. Our goal is to get Coca-Cola, Eurasia & Africa as a sponsor.