

Mandla Mkatshwa**LRC Oral History Project****4th August 2008**

Int This is an interview with Mandla Mkatshwa, I didn't say that correctly (laughter), and it's Monday the 4th of August (2008). Mandla on behalf of SALS Foundation in Washington, DC, we really want to thank you for taking the time and meeting with us and agreeing to be part of the LRC Oral History Project. I wondered whether we could start the interview...if you could talk about your early childhood memories, growing up in South Africa, where you think your sense of social justice and injustice developed and, what were some of the formative influences that may have led you into the legal profession?

MM Thank you very much for the opportunity. I was born in Mpumalanga in the East of Johannesburg and basically I grew up in the township. And I sort of went through the phase of 1976 with student uprisings; I had just started school around that time and already that sort of gave me an idea that things were just not ok. Yes there were people in the family who were older than me and they would talk about the situation and some of the stuff I could see, you know, when I would go to town with parents and so on and just realised, just how differently we were treated (laughs), because we were people of colour and so on. And after matriculating I didn't really hesitate in deciding that I wanted to pursue a career in law among others because I thought that I could contribute in a very small way in trying to ensure that there was legal justice in the country. And after completing my LLB at Wits I decided to send an application to the LRC, being a Human Rights organisation at that time...Public Interest Law organisation, I thought maybe I could, you know, have a shot at using my legal skills for purposes of justice, and that was around the time of the democratic elections in the country. And just to go back a year or two earlier, George Bizos and Geoff Budlender had visited the university and they addressed the law students and that also gave me a very good idea of what the LRC was all about and it sort of enforced my interest in joining an organisation of this nature. And fortunately I was accepted as a Candidate Attorney beginning of 1994. Completed my two years of Articles, got admitted in 1996 and I stayed on at the LRC until June of 1999. And it was the most amazing time of my career boom, five and a half years that I was with the LRC.

Int I'm going to take you right back. Growing up in Mpumalanga did you grow up in the rural area or was it an urban township, and where did you get a sense early on about apartheid?

MM It was really in a township setting. Although where I was born we sort of are surrounded by villages, sort of a rural area nearby, and among others the living conditions were really not up to scratch. People were living in informal structures or shacks as they're alternatively called. We were lucky in the townships to have formal structures but still we used to live in what I refer to as four-roomed houses, with two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen. And I come from a family of eight and it was difficult to accommodate such a big family in a small house like that. You know all of those things sort of did give an indication of how life...how difficult life was for a black person in South Africa and worse of all, born of parents who were not educated and so on, yes.

- Int And then in terms of experiences of injustice, did you have experiences growing up of injustice? Of course apartheid is an injustice but specific interactions where you were told you couldn't do this or do that? I'm wondering for example in terms of Pass Laws, etc?
- MM I did. I think one specific example that stayed in my mind for a long time was my elder brother being arrested for not having an ID document or a pass as it was called then. And he was barely sixteen years old and the age of acquiring an ID was sixteen. And he just had a slightly biggish structure and for that he was detained. And my parents had to scurry around and try and get help to get him out, and to me it also was like very close and it cut very close to the family. My brother was subjected to something he had no control over (laughs), and yes, so that was one of those instances of hardship.
- Int Mandla, I'm also wondering at the point of...what were some of the things that may have influenced you to enter the legal profession and why law in particular?
- MM I think, and again I was young, and maybe I could have done a lot of things, including maybe leaving the country to join the struggle in exile and so on, but the law was another option of fighting injustice. And to me it was a question of let me go to school, let me equip myself appropriately. My parents didn't have that benefit and they were willing to help me get through school. And if I could, let me use the law as a tool to achieve equality and justice, and basically that's the route that I chose at the time.
- Int I'm also wondering Mandla the...did you go to Wits immediately for undergraduate...?
- MM Not at all. Again, because of the system of segregation I grew up in an area that was Nguni speaking, Swazi and Zulu speaking. And it made at that time sense to go to a university that catered for Nguni or Zulu speaking students, and I went to the University of Zululand for my under-graduate. And when I finished that that's when I went to Wits and the thinking then and, I think, incorrectly so was, you were better off graduating in a so-called bush university, and then once you had a certain level of academic qualification then you could go to places like Wits, and it was a misconception. But in any event I went through that route and I don't regret it. It worked out ok anyway.
- Int So when you...when you were at university in...of Zululand, what period was that...under-graduate?
- MM That was 1988 to 1991; I did a four year degree...the B Proc there.

- Int And, that was really an interesting period because change was happening but there was still a lot of violence particularly in KwaZulu-Natal. I wondered whether you could talk about that?
- MM Oh absolutely. I mean we were based in Northern KwaZulu-Natal next to Empangeni, which is close by to Richards Bay. And not only did we have to deal with issues of the police., the apartheid system, but there was also the Bantustan system. The KwaZulu-Natal, the people who were involved with, you know, the system in that area. Basically we had to deal with the police repression. Student activity was really not allowed, holding meetings was an issue, even student gatherings were monitored and so on...and so on. But on top of that we had to deal with the local chiefs and, you know, the tribal situation that was going on at that time. And from time to time we had to leave the campus because there were threats of attacks on students and so on. And in any particular year we could lose up to a month of class attendance and then we would go back and it went on and on and on and...until we graduated basically; it was a volatile area (laughs) to be in at that time.
- Int I can imagine. And there...were you involved in student politics apart from what you've described? Were you specifically involved for example in the student movement itself?
- MM I was not a specific organisation member but I did serve in the Law Student Council at the University of Zululand. But of course the cause was a simple one to follow and I did support student activities and, you know, class boycotts were the order of the day, you know. To advance all sorts of causes, including the cause of political emancipation and...it was on the agenda all the time. We celebrated all the important days, June the 16th, March 21st, and then all the political dates on the calendar. It was part of student life really and...yes.
- Int I'm wondering also, Mandla, when you entered Wits... I'm sure there must have been quite a disparity between the education you'd received at Zululand and Wits...what was that experience for you?
- MM I think as I said it, to me it sort of afterwards came out as a fair misconception...that you were more or better equipped if you studied in a bush campus and then you went to Wits. But yes, universities like those that were meant for the black community were not properly equipped and, you know, you wouldn't have the best in terms of the lecturers and so on. And those lecturers who were there were really committed to their work, and you had to balance all of that. And yes, there was a bit of a cultural shock coming to a mixed university in terms of the residences, the lecturers, even the, you know, in terms of the student body itself, you know, the way it was mixed. So there...there was that and you had to adjust and, you know, you would struggle the first few semesters and then after that, you know, you settle in and, you know, make the best of it.

Int I'm also wondering...at the University of Wits Law School, at what point did you then become interested in Public Interest Law and how did you get to know about the LRC?

MM I think as I advanced with my studies at Wits...I mean, I was at Wits for the LLB which was a two years course. So the first semester or so it was like books, books, books and so on but gradually, you know, you settle in and there was a University Law Clinic nearby and, you know, one would go there from time to time. And without fail the majority of the clients who used to come to the Law Clinic at Wits were generally black and with all sorts of problems involving Rights issues. I recall that when I started participating in the Law Clinic as part of the final year's studies, we had to deal with a case of a woman who was dismissed for having gone on maternity leave. When she came back she was told she had no job. And we took on that case and we succeeded in getting her the job back. And, you know, to me that said something needs to be done here. And when I joined the LRC indeed part of my practice was Employment Law and dealing specifically with exploited workers like farm workers, you know, in the rural areas. That's basically where I built my really big practice at the time and generally doing land work – working closely with a person like Moray Hathorn and so on. So yes, I mean, those kinds of events sort of made it possible for me to pursue the Public Interest field in that time.

Int So you went through the Law Clinics and you heard about the Legal Resources Centre and you applied, and you were a Candidate Attorney?

MM Yes.

Int And you entered at a very interesting period, 1994. Arthur Chaskalson had left by then?

MM Arthur (Chaskalson) had just left for the Constitutional Court at that time and Geoff Budlender was the National Director at the time. And Judge Navsa was the Johannesburg Director at that time and obviously George was around as well and...

Int Tell me about your experiences working here with Mahomed Navsa, with Geoff Budlender and George Bizos and others?

MM I think it's an experience I wouldn't trade in for anything. It was the first time of my early career having to work with people of such calibre. I mean, like George Bizos SC, a real teacher, a father figure, a real professional. I mean, the kind of person who sits you down, help you through whatever problem you had. I mean, always willing to listen to the candidate attorney's problems. He would participate in the attorney's and professional staff meetings. Give guidance on cases and, you know, time allowing he would avail himself to help you in a case, you know, with court appearances and so on. Geoff (Budlender) himself...amazing land lawyer and, you know, I learned a lot from him. Mahomed Navsa, you know, the best in terms of skill, in respect of litigation. I mean...and these were people who were really not highly paid but they

were just passionate about their work. And in a major way I think it rubbed off on a lot of us young lawyers at the time and, you know, I still look back and think I learned a lot from these people.

Int So when you were a candidate attorney who were the others in your cohort?

MM There were people like Happy Masondo who ended up going to the US to do her Masters there and she came back and worked for The South African Airways. There were others like, well, Judge Ellem Francis, he was an attorney already at that time. Thandi Orleyn, who afterwards headed the CCMA. There was Diane Terblanche. Dunstan Mlambo, who's a judge as well now, and a whole host of other lawyers. I mean, Judge Chris Nicholson who is going to be hearing the Jacob Zuma case. So yes, it was quite an exciting group of professionals, you know, ya.

Int And so you obviously...when you did your CA you had rotations...?

MM Yes.

Int So you started off...and which rotations did you do?

MM Coincidentally my first rotation was with Mahendra Chetty...was based in Durban, and his specialisation was Employment Law.

Int But he was based in Johannesburg....?

MM He was based in Johannesburg at the time yes, yes. I worked very closely with him. I worked with Trevor Bailey who went and...he's now associated, I think, with the...?

Int Rental Housing Tribunal...?

MM ...Rental Housing Trust, yes, yes, yes. And who else did I work with? Of course I worked with Moray (Hathorn) on land issues and I worked with Ellem Francis as well who, at that time, was working...is...his main practice was police brutality cases, civil claims. And those ya, were the people that I rotated on.

Int Ok. I was wondering whether you could talk a bit about some of the interesting cases you had?

MM Maybe one example that comes to mind is...a very long case we worked with...on with Moray Hathorn in Mpumalanga in the Piet Retief area, of a family of farm workers.

Int It's not Driefontein, is it?

MM Not Driefontein.

Int Ok.

MM ...Piet Retief. Where the farmer wanted to evict this old man with his family and he was like second or third generation farm worker in that area. And the case took so many twists at some point...and clearly it was a Land Tenure issue, but at some point it became an employment issue, because then the farmer wanted to dismiss the old man, and I had to go and fight the case on the basis of Employment Law. But we continued also fighting on the basis of it being a Land Tenure issue. And by the time I left the LRC, we were at the verge of getting a settlement on the case that was going to guarantee the old man with his family a stay on the farm, and that was, you know, one of those major cases which...when I joined in '94 the case was running and when I left in '99 it was still running but, you know, the old man was still on the farm, you know. Unlike other people who were not as fortunate.

Int Right, so you did Land Restitution cases...what were some of the things that you learned that you feel you've taken away as a lawyer in your current practice?

MM I think the element of caring for people. You know, once a person is educated, I qualify as a lawyer and, you know, it would...life would have been good. I would have just gone out to the corporate sector and had a good time. But having worked for the LRC I sort of, you know, developed more of the sense of understanding people, emotional intelligence, and dealing with people who were less fortunate than I was. And, you know, you could sit down, listen to their stories and offer whatever help you could, and it felt so good going home afterwards and thinking, at least I helped someone who is less fortunate. And I think that's the professional element that, you know, was ingrained by the senior members of staff in the LRC. That yes, you might be better off, you might be qualified as a lawyer and so on, but you must remember that you come from a community of people, you know, who are really...really deserving, and they would, you know, need your kind of assistance, and don't ever forget them. And I think I still keep that kind of thing whenever I deal with people out there who are not as lucky as I am.

Int I'm also wondering, Mandela, you've worked with a range of people, you were very fortunate to work with some wonderful people. Who is the one that you felt very close to in terms of a working relationship, and that you felt that was a very good mentor for you, particularly as a CA?

MM I think Moray (Hathorn) in particular.

Int I wonder whether you could talk a bit about that?

MM I think Moray (Hathorn) was unique in the sense that, you know, we basically came from different backgrounds. He being a white man who really didn't have any business trying to help black people who were suffering and so on, but he made it, you know, his life-long, you know, mission. And we did a lot of travelling with Moray when I was working with him. Going to the rural areas, doing land cases and we could...we would spend hours on the road, you know, and we would talk, even on a personal level, you know. I was young, entering the profession. Moray was old, matured and, he had been in the business for some time and, you know, he was really the kind of person you could rely on and you knew you could take him into your confidence and share your personal issues, private issues. And he was there to listen and help. And even to this day I think I really regard him as one of the people who really moulded me into what I am, you know, in terms of professional ethics, how to conduct yourself and, you know, and basically how to run a case, you know. Those very basic things that someone would overlook, Moray was the kind of person who'd pay attention to detail. And when he was a director, you know, we used to have the system of the director going around the office with the candidate attorney's and their attorneys, and sitting down and going through your files. And, you know, Moray was patient. He would sit down, look at the file with you, talk to you, guide you, and, you know. And coincidentally when I left the LRC he was also stepping down as Director of the Jo'burg office and, I'm not sure if that system continued but I found it, you know, so educational, you know, the way he conducted himself. And by then I was an attorney and...but still he continued with the system and, you know, it really made a difference in my professional life.

Int That's wonderful. You did your CA...candidate attorney...and then you decided to stay on; what prompted that decision? You could have gone off somewhere else?

MM Yes...no, absolutely. I think I still enjoyed the work. You know, we had just gone through '94...the elections and, then I was admitted and we had the second elections in '98, and things were happening but, you know, you got the sense that the elections themselves did not mean that people were better off, or that their rights were guaranteed in any way. There was still a lot of work and I still believe there is still a lot of work to be done and, to me it was a question of: The mission is not complete, let me stay on. And I still feel maybe five and a half years was not really enough time but of course one needs to move on in life (laughs), I had to start family and so on. But I still look back and I think it was time well spent, really.

Int In terms of organisational issues...South Africa, being always fraught with tensions, racially, etc, what were some of the tensions...within the LRC in terms of race, gender, etc?

MM I think the LRC itself was not immune from what was happening in the country and sooner or later it had to transform. And you did get the sense that there was a feeling that we needed to implement steps like Affirmative Action and, we had to make sure that black people were advanced. Yes, the candidate attorneys came in and the majority naturally were black, but some of them, as soon as they qualified or at the end of their first year, they would opt out and go to Commercial Practice and so on; and it was a challenge to ensure that we retained a lot of them. And we also had to

make sure that the structures were reflective of what was going on outside in, you know, in terms of demographics and representation, you know, in terms of what was going on in the country. So those kinds of tensions were there, but in my view, those were healthy tensions. I recall that at some point, shortly before I left, I served in the...I just cannot remember the name at that time, but we had a group of people who were trying to make sure that Affirmative Action was implemented in the organisation, and we had to draft a policy and then, and so on and so on. And I was part of that group and basically got ideas, and I recall that I had to do a presentation at one of the AGMs on the issue, and you could tell that people were willing to help. People were willing to change attitudes, and at that time the National Director was Bongani Majola and he was the kind of person also who was willing to change the LRC and to make it reflective of what was going on in society. Whether the time was enough and the...whether we had the resources, I think is another issue, but there was that willingness and indeed the LRC, I think, did go through a number of changes, and, I think, it's...it looks good now, I mean (laughs).

Int As a black lawyer in this organisation, what did you feel could have been done differently whilst you were here?

MM In terms of the composition of the organisation?

Int Not just the composition but your own experience? Did you feel that you were given the high impact cases? Did you get an opportunity to work on things that really interested you? Was there latitude for you to manoeuvre and get the range of experience that you required?

MM I think, you know, I had the benefit of being a CA and also an attorney, so I honestly think there was a lot of latitude at the time. And just having gone into a democratic situation...yes, we had to be careful how we selected cases and the resources that were available, you know, to run those cases, but I really did not feel restricted in any way. Of course we had to operate within certain parameters. We had to consult, talk amongst ourselves as professionals, when I was an attorney, but, yes, at the end of the day, I mean, you know, we had the front desk service where you could see a lot of clients in a day and pick cases and so on. And I think it...I think the system worked out ok and, you know, you picked your cases accordingly and indeed it had to have an impact. And in my particular practice with the farm workers, you know, that was the kind of work that was appealing to me and it was impact work. Of course I couldn't pick a case...a commercial case for instance, for a single individual and, you know, and expect glory out of it. I mean it had to affect a number of people and give rights to a group of people.

Int Sure. So, when you were a fully-fledged attorney here, what was probably one of the cases that you worked on that you really felt was rewarding to you?

MM I took a number of cases in the Mpumalanga area in...around Standerton and so on for farm workers. And for some strange reason just around that time...and of course this was after the elections, I think around '98, '99 and so on, you sort of had a feeling that

some of the farmers were bitter about something and so on. And farm workers were being chased away and they were being evicted, they were being dismissed, and so on and so on. And those were the kinds of cases that were very appealing to me. And I got a lot of satisfaction because in the majority of those cases we got judgment in favour of these farm workers and they were able to stay on. And those that felt that the relationship with the farmer had really broken down would accept settlements and move on to other places and so on. And I think to me, that was really a fulfilling experience. I mean, at that time there was what was called the Agricultural Labour Court. A very friendly, semi-formal kind of institution, you know, that was not intimidating and, you know, with time you developed really a relationship, but a professional relationship with the presiding officers and so on. And you could get a sense that they were gradually also understanding the plight of farm workers and, you know, it made the work even easier. And I think in a way it was also educating to the farmers themselves, you know, because they would come to the court, you would have a pre-hearing discussion and so on, and after the case they would see things differently and, you know, when I left the LRC, to me it was like at least something has happened, you know, with some of these farmers, who might have been hostile before but once they understood what was going on and they understood that their farm workers also had rights and there was an institution that was independent, objective, and that could listen to their problems, you know, it made the work much, much easier. And ya, I think to me that was exciting, really.

Int Right and...there's always been a tension in the LRC in Public Interest Law organisations between the person who comes in...through the door, and has a really important problem that's important to them, and the need to because of funding probably, to specialise and have key areas of Public Interest Law Litigation...high impact cases. What was your sense of that tension when you were here?

MM I think it was sad sometimes to turn an individual case away when you thought you could do something. Yes, you know, in exceptional cases we could say, well, maybe this is a deserving case, maybe let's take it, but it wasn't done as often. But what we used to encourage, and George (Bizos) was one of those people who would say: If we can't take this case, where can this person go? And as a result we had relationships with some of organisations like the Consumer Forum. We had relationships with the Law Clinics and other places, the Public Defender's Office for instance, and where we could not help we could even prepare a letter of recommendation and say: Take this letter, go to this particular office, you are likely to get help. While previously, you might have had instances where a person was told: Look, we don't do this kind of work, sorry we can't help you. And they would have had to just find help elsewhere, on their own. So I think the referral system sort of helped in a way, ya.

Int I was also wondering, Mandla, what prompted your decision to leave the Legal Resources Centre?

MM I think it was time to enter the corporate world really, and as I was saying earlier, to also start a family. You know I left the LRC June of '99 and I got married in December of '99, and I must say that the work at the LRC was very challenging but also demanding. I mean, it was not unusual to have to come in, into the office on a

Saturday or on a Sunday, so one had to, at that time, decide, you know, it's time maybe to slow down and do other things. And so ya, I guess it was a mixture of things really: growth, family and...ya, it was time to move on really (laughs).

Int Right. So when you left, where did you go?

MM I joined a petroleum and mining company as legal adviser. And initially I was based in Mpumalanga in Secunda, and I was there for about two years then came back to Johannesburg...worked for the same company for about six years.

Int That was at Total, was it?

MM In Total ya.

Int At Total, right.

MM Yes.

Int Now I understand other people who've worked at Total have complained about lack of transformation?

MM You're saying Total as in the company?

Int Ya.

MM Oh no, it's Sasol. Sorry I thought you were talking about total time, no. It's Sasol I worked for...for Sasol, ya.

Int So how did you make the adjustment from Public Interest Law to corporate law?

MM You know, it was difficult I must say, but having planned it, I think, in advance...when I left the LRC I registered with Unisa and I did a Masters in Commercial Law, just to prepare myself, you know, for corporate work, and it worked out ok. But yes it was a major adjustment because while I was very independent at the LRC, now you're working for a corporate where you had to follow corporate rules and, you know, the amount of independence that you enjoyed in practice are extremely limited in the corporate sector. So ya, it took a bit of adjusting.

Int Right. And then have you stayed on there or have you gone elsewhere now?

- MM I've moved on. I left Sasol in 2004 and joined an IT company called (**inaudible**).com as their in-house legal counsel. So it's still corporate work. Very exciting, you know, in a different field though.
- Int Since probably around the time you were here, '94 plus, funding is all... become a crucial issue for the Legal Resources Centre. And attached to that it seems that the LRC is really unable to attract good quality black lawyers because they're snapped up by the corporate legal firms. Do you think that's the case?
- MM Absolutely, I think it is a major problem. Even way back then it was a struggle. Yes, there was, I think, money available at the time because, you know, of the Constitutional Dispensation and, you know, rights had to be enforced and so on. And I do suspect that as the years went by you got a sense that a lot of donors thought, but you're in a democracy now, you've got, you know, the Human Rights Commission, you've got the Gender Commission and other institutions, why the need for Public Interest Law? But I think it's still there, you know. It's good enough to have a Constitution but you need those rights to be enforced and the LRC's that kind of organisation.
- Int Ok. I'm also wondering, currently there's a lot of issues around rule of law in terms of the Constitution, Constitutional Court judges being called counter revolutionary and there's the Jacob Zuma case, the Judge Hlophe case... What's your sense of whether an organisation like the Legal Resources Centre...do you think it can take on government effectively in that kind of context, or do you have some concerns?
- MM No, absolutely. I mean, maybe one should start by saying...what is going on is probably a reflection of democracy, maturing really, where people are able to speak openly and so on. On the other hand you do want to caution against crossing that fine line where the attacks become personal and the insight...non-compliance or non-adherence to the rule of law itself, and you do need organisations like the LRC to really calm the waters, you know. And, you know, government should be challenged where government is going wrong and government should be taken to court where necessary, but to appear in public platforms and make inflammatory statements, in my personal view, is not helpful at all. I mean the law is there, the courts are there, the judges are there, they're executing their functions. We've got appeal processes and judgments generally have to be respected even if you don't agree with them, and that's what we were taught and, you know, and that's what the rule of law is all about. No one is above the law. And those are the kinds of issues that need to be balanced with, you know, maybe the impatience of society out there for delivery of services in other things, and maybe unhappiness with the government of the day and so on, but let's follow the structures and processes that are in place.
- Int When Arthur Chaskalson was leaving he said, that the purpose of a...Public Interest Law organisation is that it must litigate where necessary and it must, take on Public Interest Law cases. And it has to challenge government even if it's an ANC government. It seems to me that with certain cases, for example like the TAC case, that the LRC has done that...exactly that...

MM Absolutely.

Int ...but do you think it can do more? And what areas of Public Interest Law do you think it could challenge government effectively?

MM Just about the time when I was about to leave, I mean, there was...there were quite a lot of cases involving pension matters. I mean, you know, where people's pensions were stopped or withdrawn or where there were long delays in paying pensions and so on. I think those are the kinds of cases that, you know, the LRC should continue to look at. For instance the issue of housing particularly, you know, in the urban areas, you know. The LRC used to run the Seven Buildings Project, years ago, where large numbers of tenants who were done in by unscrupulous landlords and so on, and similarly, I mean, housing in the rural areas, you know. Housing remains a serious set-back in terms of delivering for government, and those are the kinds of cases I think that could still make an impact, you know. The living conditions of some of the areas where people live, I mean, are really appalling to say the least, and, you know, I think the LRC can and should get involved there.

Int I'm also wondering, Mandla...in terms of the current debates around...socio-economic rights, I wonder whether you could talk a bit about that, in terms of Public Interest Law Litigation?

MM I think it's an important area. I mean, I've mentioned already the issue of housing. Health is another issue. I mean, way back then JP (Purshotam) in Durban took on the case of a person who was challenging the Department of Health. And I think it involved the supply of a dialysis machine to that particular person...

Int The Soobramoney case...

MM Soobramoney case. And, you know, those are the kinds of cases, I think, that remain relevant, the provision of health, you know, facilities. Ya, I think, ya, there's still a lot of work to be done really.

Int Ok. I've asked you a range of questions and I'm wondering whether there's something I've neglected to ask you which you feel ought to be included in your LRC Oral History interview?

MM Um...I think the issue of attracting more black professionals into Public Interest work remains to me a concern. And that, balanced with funding, because, you know, if there's no money to pay them, unfortunately they will leave. And ya, it's still an issue and, you know, I...if I could help I would and, you know...I do think of the LRC a lot of the times and, you know, I would like to be associated with the LRC for as long as it exists and, you know, if I happen to get into money, honestly I...this is one organisation I would like to help.

- Int That's good to know! I'm also wondering, since you've left the LRC, its 1999, it's nearly...nearly ten years, do you hear much about the Legal Resources Centre? Is it in the public domain? Do you hear about it and what it does? Do you know much about that?
- MM No, unfortunately no. The LRC is not grabbing the headlines anymore. It never used to be a headline grabbing organisation anyway but the media was always aware of the work of the LRC, be it representing pensioners or street hawkers who were being chased out of the city, land cases and so on. But somehow, you know, the profile of the LRC seems to have taken a dive and my suspicion is there's not a lot of work that's coming out of the LRC, and that is also disturbing, because the higher the profile the better are the chances of attracting funding. And, you know, so ya, I'm not hearing about the LRC. I don't read about it at all unfortunately.
- Int Ok. Mandla I'm wondering whether we could end the interview...if you could talk about a particular memory. Whether it's with a client or with Moray or George or anyone...that you treasure and it represents your experience at the LRC?
- MM I think one incident particularly with Judge Ellem Francis. I think I was just about a month at the LRC and we went to Standerton. He was doing a Rescission Application, and he went into court as I was parking the car outside, and I sort of rushed in, following him. And I walked into the court with my jacket and I hadn't put it on at the time and the proceedings had already started. And right in the middle of court I put on my jacket. And the magistrate was not impressed and, you know, he started shouting, but he was doing so in Afrikaans and I couldn't really understand. You know, I was a candidate attorney but I did understand the rules of court. I mean I couldn't stand up and address the magistrate or apologise or anything. So Ellem Francis had to do it for me, and he had to explain that I was a new candidate attorney and, you know, and...the apology and everything. On the one hand I was upset that I was shouted at in a language that I was not comfortable with and I couldn't understand everything the magistrate was saying but, on the other hand, you know, it was a light moment really because it was like a baptism of fire into the profession.
- Int Sure!
- MM And as a result it sort of stayed in my mind that, you know, one has to respect the officials of the court, and particularly magistrates and judges and, if you do so, they also treat you with respect and, you know, it's....it was quite a funny moment really (laughs).
- Int Thank you for sharing that. And I think you're right about the baptism of fire. Mandla, I really enjoyed meeting you and thank you so much for taking the time to come out here and to really share your memories, and also for a very focused interview, thank you.

MM Thank you very much. Thanks for the time.

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