



A century of sound legal advice & expertise since 1921.

J LESLIE SMITH & COMPANY INCORPORATED

Tel : 033 845 9700





A note from our Chairperson Margaret McCullough

I have been part of the JLS team since 1994. I became the first female director on the 1 June 1998 and the first female chairperson of the company on the 25 March 2021. The "old guard" of the firm were receptive to transformation all those years ago and when considering succession within the firm, they were open to considering a female attorney! Since then, many more ladies have joined JLS and we are now a director base of 5 ladies and three men.

Over the years, JLS has embraced the process of transformation in all respects, and we are proud to have a young, ambitious, capable and diverse team of directors.

We offer expertise to our clients across the spectrum of legal services and are able to assist our clients with their conveyancing requirements, with litigious and family law matters, with pension fund law, and with their wills, the administration of estates and trust law.

We are much more than simply a law firm that provides a service to our clients. We pride ourselves upon our involvement within the community. Our directors are involved in various aspects of the community which includes sitting on boards and trusts on a voluntary basis which boards and trusts provide care to our senior citizens, and to the safety and security of the community we live in.

Myself and my co-director Whyona Sithapersad are proud to represent the legal profession on the Legal Provincial Council, KwaZulu Natal, and have been elected as representatives of the legal profession in the first council appointed after the Legal Practice Act was promulgated.

I am proud and grateful to be part of the JLS team.

As our logo states – *"More than just Suits!"*



J Leslie Smith & Company Inc

About us

J Leslie Smith & Company has a proud history of being a leading law firm servicing clients in Pietermaritzburg, Howick, and throughout South Africa since 1921.

Our dedicated and committed team of attorneys, conveyancers, and notaries public are leaders in their respective fields and are constantly in touch with recent developments in the law. We seek to maintain our long-standing relationships with clients, which have been built over the years through excellent service, by consistently updating our practice and knowledge. With an established history and a dynamic team of professionals and staff, we are able to draw from experience and then forge the way forward.

Our firm balances old world values and ethics with today's needs for aggressive business and commercial expectations of our clients.

We currently proudly hold a Level 1 B-BBEE and are constantly aiming at improving our B-BBEE level going forward.



How can WE help YOU ?

1

BOND REGISTRATION

Catherine Smith

2

CIVIL LITIGATION

Vaughn Daly
Warren Smith

3

FAMILY & PENSION FUND LAW

Whyona Sithapersad

4

PROPERTY LAW

Catherine Smith
Christine Speirs
Bilal Osman
Marc Sharratt

5

COMMERCIAL LAW

Warren Smith
Marc Sharratt

6

LABOUR LAW

Whyona Sithapersad

7

NOTARIAL WORK

Catherine Smith
Christine Speirs
Bilal Osman
Marc Sharratt

8

TAX, TRUSTS & ESTATES

Margaret McCullough
Bilal Osman

9

INSURANCE LAW

Vaughn Daly

10

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

Warren Smith

Meet the JLS directors



Who is Margaret McCullough?

Qualifications and Year Qualifications Obtained

- Bachelor of Arts Degree, University of Natal, Durban: 1986
- Obtained LLB, University of Natal, Durban: 1989 – 1990
- Admitted Attorney – 1992
- Diploma in Estate Planning

Area of Expertise

- Estate Planning, Wills & Trusts
- Curatorship's

Other positions held

- Elected Councillor for the KwaZulu-Natal Legal Practice Provincial Council – 2019 – 2022;
- Chairperson of the Professional Affairs Committee of the Provincial Council – 2019 – 2022;
- Acts as the Ombudsman to PADCA (Pietermaritzburg and District Council for the care of the Aged)
- Member of the Emma Barter Committee and of the Riverside Park Home Committee
- Member of the Ethics Committee, Msunduzi Hospice

Interests and Activities

- Camping, reading, spending time with the family

Contact Margaret

- Margaret: margaretm@jleslie.co.za
- Secretary: mandik@jleslie.co.za





Who is Vaughn Daly?

Qualifications and Year Qualifications Obtained

- B Proc – 1994
- Admitted Attorney – 1997

Area of Expertise

- Litigation
- Insurance Law (Representation of Insurers, UMA's and brokerages on a national level)

Interests and Activities

- Rock climbing
- Mountain biking
- Hanging out with the children

Contact Vaughn

- Vaughn: vaugn@jleslie.co.za
- Secretary: virginiac@jleslie.co.za



Who is Warren Smith?

Qualifications and Year Qualifications Obtained

- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Cum Laude in 1997
- Pat Merrett History Prize for History Honours thesis
- Bachelor of Laws – 2000
- Admitted Attorney – 2002

Area of Expertise

- Civil Litigation
- Property Litigation
- Commercial disputes
- Land Claim matters
- Administrative Law

Other positions held

- Director of Maritzburg College Foundation
- Honorary Secretary of Maritzburg College Old Boys Association
- Deputy Chairman of Merchiston Preparatory School Governing Body

Interests and Activities

- Cricket
- History

Contact Warren

- Warren: warrensmith@jleslie.co.za
- Secretary: leighs@jlesliel.co.za



Who is Catherine Smith?

Qualifications and Year Qualifications Obtained

- Bachelor of Arts – 1998
- Bachelor of Laws – 2000
- Admitted Attorney, Notary Public, Conveyancer – 2002

Area of Expertise

- Property Law
- Bond registration
- Notarial Work

Other positions held

- Trustee and current Chair of Epworth School Trust

Interests and Activities

- Cooking
- Baking
- Ballet
- Music

Contact Catherine

- Catherine: cathys@jleslie.co.za
- Secretary: ronellh@jleslie.co.za



Who is Whyona Sithapersad?

Qualifications and Year Qualifications Obtained

- Bachelor of Arts – 1998
- Bachelor of Laws – 2000
- Admitted Attorney – 2003

Area of Expertise

- Family Law
- Pension Fund Law

Other positions held

- Elected Councillor for the KwaZulu-Natal Legal Practice Provincial Council for 2019
- Chairperson of the Risk and Compliance Committee (LPC)
- Board Member: Umgeni Community Safety Initiative

Interests and Activities

- Spending time with family, cycling and reading

Contact Whyona

- Whyona: whyona@jleslie.co.za
- Secretary: tanya@jleslie.co.za



Who is Christine Speirs?

Qualifications and Year Qualifications Obtained

- National Diploma Deeds Registration Law Cum Laude – 1999
- Bachelor of Laws – 2006
- Admitted Attorney, Notary Public, Conveyancer – 2006

Area of Expertise

- Conveyancing
- Notarial Work

Other positions held

- Notarial Examiner (KZN Law Society) since 2016
- Attended the annual registrars of deeds conference in 2013 and 2017 as the Kwazulu-Natal Law Society representative
- Instructor for the KZN Law Society in Conveyancing and Notarial Practice Attendance courses
- Appointed in May 2019 to the Disciplinary/Investigating and/or Mediation Committees of the KZN Council of the LPC
- Appointed Conveyancing & Notarial Practice Examiner by the LPC
- Vice Chairperson of the Pietermaritzburg Conveyancers Association

Interests and Activities

- Reading, creative projects, including sewing, cooking and baking.

Contact Christine

- Christine: christines@jleslie.co.za
- Secretary: samf@jleslie.co.za



Who is Bilal Osman?

Qualifications and Year Qualifications Obtained

- Bachelor of Laws Cum Laude – 2013
- Admitted Attorney – 2016
- Admitted Conveyancer – 2017
- Admitted Notary Public – 2019

Area of Expertise

- Conveyancing
- Estate Planning, Wills & Trust
- Notarial Work

Other positions held

Chairman of UKZN PMB Varsity Cricket

Interests and Activities

- Cricket
- Tennis

Contact Bilal

- Bilal: bilalo@jleslie.co.za
- Secretary: sonjas@jleslie.co.za
/ rodele@jleslie.co.za



Who is Marc Sharratt?

Qualifications and Year Qualifications Obtained

- Bachelor of Commerce – 2010
- Bachelor of Laws– 2012
- Admitted Attorney and Notary Public – 2015
- Admitted Conveyancer – 2016

Area of Expertise

- Commercial Work
- Notarial Work
- Conveyancing

Interests and Activities

- Howick Area and surrounding developments
- Fishing
- Trail running
- Golf
- Squash

Keeping updated with the latest sporting and political development in South Africa

Contact Marc

- Marc: marcs@jleslie.co.za
- Secretary: howicke@jleslie.co.za

Community spirit

At JLS we are passionate about helping our communities. Here are just some of those ways....



- Winter and toy campaign for Thandi House, (children's home and place of safety) in Pietermaritzburg
- Outreach for Funda Njenja located in Mpophomeni where they nurture youngsters on education, training and the health of their dogs, instilling a positive impact in their communities
- JLS staff wears purple highlighting World Elder Abuse Awareness Day which is held worldwide on 15 June. The purpose of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of the abuse and neglect of older persons
- Directors delivered meals to our local Grey's Hospital for the special front line nurses working tirelessly during the height of COVID.



Talk to us

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J Leslie Smith & Company Inc.

Our history

J Leslie Smith was founded by John Leslie Smith on the 4th April 1921. He opened an office in Timber street, not for one second imagining that he was about to build one of Pietermaritzburg's biggest law firms. His priorities were to find clients, and provide for his family. With lots of heart, hard work and sheer determination, he built up a client base and with his expanding business, on 1st July 1931, he moved to the O'Keefe building in Longmarket Street.

On 1st July 1935 J Leslie Smith was delighted to have his brother, Arthur Austen Smith, join the firm making it the start of a true family business. To seal the family business, on 1st July 1938 the third brother, Eric Moore Smith, joined the partnership making it a family trio.

While the business was being built, so were families. On 1st January 1957 Patrick Leslie Smith, the son of John Leslie Smith, became a partner in the firm.

The family continued to grow and on 1st January 1963 AP Austen Smith, the son of Arthur Austen Smith, became a partner in the growing family business.

In 1968, John Leslie Smith was able to put his feet up and retire. His hard work and perseverance had laid the foundation and he was ready to pass on the reigns. Sadly in the same year Arthur Austen Smith passed away.

By then the company had grown to a complement of 19 staff members and was still growing. James Bernard Austen Smith, son of Arthur Austen Smith, became a partner in 1973, after having served his articles and practiced as a Professional Assistant in the family business.

In 1974 Graham John Moore Smith, son of Eric Moore Smith, became a partner and it was once more time to move. The firm moved to the PEBS building in the same year and continued to grow.

Two of the firm's most historic moves were, firstly, the move in 1988 to Brasfort House and then, in 1998, the move out of Brasfort House. During the move into the building the furniture did not fit into the lifts and the movers spent hours carrying furniture up the fire escape steps. By the end of the day they were extremely exhausted and the furniture was badly damaged. Moving out was even more dramatic – Longmarket Street was closed as a huge crane was hired to take the furniture out via the boardroom balcony. That, to date, was the final move. The firm purchased its current premises at 332 Jabu Ndlovu (Loop) Street, Pietermaritzburg and decided to stay.

J Leslie Smith was formed as a family business, and the family ethos still exists. Despite the large staff complement, we are still a family, and we try and make our clients feel part of the family by providing a friendly, personal and professional service to them.