

## **National Schools Moot Court competition**

By Kevin O' Reilly

On 11 October the fifth National Schools Moot Court competition took place at the Constitutional Court. The competition saw over 150 teams enter from all nine provinces.

The judges were Justice Elias Matojane, Justice Johann van der Westhuizen, University of Pretoria Professor Christof Heyns and Human Rights Commission Commissioner Mohamed Ameerma.

The hypothetical facts focused on issues of discrimination on the bases of sexual orientation and were devised by University of Pretoria Centre for Child Law director, Professor Ann Skelton.

Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, John Jeffery, delivering the opening remarks said: 'We must enhance access to the Constitution and undertake human rights awareness in constitutional education. The schools moot competition is one of the ways of achieving this as the competition is an exciting way of raising constitutional awareness. If people are not aware of their constitutional rights or are not allowed to exercise these rights in their daily lives then our constitutional rights are only promises on paper'.

Commenting on the issue of gender representation in the judiciary, Deputy Minister Jeffery was pleased to note that all four candidates were female.

'Moot court competitions have many benefits and allow students to improve their public speaking, learn to structure a legal argument, analyse cases and develop writing skills,' said Deputy Minister Jeffery.

The four finalists were 16-year-old Clara-Marie Macheke and 17-year-old Claire Rankin both in grade 11 from Springfield Convent in Cape Town and 17-year-old Shandré Smith in grade 12 and 16-year-old Katelyn Chetty in grade 11 from Gibson Pillay Learning Academy in Johannesburg.

Ms Macheke and Ms Rankin were the winners.

Cape Town attorney, Tracey Babb, helped the winning team prepare for the competition.

Ms Macheke described the experience as 'phenomenal' and one she would not 'trade for anything'.

Ms Rankin said she wants to study law and become a state advocate.

Jacquie Cassette, director and national practice head in the *pro bono* and human rights practice at Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr announced that Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr were offering a R 30 000 bursary to each finalist if they were accepted to study law at a South African university.

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