

GUEST EDITORIAL

Die twee oudste regsfakulteite in Suid-Afrika het vir baie jare langs mekaar bestaan, maar sonder enige betekenisvolle georganiseerde kontak tussen die studente van die twee instellings. Dit het egter in 1964 verander.

Dit was grotendeels te danke aan die inisiatief van ‘n Kapenaar wat sy eerste graad aan die Universiteit Kaapstad behaal het en toe besluit het om sy LLB aan die Stellenbosse Universiteit voort te sit. Charles Abelsohn, tot met sy aftrede vyf jaar gelede dieregsadviseur van die Israeliese lugdiens El Al in Tel Aviv, het gou ‘n entoesiastiese Matie geword, maar ook sy bande met sy eerste *alma mater* behou.

Charles, ‘n man vol planne en inisiatief, het besluit dat die twee groepe studente mekaar moes leer ken. Die eerste deel van die plan was die eerste Regsintervarsity met akademiese voordragte deur dosente van die twee fakulteite, mededinging op die sportveld, en die aand mededinging in die fynere kunsies van alkoholverbruik. Die Ikeys was die gashere vir die eerste geleentheid.

UK se Regsfakulteit was toe nog by Hiddingh Hall naby die Kompanjiestuin in die Kaapse middestad. Daar het twee akademiese swaargewigte, een van elke kant, die oggend die verrigtinge met geleerde voordragte begin. Vir UK het tot die kryt toegetree die formidabele, maar minlike, prof Ben-Zion Beinart (1914-1979), groot van lyf en met ‘n swaar Swartlandse Joodse aksent. Die ewe formidabele Matie-kampioen was die kort, vlymskerp prof JC de Wet (1912-1990). Die uitslag was gelykop. ‘n Voordrag deur ‘n besoekende federale regter uit die VSA was ook op die program.

Die Maties het die rugbyveld die namiddag gedomineer. Die ander sportuitslae is nou in die sluiers van my geheue gehul.

Die aand se aktiwiteite was by die beroemde Foresters Arms in Nuweland. Die wenners van die bierdrinkkresies (“boat race”) was die gashere, aangevoer deur die einste prof Ben Beinart. Gelukkig het alle Stellenbosse deelnemers daardie nag veilig hulle pad terug na die Pieke gevind, gerig deur die wit strepe van die nog splinternuwe Setlaarsweg (nou die N2).

The second part of the *rapprochement* plan was the publication of a joint legal journal, produced and edited by the students of the two faculties. This was inspired by the example of the law reviews of the North American law schools where these student-led publications are extremely prestigious and where membership of the editorial board is a proud entry in any aspiring lawyer’s curriculum vitae.

It got the learned Latin name of *Responsa Meridiana*, i.e. *Opinions from the South*. The guiding spirit in the editorial board was another Ikey with Matie loyalties, Mr I (Solly) Leeman. Born and bred in Stellenbosch, he had a brilliant career as a Matie law student. He then spent many years as a lecturer and professor in the Cape Town faculty and was the natural editorial advisor for the new venture.

The three Stellenbosch members of the editorial board were Charles Abelsohn as co-editor, Johan Winckler from the 1965 class and myself from the class of 1964. The UCT members

were Barry Dean as co-editor, and Mike Rogers and Selwyn Selikowitz. Barry was later dean of the Cape Town law faculty and Selwyn a member of the bench in the Cape High Court.

The publication of the first number of the new journal was accompanied by the pains to be expected when a group of enthusiastic but inexperienced students tackle such a venture. Had it not been for Solly Leeman's cool head and guiding hand that birth would never have taken place. However, we did see the miracle occur and enjoyed our first experience of intellectual ownership.

In subsequent years I returned to Stellenbosch as an academic in the Law Faculty and till 1984 took over the joint oversight of *Responsa Meridiana* with Solly Leeman. We saw the journal prosper (and at times nearly fold, depending on the student leadership in a particular year).

Now we are experiencing the 50th anniversary of that slightly mad initiative of 1964. South Africa is a very different, but better place. Nevertheless, the students of the two Southern Law Faculties can be proud of their respective heritages which have contributed so much to our country's respected legal system. They should be proud too of *Responsa Meridiana*, their joint creation.

Mag *Responsa* nog lank floreer. Long may it prosper!

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