



## EMILY VAN HEERDEN - 2016 DIOCESAN COLLEGE RHODES SCHOLARSHIP

Emily van Heerden attended Herschel Girls School where she was Head Girl in 2010, matriculating with nine subject distinctions. She went to the University of Stellenbosch where she graduated *cum laude* for both the BA Law and LLB Degrees, in 2013 and 2015, respectively. She was the University of Stellenbosch Law Faculty's top student in 2015. At the beginning of this year, she started her articles at Norton Rose Fulbright in Johannesburg where she is currently employed as a Candidate Attorney.

Both her school and university careers have been characterised by very direct and active involvement on various committees and in outreach programmes. She was head of SMILE, a programme which teaches English to previously disadvantaged children, and on the outreach committee whilst at Herschel. Whilst at university, she participated in Tutors4Tomorrow, to provide extra-curricular education to pupils at Kayamandi High School in Stellenbosch. She also worked in the Rachel's Angels initiative, mentoring students during their final two years of high school, for them to complete Grade 12 with a university exemption. She shared her passion and knowledge of Constitutional Law to younger students at the Law Faculty by tutoring Constitutional Law for two years. Since living and working in Johannesburg, apart from her full-time position as a Candidate Attorney at Norton Rose Fulbright, Emily has been involved in the Constitutional Hill Educational Project, running Saturday morning workshops at the Constitutional Court for school children. Amongst other programmes, she currently assists at the Domestic Violence Helpdesk and volunteers at the Lady Liberty Project; going into different communities and practically assisting women and children with their legal rights.

Competitive exercise included swimming and water polo at school, university and at provincial level. At school she achieved provincial colours for water polo and swimming whilst also enjoying participation in winter games such as hockey; and at University she played as a member of the U20A Western Province Water Polo side and was vice-captain of the University first team. Whilst at university, she coached high school water polo and did water polo refereeing for Western Province schools.

Currently, whilst a demanding work schedule does not afford Emily sufficient time for her water polo, she enjoys running every morning before going to the office and has taken up yoga. She is currently on an intermediate photography course and enjoys attending productions at theatres and art exhibitions, reading and relaxing with friends.

Emily's passion lies with the Law and Constitution of her country. She wants to work in the field of constitutional law, specialising in the constitutional rights of women and children, in the arena of transformative constitutionalism and social justice. To this end, she plans to read for the Bachelor of Civil Laws (BCL) at Oxford, followed by an MPhil in her second year of study. The BCL courses would prepare her to return to her country equipped to deal with challenging constitutional legal work from the courses she would have studied at Oxford, namely *Comparative Equality Law, Comparative Human Rights Law, Children, Families and the State* and *Comparative Public Law*.

With this compounding of skills, and with her passion and hope for South Africa, she plans to work towards, and stimulate argument, that will ensure the protection of the fundamental rights and provisions in the Constitution. It is through a career in constitutional law that she hopes to positively and actively effect change in the lives of many South Africans.

Dr Paul Murray  
**Secretary of the Diocesan College Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee**

*inspire individuals*

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