

Barry Adams

LRC Oral History Project

20<sup>th</sup> August 2008

Int This is an interview with Barry Adams and its...Wednesday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of August (2008). (I'm discombobulated!!!)...Barry, on behalf of SALS Foundation, we really want to thank you for agreeing to participate in the LRC Oral History Project.

BA Sure.

Int I was wondering whether we could start the interview, if you could talk about your early childhood memories, growing up in South Africa, and where you think your sense of social justice and injustice developed?

BA Ok...I grew up in Pietermaritzburg, in what was then called Natal, now KwaZulu-Natal, and I went to school and university there, and I'm not really sure, what...what originally sparked the direction that my career, at least initially in the Legal Resources Centre days, took. I had, I guess, a very ordinary childhood growing up in an abnormal society, that...somehow didn't always, somehow didn't feel right and I remember participating in sort of school, sort of political history classes where we did sort of mock elections and that type of thing, where...my natural inclination seemed to always be to, though of course there were only whites, white political parties in the context, but we had to research and, you know, the sort of standpoints of the political parties at the time, then conduct a sort of mock election where you stood for a particular party, and I think...I think in those days there was the Progressive Federal Party, I think was what it was called, was in terms of parliamentary politics as liberal as you could get, and in those school things I remember that's who I stood for, and it just somehow always felt right, and I certainly wasn't influenced in my thinking by my parents. And we would...we would have heated political arguments...

Int Was it on differences of opinion about certain things?

BA It's...it's hard, you know, I think that we're...we were so subtly influenced by the society that one often didn't...you weren't consciously aware of how weird and abnormal it was, and so I guess perhaps my...my parents were less...less thoughtful, you know, a sort of classic and ridiculous illustration of how at some deep level, you are just influenced by, or somehow brainwashed by the society was. I remember reading a foreword of Cormac Cullinan's book...you know Cormac Cullinan? His book 'Wild Law'. And Cormac was at school with me, at high school, and he then went overseas for a year and then came to Pietermaritzburg, so we did study there at the same time, although not in the same year. And I remember reading the foreword of Cormac's book and he was commenting on, also on growing up in Pietermaritzburg society and how one was sort of subtly brainwashed and his comment in his foreword was that he was...how do I put it politely, a testosterone-driven young teenager who never thought of black women as attractive, because somehow society had brainwashed us into thinking that way, even though one can hardly get more testosterone-driven than a young teenage boy, and that's weird. I'd never consciously

thought of it until I read his foreword and I thought, yes, here we were as boys at school, and that was just crazy. Anyway, so...I don't know, somehow something resonated in me that just always, always felt wrong and I suppose that's what inspired me to want to study law. I didn't study law because I wanted to do the work that I'm now doing, which is commercial work, but I thought that being a lawyer would somehow make a difference to our society.

Int Did you think that the law could be used as an instrument of social change...or could ...effectively challenge what was a repressive legal order?

BA Ja, I did. And I suppose it was a naïve idealistic notion that somehow being a lawyer put one in a position of...of...capacitated you to somehow make a difference in other people's lives, and so that's what motivated me to do my legal studies at Pietermaritzburg. And during that time I wasn't very active during my...I did a BCom first and then my LLB. I wasn't very active during my BCom, but during my LLB I edited the Law Students newspaper, so that gave me a voice to say the things in respect of what was happening in our society at that time and somehow try and influence people and...and make a difference.

Int Were you involved in NUSAS politics at all during your LLB maybe?

BA Not...not heavily. I mean, I remember that we went to NUSAS congresses and so on, but I didn't ever hold a NUSAS position or anything. But certainly that's where our allegiances lay and ja, so we went to the congresses and so on, and that was certainly the dominant driving influence on our campus in terms of, you know, student politics, ja.

Int So you were on the Pietermaritzburg campus. And from what I can gather from others, on the Durban campus there was actually some sort of community street law initiatives, there was the Law Clinic...was that around the time when you were at university? Or was it later?

BA There were...there was a Legal Aid Clinic...

Int Were you involved in that?

BA Yes...we all...well, I can't say without exception, but most people did it. There was a sort of roster basis where people were involved in that...in that clinic, so ja, I participated along with others in the clinic. And in fact it was, it was run by Alan Dodson, who you also may know from Legal Resources Centre. Ja, he was the reason why I ended up working at Mallinicks eventually in Cape Town.

Int Oh really? Ok.

BA Ja. Ja, after Johannesburg LRC.

Int So, you did your LLB and then what were the next steps really? You did it during the 1980s, your LLB, or...?

BA Ja, I graduated in '84.

Int Ok.

BA And I'm not sure I should put this on record...

Int You can edit it.

BA (Laughs.) I guess...I laugh, because I've gone full circle in terms of...in terms of my career. Because I was going through the motions of finding Articles as a final year law student, and the very first firm that I interviewed with was none other than Webber Wentzel and I travelled to Johannesburg for the interview with a friend from my class at Pietermaritzburg, and both of us were made an offer at the interview to do our Articles the following year. And so I had the Rolls Royce of large commercial firms offering me training as a lawyer, and I was rather, I suppose, mercenary because I wanted to get the best possible training that I could, as a lawyer, and I figured I wasn't going to get better training than they offered, so I was rather mercenary about it in that I accepted their offer of Articles but with no intention of remaining beyond the two years that it took me to train up and qualify and be admitted. Because that's not what I wanted to be doing.

Int What did you want to be doing?

BA I wanted to be doing public interest work...

Int I'm curious...

BA ...and there were...there were limited choices in those days in terms of where one could pursue such a career, so, I finished up at Webbers in the end of '86, and I had a conscription problem, so I had to decide what I was going to do about that, put it off, leave the country, study more, all the options that people did to juggle the conscription issue, and I didn't want to leave, I wanted to stay because I felt that this was my home and I could make a difference to what was happening here and that's

what I wanted to do, and I wasn't going to achieve that by going overseas and continuing my studies there or putting off the issue, so after much agonising, I went into the army and I spent three months in Kimberley which was probably the most stressful period of my life because I simply didn't want to...simply didn't want to be there and joy of joys, after three months I became diabetic, probably...you know, it takes something to trigger your diabetes, it can be a children's illness or whatever, so for me it was the stress of being in that situation, and it was a delight. I was booted out of the army after three months, and I was back home, and I figured that was a very fair exchange. In fact, I've often wondered if I didn't manage to induce the illness. (Laughs.) I think the mind and the body are closely linked and I've wondered over the years...

Int      Hmm, there are certainly theories to that effect...

BA      If somehow I didn't make it happen. Anyway, but it was a delight. So I was out and then Webbers asked me to come and...Webber Wentzel asked me to come and see them for an interview again, hearing that I was out of the army, so I did that as a courtesy, but that's not where I wanted to be, and then in Johannesburg there was very limited options in terms of firms who were doing what I wanted to be doing. It was either Cheadle, Thompson & Haysom, Bell Dewar, who ran a sort of public interest department headed by David Dison in those days, or there was the Legal Resources Centre. I spent a bit of time working at Cheadle, Thompson & Haysom, but...and I would have perhaps enjoyed working there more but it was awkward...my girlfriend at the time, Amanda Armstrong, who was at Cheadle's, was there and we both didn't want to be at the same firm, so I worked there for a few months. They were busy on the COSATU House bombing. There was a big application around...around that and I helped in drafting papers on, and then I interviewed at Bell Dewar, and that didn't appeal to me, and then there was the Legal Resources Centre, so I interviewed there I think with Geoff Budlender, and I think Mahomed Navsa might have also been someone who interviewed me and it just...it just clicked. It felt like the right decision to be making, so I started work there, I guess it was about mid-'87.

Int      And it was the Johannesburg office?

BA      At the Johannesburg office, ja, ja.

Int      Prior to coming to the Legal Resources Centre, did you know much about it? Because it started in 1979, so I was wondering what your knowledge of it was, whether it was through law reports or through particular individuals? You mentioned Alan Dodson for example...

BA      Ja. Well, Alan (Dodson) was my contemporary, so we studied...we did our LLB, we graduated together, and Alan (Dodson) ended up coming straight to Mallinicks, I think because of Mallinicks' reputation as also having similar public interest department I suppose akin to Bell Dewar as a similar commercial firm having a public



interest department in those days. But Legal Resources Centre I knew probably through the...the case law and...

Int So that would have been Rikhoto, Komani and other...?

BA Yes...I'm trying to think of the timing. Probably would have been...

Int When you were a law student.?

BA And, ja. And Geoff (Budlender) I had met...I'm trying to remember exactly what the occasion now...was now, at the Pietermaritzburg campus...we hosted a conference over a couple of days, at the law school, I think it was around legal aid issues, and we'd invited Geoff (Budlender) to speak so I'd met him then. In fact, I'd introduced him as the speaker, I think, ja. So I, ja, he was the only person that probably that I'd met from Legal Resources before I went and worked there.

Int ...I'm wondering what was the impetus really, for you wanting to do this type of work, when you could have probably had the cream of commercial law firms wanting to hire you, I'm just curious why in particular that you wanted to do public interest law and where that might have come from?

BA Well of course, by that time, South Africa was madness.

Int It was the Eighties?

BA It was the Eighties...in...when was the first State of Emergency?

Int '85?

BA '85, ja. So that was in my first year of Articles at Webber Wentzel, and I was woken up in bed as the State of Emergency was declared at midnight on that particular day,

Int It was June?

BA Ja, because I was staying overnight at my girlfriend's house in Yeoville, and one of... it was a communal house, and one of the people in the house was Jane Barrett who was...perhaps she still is, I don't know what she's doing now, she was involved with the Transport and General Workers Union, so the Security Police had...had staked out the house looking to arrest her and detain her, and fortunately she wasn't there on that

particular...on that particular evening, so I was sort of directly affected by...by what was happening. You know, the people that I knew socially, interacted with, spent time with, lived with, you know, were being affected by the State of Emergency, and it was madness. And those circumstances, there was...there was no choice. Of course I was going to use my legal skills to try and change what was...what was happening in our society. It was just...it was the darkest of dark times, thousands of people detained, police and the army exercising, you know, powers as if they weren't accountable to anyone, so...

Int And you would have probably done some of that work at Cheadle's, as well?

BA At Cheadle's I just worked on that one, on the COSATU House application, but they, you know, of course that's what they were...that's what they were doing full-time, was labour work, representing COSATU and detainees. And of course there was a lot of strike action and so on, so it was chaotic times when there was no thought of wanting to sit down and draft a shareholders agreement (laughter), rather than remedy what was happening in our society. Honestly it didn't cross my mind at all, that's not what I wanted to be doing. So I ended up at LRC, ja, as I say, mid-'87.

Int This was a really interesting time in its history, because people like Karel Tip, Paul Pretorius, Charles Nupen, were really on their way out of the organisation. In fact, I think Karel (Tip) must have been leaving when you were there, if I'm not mistaken.

BA Karel (Tip) would have...we might have overlapped briefly.

Int Right.

BA Charles (Nupen) had left, which gave rise to the space so that they could hire me, he'd just left. And ja, in office there was Thandi Orleyn, Mahomed Navsa, who was the in-house counsel, Arthur Chaskalson of course, as National Director.

Int Mr Zimmerman was still around? Morris?

BA Yes, ja...he was there, and he was supervising a lot of the...the advice office work I think.

Int The Hoek Street Clinic had closed by then, I think.

BA Sorry, the?

- Int Had the Hoek Street Clinic closed by then...Hoek Street, which was the advice...?
- BA I'm not sure...not sure. I think there were a lot of advice offices sort of in the surrounding towns that they serviced...Ellem Francis...Ellem Francis? Ja, he...he also did that work. And then there was Trevor...I can't remember his name...
- Int Bailey...
- BA Trevor Bailey, Trevor Bailey, yes, from Natal, joined while I was there, and Moray Hathorn came out of Webber Wentzel, to join and...
- Int And you'd known Moray Hathorn from your time during Articles or not?
- BA We knew each other from...from our period then, ja. And...although I say these things in respect of myself, you know, you asked, well why did I do this rather than the commercial work? It was a much easier decision for me, you know. I had just qualified as an attorney, I had nothing, you know, I had nothing to lose. There was relatively little cost to it in terms of a career move, but for Moray (Hathorn) I had...I had admiration because he'd spent more time at Webbers than I had, and I think was quite entrenched in doing...I think he did mining work, and so it was fantastic for me, I thought, you know, great, hats off to Moray (Hathorn), well done. Other people there were Geoff Budlender who was running the office, Cecilie Palmer, who of course set up this interview...
- Int Ma Vesta Smith?
- BA Yes. Ja...Pinky...what was her surname?
- Int Madlala...who's passed away.
- BA Ja, I think she also helped with advice office work.
- Int So what type of work did you do when you were there? Did you specialize in labour, did you take over Charles Nupen's work, or did you branch out in other kinds of work in particular?
- BA No, I had...I had no particular skill in labour work, I'd not studied it at university, so it wasn't really my...my area. The work that I ended up doing was largely a split between land related work, with Geoff (Budlender) involving me in some of the work that he was doing in that area.

Int Was it Driefontein?

BA In Driefontein and...

Int Magoba I think it is.

BA Ja, that's right. And then I also...I also did some work on my own, probably the most interesting land related matter I had during my period there was to resist a forced removal in what was then called the Western Transvaal, the little town called...the white town was called Koster. And there was a black township called Reagile, and this was one of these instances of total bizarreness in our society at the time, but the black township had been there since, I think, the 1920s, and it wasn't a sort of shack dwellers community. People had very solid brick homes that they had built and the community had obviously grown a little bit, to the point where because of the physical separation of black and white areas, the...the black township was now cresting the brow of the hill and was visible to the white township, and because it was now visible, it was somehow intruding into this invisible...into this buffer zone that had to be there, and so the white local authority started demolishing people's houses, in order to move them. We measured the distance, less than a kilometre. They were going to demolish an entire township of, you know, houses that had been there since the 1920s, in order to move people, I think it was about 800 metres, into new homes, which would be these...what people termed these two bedroomed awful concrete structures. And we found a basis to challenge the regulations...the local authority regulations, in terms of which they were purporting to have the authority to do this, and we brought an urgent application to stop the demolitions. And that was pretty much the tactic in those days, was to find some legal foothold to jam your foot in the door so that you could start negotiating with the...with the local authority or provincial authority and get them around a table talking to you and ja, we got...I think we got an interim order and then managed to get them around a table with us talking. And that stopped the...stopped the removal.

Int Interesting...

BA But it was a most absurd instance of a...of a forced removal where the motivation was literally to push people out of sight, physical sight, of the white township in order to move them 800...800 metres. So I did...I did a combination of that sort of land related work and then because of the craziness of the State of Emergency, I also did cases against the Minister of Law and Order.

Int Was that Adrian Vlok at the time?

BA Yes, it would have been...would have been Vlok...was it Vlok or le Grange? Vlok, no, it would have been Vlok. So there were numerous sort of unlawful arrest, assault

and detention cases where we sued for damages against the...against the Minister of Law and Order. Some of these were not really politically motivated, you know, and the people who were arrested and assaulted...detained and assaulted, sometimes in instances where there was no political motivation to it. The Brixton Murder and Robbery Squad had a particular notoriety in those days, so when they were investigating ordinary, whatever it was, a robbery case, they would resort to detaining their suspects and typically torturing them in order to extract confessions. One of the worst incidents that I had to deal with was an elderly woman living in Soweto, who had been picked up by the Brixton Murder and Robbery Squad in this way, and they had detained her and then...and then tortured her, and they had resorted to putting some sort of shock device in her vagina and shocking her repeatedly so that, you know, she...she was examined by, what was his name, Doctor Motlana and, you know, she had terrible wounds from electric shocks and that was their sort of standard practice. At the same...same time I had another case with a man also from Soweto, same story, same people at Brixton Murder and Robbery, same detention, same torture process, they inserted electrodes into his urethra and then shocked him repeatedly. So there were those kind of cases where we had damages actions and in some instances, I did one Anton Pillar against the police at Sebokeng Police Station where the client had been assaulted...it seems that the police had kept a baboon in a... in a totally dark, small...probably like a cupboard or a broom closet or a small room, totally dark, so as part of their standard interrogation technique, was the person would be shoved in the dark, into this room and would then...I don't know if it was a baboon or a monkey, or whatever, this thing would fly at them in the dark...

Int Gosh.

BA And they would get bitten and hit and whatever, and we got an Anton Pillar to search the Sebokeng Police Station, to look for this creature (laughs) that they were using as part of their torture process. Unfortunately we didn't find anything. Later actually when I was here, and I'd moved to work at Mallinicks' Public Interest Department, we had a successful, a very successful *Anton Pillar* against the police in the Paarl Police Station, where our clients described being...being interrogated and tortured with electric shock treatment, what the police would call a boomerang, when you put a pole between two desks and tie the person...handcuff them so that they're suspended from the pole and then swing them around, and he was interrogated with this electric shock...a big **inaudible**, but he described how for some reason the police had used a wicket keeper's...cricket wicket keeper's gloves in the course of administering the shocks, I suppose as some form of protection, I think the gloves have got rubber in them. And we searched the Paarl Police Station and we found all of these things, we found the wicket keeper's gloves, the pole, the desk with the marks where the pole had obviously been suspended, the electric shock devices, and that was a satisfying matter, because they actually got charged with assault and I think the policemen involved got, I don't know, five or six years sentences. But in most cases it was an unsatisfying experience, in the 80s, you know, where you were bringing damages actions, which would be defended and eventually be settled on some basis and you would get...you would get some damages payment, not satisfying, you wanted to see the people being locked away for what they did. Ja, so that was the sort of combination of what my practice there was like. We also ran a long inquest...

Int Really?

BA ...with Mahomed Navsa, which had been started by Steve Kahanovitz, when he was at Johannesburg Legal Resources Centre. I can't remember the plaintiff's name but it was an instance where in a township unrest situation, somebody had been shot and killed by the police and clearly in circumstances where there could have been no justification for the use of force. There wasn't any danger to the policeman but you know, it was one of those instances where police just...they were firing from a Casspir and claimed of course that, I don't know, the person was throwing stones at them or something and that justified shooting and killing him. So it was quite a long inquest that we ran.

Int That must have been the one off the Grand Parade?

BA Sorry?

Int Was that the one where the person was in the Grand Parade?

BA No, no.

Int No, ok. Because Mahomed has described a few cases...

BA Ja, ja. This was in one of the surrounding areas around Johannesburg so it was in a township situation.

Int It's interesting, because the type of work you describe can hardly be construed as cautious, yet the LRC has a reputation, if you compare it to Cheadle Thompson & Haysom during the 1980s, and CALS, although CALS didn't do litigation, as being somewhat more cautious under Arthur Chaskalson's stewardship. You worked in a particularly interesting time in the history of the country and the organisation, States of Emergencies, consecutive ones. Did you feel that the LRC was cautious or did you feel that they did take on political types of cases? Certainly your work describes that, but I was wondering what your sense was of the overall?

BA I suppose there was a degree of...I don't know if I'd describe it as caution, but there was consideration in...I guess, in wanting to take on cases that could have a maximum impact for as many people as possible, so I suppose there was...there was sometimes a process of sifting to see whether...how does this case impact, you know, would it have a, you know, sort of test case impact so that thousands, hundreds of thousands of people could perhaps benefit from the case, and maybe that meant that some cases weren't taken on. Cheadle's I think, had the reputation of, certainly doing all of the sort of union related work; the unions were very aggressive, so perhaps that

was a difference between the two organisations in a sense, whereas...I'm not sure... I'm musing over it, but I...I don't know whether LRC didn't have...maintained the position that it couldn't in fact act for the unions because I think that the unions could pay. The unions could pay therefore you couldn't act for them.

Int Right.

BA So that cut out a whole possible ambit of...of involvement but otherwise I wouldn't have described it as cautious.

Int Ok, fair enough. I was also wondering, all organisations have dynamics, and I'm sure the LRC is no exception. You were there during the apartheid era and I'm wondering...and you were also curiously enough, not really part of that very strong NUSAS background, and I wondered how you experienced the LRC in terms of gender dynamics, in terms of race dynamics, or were those not issues that pertained to you at all?

BA Ja...I don't know if I really want to comment on it.

Int Sure, ok.

BA There were some negative dynamics, there were some negative dynamics, I think maybe there were some...I don't know, some race issues, which I never really understood.

Int Were those particular individuals, or was that just sort of a more pervasive sense?

BA I have the sense that the dynamic has persisted in the Johannesburg office. I've heard that comment from people who were there long after I left. And I'm not...I'm not really sure why...what gave...what gave rise to it. I had a perhaps a simplistic view in that if there was any tension, in regard to myself perhaps, it was motivated by the fact that...I don't know, I was a...I was a, I guess, a white, bright, young boy who had a very good relationship with...with Geoff (Budlender) while I was there, and perhaps there might have been some tension in people who'd been in the organisation longer than I had, like, you know, who is this whippersnapper who's entering our space? And...ja...I don't know, but there...I think there are some tensions there, there are some problems, which was part of prompting me to, I guess, move on in the end. I'd always joked with Alan Dodson, who was at Mallinicks down here in Cape Town, saying if an opportunity came up in Cape Town, to give me a call. It was always just a joke, and then he did. And...and Mallinicks had a fantastic, vibrant public interest department, with Alan (Dodson), Henk Smith, who left...

Int To the LRC?

BA To go to the LRC. Mike Evans, Willie Hofmeyr, and myself, so you know, it was staffed almost by, I guess, an equivalent number of lawyers as the Johannesburg LRC office. And doing lots of exciting and interesting work down here, so I was more than happy to...to move to Cape Town, get some sun on my attorney's legs!

Int (Laughs.) I'm wondering, Barry in terms of, doing public interest law at Mallinicks, ...has there been a change in your practice as such?

BA I did that...so I came down here...

Int 1989?

*(Interruption).*

BA ...1989, and I guess I did that work through to the early Nineties...through to '94 or so, and it was because we were operating in a commercial practice here, not having sort of source of donor funding, as the Legal Resources Centre did, we relied on... what was it called? SALDEF?

Int SALSLEP?

BA What was it? South African Legal Defence Fund...

Int Oh the Legal Defence and Aid Fund...

BA Ja.

Int Ok, in London?

BA In London, ja. So every matter that we got here, we would have to write a motivation to London for funding for the matter, and you know, there were agreed rates...

Int And funding dried up post-'94?



BA And funding dried up. So I gradually had gone full circle, I drifted out of doing that work that was my original inspiration until now I find myself drafting shareholders agreements. (Laughter.)

Int Do you miss public interest law work?

BA I do. Yes, I do.

Int What in particular?

BA I miss working with communities. When I was here I continued to do land related work so, you know, a lot of that was acting with squatter communities and I spent a great deal of my time literally sitting in people's shacks consulting with them and I miss that sense of...of communal involvement and being able to see directly...there's a huge sense of satisfaction which one gets when literally the poorest of the poor, you can somehow improve their lives, through stuff that you do as a lawyer. That's enormously satisfying. There's not the same sense of satisfaction when you close a transaction and one party hands over a large cheque to the other. It's definitely not as...not as satisfying. And I guess with that public interest work, there's always a sense of urgency, you know, there's always a pressing need. You can't slack off, you know, you can't, as you might say, you know, to a commercial client, you know, I've got ten other matters on my desk, I'll give you your agreement tomorrow. It's, you know, it might have a financial impact on them perhaps, you know, but with the public interest law work, there's more of a desperate sense of urgency and people's lives are impacted by your commitment or lack thereof, so it's a huge motivating force to keep you energised, I guess. So I miss that.

Int Barry, you spent a lot of time in public interest law, and I'm wondering in the current context where the judiciary appears to be in lots of crisis, the Bar in Cape Town, Johannesburg, there's attacks on Constitutional Court judges, on the Constitution, on the courts, how does a public interest law organisation, which is effectively also a human rights organisation, function in that milieu? And I'm speaking here particularly of an organisation like the LRC, which has a mandate to take on government where necessary, and of course, in a post-apartheid context, has continued to take on an ANC government. What are some of your concerns and perspectives on that?

BA It's...it's very worrying...it's very worrying. It's...I've never had a sense of despondency in relation to our country until, you know, recent attacks on the judiciary. I can understand that in terms of delivery, there's a growing groundswell sense of frustration and you know, that drives the popular support of people like a Zuma and so on, so I...I can understand how we might have got into this position but what distresses me is that...is that people in leadership positions feel that they must, I don't know, pander to their support base by launching really ill-considered attacks on the judiciary. That's very worrying to me. So it's the...it's something that's happening in our country at the moment that is a cause of concern to me. What an organisation like the Legal Resources Centre can be doing in these circumstances, I'm

not sure. It doesn't have...it shouldn't, you know, have any hesitation if government is to be a target, to continue doing what it always has done, even though we now have an ANC government, it has the same responsibility as it always has. But in terms of cases it can be involved in, I don't know. What is happening, are they doing anything? (Laughs.)

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

BA I can't think of anything offhand. I think you pretty much...pretty much covered it.

Int Ok. I wondered in terms of ending the interview, you've...had the privilege of working with great minds like Geoff Budlender and Arthur Chaskalson and others, and I'm just wondering whether you have a particular memory, whether it's working with these individuals or even a client, or a case, that for you embodies what public interest law is about, and it's something that you feel has been enormously rewarding. I know you've mentioned other cases, but just something that you treasure, a memory; it could even be a challenge?

BA Can we stop it while I think, otherwise there'll be a long silence.

Int (Laughs.)

BA Wow, to single out one thing.

Int I know, it's difficult. (Laughs.)

BA I don't know, that's very hard to...

Int Ok, fair enough.

BA ...to single out one thing.

Int Perhaps...you mentioned that you had a very close working relationship with Geoff Budlender, I wondered whether you could just maybe say a few words about him or Arthur Chaskalson, someone that may have inspired you along the way at the LRC?

BA Arthur (Chaskalson), I didn't get to know very well whilst I was working there, because he was working on the Delmas Treason Trial, so he wasn't in the office much. I think the case ran every day for what, years...so he was involved in that every day. But he's obviously a hugely inspirational person. And with him, as well as with...with Geoff (Budlender), what strikes one is their humility, that they're incredibly humble people, as Arthur in particular, you know, with all that...that he's achieved and so on, he's obviously got a fantastic intellect but normally, normally with someone who's achieved so much, comes a equally large ego, and he's just humble, which is incredibly inspirational. And I think Geoff (Budlender) is much the same, and he has a fantastic sense of humour to go with it, so that's part of the reason why I guess I enjoyed working with him so much. We worked together recently again, an extended period, and his sense of humour is fantastic. And he has a wonderful intellect and tons and tons and tons of integrity. And one doesn't meet many people like that who, you know, you truly feel have...have never crossed a line, that their integrity is just huge. Ja, so they're both very inspirational people, and I'm privileged to have spent time working in the same organisation as them, and time working more closely with Geoff (Budlender). I've learnt a lot working with him, and have huge amounts of respect for him.

Int Barry, thank you very much for a most thoughtful interview. I've appreciated your time and your reflections, as well.

BA Thank you.

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## Legal Resources Centre Oral History Project

### **PUBLISHER:**

*Publisher:-* Historical Papers, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand

*Location:-* Johannesburg

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### **DOCUMENT DETAILS:**

*Document ID:-* AG3298-1-002

*Document Title:-* Barry Adams Interview

*Author:-* Legal Resources Centre South Africa (LRC)

*Document Date:-* 2008