Webster Sekwati LRC Oral History Project 24"â\204¢ July 2008

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This is an interview with Webster Sekwati and its Thursday the 24â\204¢ of July (2008). Webster on behalf of SALS Foundation we want to thank you for agreeing to participate in the LRC Oral History Project.

I greatly appreciate it.

I wondered whether we could start the interview, if you could tell me about your early childhood memories growing up in South Africa, what was that like, where did your sense of social justice and injustice develop?

Iâ\200\231m actually from a rural area in Pietersburg, that is where I was born, in a famil y of seven, and unfortunately four of us...or fortunately maybe, four of us are blind and we went to a school for the blind in Pietersburg. The name of the school is called Siloe.

So itâ\200\231s a genetic condition?

I think it is, it could be genetic, although no expert ever came with evidence to that effect, but itâ\200\231s a reasonable suspicion. It makes sense, itâ\200\231s a sensible in ference.

So you went to a school...?

For the blind, yes. At the school for the blind where we were, it was a Catholic school and there was a lot of restrictions, as you know the Catholics were. They wouldnâ\200\231t allow us...at some stage they were not even allowing us to listen to the news. That was during 1976 where there was general uprising in the country, so I suspect that there was a fear that we might be influenced into rioting and things like that. As a matter of fact there was a bit of a riot, if I remember correctly, and then from then on we were not allowed to know much about what is happening outside in the world there. So I didnâ\200\231t really know much about what is happening out there until I passe d my standard ten. Then I went to university, the University of the North where I studied law. That is where I started to see a lot of things, people were toy toying and raising concern about the apartheid government. The apartheid government was sending soldiers onto our campus to look after us and to drive us to school and things like that. So that is where I started to know what is happening out there.

Right. I’m going to take you right back, Webster. Thank you for that wonderful outline. In terms of...growing up in the rural area, in terms of...you said you went to this school and it was very sheltered and restricted, but in terms of family, did anyone in your community ever talk about...that there was this apartheid system, that black people couldnâ\200\231t do certain things, that there was restriction, there was the pass l aws, where did your sense of that social dislocation come from?

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As a small child I must admit very little was brought to my attention about that. But when I grew up, especially when I was at varsity, my father did reveal to me that he belonged to a political organisation, he was a member of the ANC and he was...he belonged to an organisation called Fetakgomo, which was affiliated to the ANC at that time. It was also a reactive organisation to try to fight the injustices of the past. Yes, and some of my fatherâ\200\231s friends were arrested. And he tells me about there was a
day when he told us about a very interesting story. He had books and documents of that organisation in the house where he used to work in Springs. And that was the day when the police were raiding houses of members of Fetakgomo, and when they were about to come to our house, my mother collected the documents and threw them in some mealie fields adjacent to our house.

Really. Gosh.

Yes. And then when they came in they didnâ\200\231t find anything and my father was not arrested, otherwise I'm sure my father would have been arrested as well.

Your mother sounds like an impressive woman...

Well...sheâ\200\231s your rural kind of a person, not sophisticated at all. In fact she tol d me
she went up to standard two in those years, so sheâ\200\231s not really sophisticated. All she
was fighting against is that possibly she was trying to...

Save...?

Save the husband from being arrested, yes.

And in terms of schooling...even though the school was restricted...from what you said it sounds like you got a very good education.

Oh yes, our school was very good in the sense that...well, it was a school for the blind, we were few there, not very many students, and they were giving us opportunity to read whatever that they could provide, but obviously under restrictions. We were not allowed to read newspapers, we were not allowed to listen to the radio freely. When it is news time they would switch off the radio. And even when we had a visitor from outside, you know, it wasnâ\200\231t just...they were not just free to talk to us
about anything.

Right. So Webster...what made you decide to become a lawyer? Why law? You could have done many things, why law?

Ya, you know, it might sound stupid but one has to be honest. During my days as a blind person, there were very few fields of study that were open to us. I first of all

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wanted to become a pastor, a Catholic priest. But then I decided, no, let me rather not do it, let me not start there, let me first of all go out and see the world, then Iâ\200\231ll make an informed decision as to who I am and what do I really want in this world. Then I wanted to become a teacher as well; that was also an available field for me. But then I thought maybe I might not get a job as a teacher because if they decide then â\200\224 it was during the apartheid era â\200\224 where, you know, the rights of the disabled were not recognised at all. We were supposed to work in sheltered employment and things like that. So I became scared that I might qualify as a teacher but then I might have to teach at a school for the blind, and the schools for the blind were very few, and if I donâ\200\231t get that then it means Iâ\200\231'm going to...it will be a waste. So, I then decided let me try to study the law. I mean, I wasnâ\200\231t very interested in the law at that time, I must be honest. But as I proceeded studying the law the interest developed and I really liked the law so much, and as a matter of fact Iâ\200\231'm a court lawyer, I donâ\200\231t like to sit in the office.

Right. So youâ\200\231re a litigator.

I like litigating a lot, yes.

And you said to me that you went to the University of Venda?

University of the North.

North. Was that Turfloop?

Turfloop, yes.

Right. Could you tell me a bit about that university and your experiences studying law there.

Ya, the University of the North was a very...well, it was a nice university. Obviously it is not one of those classy universities, itâ\200\231s what they call a Bush University. In terms of providing material for us, the blind, there was very little they could. In fact on the first year I thought I was going to fail because of the fact that there wasnâ\200\231t material for us, we were struggling. But with time things got better. I think the children who are studying now are the ones who are enjoying themselves, because there are quite a lot of material available for them now. It was very difficult to study there. First of all the teachers didnâ\200\231t know...although they did teach blind people they still had problems, like we had to record their voices, their lectures, some of them were not happy with that, and it wasnâ\200\231t very nice always. But the students were very nice. I used a lot of students to read for me. I had a good Latin background from coming from a school which is a Catholic...or coming from a Catholic school, I had a good Latin background and the students were struggling with Latin, so I used to teach people Latin. And so that made me to be respected a bit, and that is why people

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became very willing to help me. The other thing is of course I talk a lot. (laughter) I make a lot of jokes. Iâ\200\231m a social person, so people liked me for that.

Oh, good. But you also mentioned that you became very politically conscientised at university.

Well, yes, at the university we became conscientised in the sense that they used to circulate pamphlets from the ANC, there used to be mass meetings of students, political days like the Sharpeville day, June 16, we started to understand what they imply. Nelson Mandela, we started to understand who Nelson Mandela was and what is happening to him. Ya, that is where I picked up everything at the university, yes.

...Webster, what period was that when you went to university?

It was in 1986.

Right. So this was really the States of Emergencies...

That was during the State of Emergency, that is why previously I mentioned the fact that the university...there were soldiers at the university all the time.

And did you get detained, did you get picked up at all for...for political activism or...?

I wasnâ\200\231t really picked up for political activities, myself, thanks God for that. Bu t I was
picked up for running an illegal meeting. When we hold a meeting we had to ask for permission all the time, so there was a time when the university issued a very unfair exam timetable. The subjects were going one after another from Monday to Saturday, we used to write even on Saturdays. And then we would rest on Sundays, there were other three subjects following each other. So there was a general displeasure about the timetable, and we obviously...if itâ\200\231s something that involves all the other people, youâ\200\231ve got to come and come together and meet and talk about the whole thing. But then we first of all had to approach a magistrate for permission because such meetings were not allowed. And then when we approached the magistrate for permission he refused that, and then we decided as students, the hell, we are going to continue with our meeting. And then I was...I happened to be the chairman of that meeting, and then when the meeting was on, the Security Police came, and they found me there chairing a meeting and they took me and they detained me for a night only. But I was never really a political person...I was detained to prison for some days and whatever, no.

So did you do a B Proc or did you do an LLB?

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I did a B Juris. Ya...I wanted to do a B Proc as a matter of fact but then there was accounting and our mathematical background as blind people at that time was very bad. So I thought it wasnâ\200\231t going to be viable for me. And besides I got a bursary, so the bursary had very strict terms for me. If I failed they would definitely not continue to sponsor me so I had to make sure that I passed.

Sure. So you did the B Juris and...

Yes, and then I did LLB at Wits University.

Oh right, so you finished at Turfloop...

Turfloop, 1989, and then 1990 I was at Wits. I did my LLB, and then when I finished my LLB that was when I started making applications for articles, I think that is how I came into contact with an organisation like the Legal Resources Centre.

Had you heard about the Legal Resources Centre before you...?

Um, I heard a little bit, not much hey...I heard about it when I was studying human rights, a subject called human rights and they told...Professor van der Vyver was our professor and he told us about the Legal Resources Centre as one of the organisations which was doing public interest law matters, yes.

And what prompted you...you said you started applying for articles, was it because the Legal Resources Centre approached you, you wanted to do public interest law, how did it come about?

Let me be very honest once again, and Iâ\200\231’m sorry to have to...to sound stupid.

No not at all.

I was looking for articles and I wasnâ\200\231t particularly specific as to what Iâ\200\231 ’m looking for.
I was just fishing, putting a net into the ocean to see what I come with. If it is something edible I would fry and eat, if itâ\200\231s something that is not edible I’ll just chuck away. And thatâ\200\231s it. So I applied to so many firms, so many firms! As a matter of fact the Legal Resources Centre didnâ\200\231t give me articles immediately. They had given articles to one student who was attending with me at the university. And that student went overseas. And when she went overseas that is when my name...

Appeared...

Appeared and they called me. And at the time when they called me I was working as a switchboard operator (laughs).

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Right. In terms of starting in the Legal Resources Centre you did that in 1992?
1992, yes. It was on the 13" of January if I still can recall.
And what was the experience like, was it this ...building or another building?

No, it was far from the university. It was another building, another place, yes, another place.

Right. And tell me about...the experiences you had at the Legal Resources Centre.

When I came to the Legal Resources Centre I remember my interview, it was so nice, I was interviewed my Mr Mahendra Chetty and Mr Trevor Bailey, and they were asking me about...I could hear from their questioning that they are indeed people who are involved in public interest law because they asked me questions relating to AIDS victims, what my feeling about AIDS victims were, and the from there they went to ask me about how myself as a disabled person am going to cope with them and things like that. and they were particularly taken, very impressed with me that I was able to make it as a lawyer.

Sure, right. So when you came here what were the provisions for you in terms of your being blind? How did they provide for you?

The Legal Resources Centre unfortunately couldnâ\200\231t provide much, but I applied for a bursary from the Department of Labour and they gave me a sponsorship to employ some sighted person to read for me. And that was very helpful. So they would pay the salary of this person and I would use this person when I do research and I read and things like that.

So who worked with you here at the LRC, to read for you, etc?

On my first year I worked with a lady called...Lottering, her surname was Lottering.
Ursula Lottering, yes. She was a student at RAU. Now they call it University of Johannesburg. So she used to come in the afternoons every day.

Right. And then at some point you started working with Topsy?

And then in the following year I worked with Topsy McKenzie. I actually felt that working with a person in the afternoon is not good enough. My work was becoming too much and, you know, I wouldnâ\200\231t be able to deliver because earlier on in the morning [wouldnâ\200\231t be having an assistant. So the following year that is when I suggested to Ursula, but look, I donâ\200\231t think weâ\200\231re going to work well anymo re, it

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wonâ\200\231t work well, because I need a full-time person. Then I approached...I started looking around and I came across Topsy.

And what was that working relationship like with Topsy? Did you find that easy? Was it a lot of training involved? Was it difficult?

It was very easy, hey. I donâ\200\231t know what sort of background she had but she was a bit
mature and she was a hard worker as well, and she was a pleasant person and she really understood whatever the needs I had. I had to tell her what I needed obviously but she was really accommodative.

In terms of your training, Webster, what were the sort of cases that you took on during your articles and what were the...areas of interest for you, and who were the lawyers you worked with, just generally?

When I came in here, on my first year, I worked with Thandi Orleyn. She actually was my principal, even when I registered articles, applied, she was my principal. We did what used to be called the advice centre program where we used to visit law centres outside the Joâ\200\231burg area to give advice to members of the public and to support the officials who ran the centres, because my recollection was that those centres were run by ordinary people in the street not necessarily lawyers.

Which ones did you go to? Which advice centres did you go to, the Kempton Park..."?

Kempton Park I remember. There was a time when we went to Bloemfontein. I canâ\200\231t remember them all nicely but there were quite a few. Reiger Park as well. There was one in Reiger Park.

Do you remember the individuals you worked with, the ones who ran the advice centre in Reiger Park?

Inaudible There was a young boy, I canâ\200\231t remember the names...Iâ\200\231ve forgotten,
sorry, Iâ\200\231ve forgotten these people, itâ\200\231s very many years. Look we were not going there
every day, we were going there once in a while. So really, much of the time I was spending here in Joâ\200\231burg doing the office work and once in a while we would go around the advice centres to give them advice.

So the cases you...

There was also Mrs Ntaka. I donâ\200\231t know which centre Mrs Ntaka was running. Yes, Mrs Ntaka.

So you remember her....

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I remember Mrs Ntaka very well.

What was impressive about Mrs Ntaka?

She was a mother, she was mother. When we came to a place she used to provide nice things for us.

Like food?

Ya, coffee, tea and the likes. Ya, she was very nice and she also used to frequent the office as well. It looked like she also had a very good relationship with the office as such, yes. And of course there was the time when she also had a case and we had to help her. I think it was something related to some instalments that she wasnâ\200\231t able to pay properly and the bank was repossessing whatever. I canâ\200\231t recall fully but it something along those lines, yes.

And the lawyers that you worked with...besides Thandi Orleyn, who else did you work with?

Yes, on the first year, they were swopping us every six months. Our articles then were supposed to be two years, so on the first six months I worked with Thandi, and then the following six months I worked with Trevor Bailey. Yes, Mr Bailey. And then the following year, in January, I worked with Mahendra Chetty. Yes. What I liked about Mahendra Chetty is he threw me in the deep end, he sent me to court. And then the...

(Telephone interruption)

And then I worked with Odette Geldenhuys, that was my last principal, yes, I remember what is very nice about Odette is we celebrated a lot when I passed my exam.

Really?

Ya, she was very happy and I could feel she was very impressed, yes and weâ\200\231re still friends even today.

Thatâ\200\231s wonderful Webster. So after your articles, what happened, where did you go?

When I finished my articles I became unemployed for a while.

Gosh, right...

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No, it was alright, it was a good experience as well. I became unemployed, and when I was unemployed I was visiting courts and I saw stupid lawyers representing people, and I thought these people are making money. If I canâ\200\231t get a job then I might as well just join these silly people, Iâ\200\231ll do better. And I had my own practice afterwards.

Good for you. Where did you practise?

I had an office in Marshalltown in a building called Cape Towers. I practised there for about six years. And then during that six years I did a lot of labour work, which I picked up from Mr (Mahendra) Chetty. That was...ya, and I did a lot of criminal work. While we were at the Legal Resources Centre there was a time when we were seconded to the Public Defenderâ\200\231s Office to get criminal exposure. So when I got in to practice I found that criminal work is much easier in the sense that there are no prescriptions, there are no medical legal reports, etc, etc, and now it was easy for me to run around the courts and argue criminal cases, yes, and labour cases.

So after your practice what happened then?

During my practice there was a time when I felt...I mean, I had a big problem. I employed a certain guy who stole my client base and my business went down on its knees. I tried to pull it up, pull it up, but it wasnâ\200\231t happening for me and I started looking for jobs. And...at some stage I found a job with the Department of Justice as a director. Which is a job which I still hold today.

Oh right, ok! And what do you do there?

At the moment Iâ\200\231m heading a component which deals with medical negligence matters, personal injuries, medical negligence, unlawful shooting, and there is also prisoner right matters, correctional services.

Very important stuff really in South Africa.

Yes, and...ya, yes.

So did you deal with the case last year with the epidemic where children were dying with the flu? There was some flu epidemic...some virus in the hospitals?

No, no, no, I didnâ\200\231t personally deal with that matter. It was not in Joâ\200\231burg, it was in Durban wasnâ\200\231t it?

Right, yes, in KwaZulu-Natal...

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Yes, so it didnâ\200\231t come our way. The case that we had which was generally known was the one relating to the ex drug resistant TB. One of the attorneys in my component was responsible for the case where we were trying to retain these infected people in hospitals. The judge was calling that...I remember the judge was calling it â\200\230turnin g
hospitals into prisonsâ\200\231.

Gosh. But there was a need for it wasnâ\200\231t it?

There was a need for it, there was a need for it, because really people were...that was highly infectious and we had to detain those people until such time that the conditions were under control.

Webster...youâ\200\231ve been with the Department of Justice, is that a government job?

It is government, yes.

Right, ok. So youâ\200\231ve gone from independent public interest law, then to private practice, then to government. So youâ\200\231ve done a whole slew of lawyering (laughs).

Yes, I come from public interest law and then I went to private practice and then...public interest law we were more against government, and as a private practitioner to some extent I was against government. And now Iâ\200\231’m with government, yes (laughs).

Right. Which part of lawyering do you like the most?

I enjoy medical negligence matters. And I like constitutional matters as well, but unfortunately I couldnâ\200\231t...the component was in my section as well, the constitutio nal
law component was in my section as well but I had to give it up because of capacity.

Right. As I understand it articles....and being a fellow is a very important experience for most young lawyers. Could you talk about how the LRC might have shaped your future as a lawyer, a litigator, and...

Ya. Hey, it was very nice, hey. I must tell you it was wonderful. Obviously articles are not always pleasurable but with the benefit of hindsight I think these people have really helped us a lot. First of all they taught us moral values. You must first of all sympathise with the person that you are acting for. And of course at the same time you must be fair. If your client is unreasonable you must be able to understand that my client is unreasonable. Like now Iâ\200\231m acting for government. If the government is unreasonable, Iâ\200\231m the first person to stand up and say, look, this is not going to work,
we have to pay the poor person. I donâ\200\231t like it...in fact that actually happened in

my
interview. When I was being interviewed for my position I told them that in the past I was not willing to work for government because it was a government of apartheid,

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and there was no values for people. Now that it is a new government Iâ\200\231m prepared to come to you but this is the background I have from the LRC; when we were at the LRC we used to fight a lot against you guys, and what I picked up was that you were sometimes defending matters just because you are a powerful organ...you are a powerful organisation and if that is what you are going to do while Iâ\200\231'm working with you, please understand Iâ\200\231m prepared not even to take your position because I donâ\200\231t believe in that. And even the way we litigated at the LRC, we were protecting our clients but at the same time we had candour towards our colleagues. We were treating our colleagues with respect on the other side. So those are the basic things that I learned. And even litigation, the skill of litigation, they really taught me how to draft papers, how to interview clients, how to cross-examine, every time I boast, when I cross-examine clients I will tell them that listen, I'm now George Bizos now (laughter). I used to tell them that I'm George Bizos. This is not me cross-examining its George Bizos. Because George is the one who taught me how to cross-examine.

Really!

Ya. He told me...he gave me a very important weapon, he said, when you cross-examine youâ\200\231ve got to close the avenues of escape. That is his expression. It still sounds in my mind every time I stand up to cross-examine. And of course they taught us how to do research, which was very nice.

Iâ\200\231m also wondering Webster...you mentioned, George, were there other lawyers that you learned very important skills from, for example, Arthur Chaskalson, or anyone else, Geoff Budlender, Mohammed Navsa?

I worked with Mohammed Navsa, yes. I never worked with Arthur, I never worked with Geoff Budlender, no. They were in the national office, I wasnâ\200\231t lucky enough to work with those people. But I worked with Herr Navsa, I used to call him Herr Navsa. (laughter) In fact even today I still call him Herr Navsa when I meet him. Ya, that was a difficult man, hey. He used to push us to extremes, hey, he used...when he wants work to be done, he wanted it to be done and he had very high standards. Heâ\200\231s a very brilliant lawyer that man, ya. And...he knew his law, he knew his case law so much. He knew authorities like...I mean, itâ\200\231s like he has them in a pocket of his pants somewhere. When we have a case he would ask me immediately, what is the authority for this Webster? And every time when I speak heâ\200\231d say, Webster, why are you...he would ask me, what is the legal position about this and this and this, then Iâ\200\231'm giving him an answer very quickly and heâ\200\231d say, what is your authority Webster? That was very nice and he taught me a lot.

Did you feel that you were pushed to extremes for a good reason or...?

Oh yes, it is, and that is how I work with people now. I donâ\200\231t want things to be... I donâ\200\231t want shortcuts. Yes, yes.

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Iâ\200\231m just wondering, the LRC been a public interest law organisation, to some extent it
acts against government, and during apartheid it had a clear enemy, now itâ\200\231s an ANC led government. What are the difficulties do you think for an organisation like the LRC to actually take on cases against government? Do you think itâ\200\231s absolutely necessary or...?

Very, very, very necessary. Very, very, very necessary. A government will never be perfect. A government is a government, you know. We need an independent organisation like the LRC to be out there, to be unbiased, to take up cases against government. There can still be a lot of abuse of power by our leaders. There can be. I mean, there can be corruption. And government institutions on themselves, will not be able to file those type of cases, no. So we still need the LRC, yes. Constitutional matters. Most of the time the Constitution is breached by the government itself. So it is for LRC to stand up and say, look, this is not in accordance with the Constitution. Yes.

Iâ\200\231’m also wondering, Webster....youâ\200\231ve probably heard about the attacks on the
Constitutional Court, the crisis in the judiciary, etc, as a lawyer, whatâ\200\231s your co ncern
about rule of law, etc, for the future of South Africa?

Look, I believe that our government is very...our judiciary, I still believe in our judiciary. I think they are impartial, I believe they are very strong, but Iâ\200\231m just a bit
concerned with government itself, you know, the parliamentarians. Iâ\200\231m scared that they might...if there is no watchdog they might change the laws and make things to work to their personal gain or something like that. I mean, nowadays some of our leaders are involved in corruption, and if they become...if they occupy very high positions they might have a hand in trying to turn the Constitution around and things like that, and Iâ\200\231’m very worried about those things. And I need to be assured that things like this will not happen. And for as long as organisations like LRC are no longer there, ay ay ay, I think weâ\200\231re going to be in trouble. Nowadays they are now fighting the Scorpions, they say the Scorpion...theyâ\200\231re trying to limit the power o f the
Scorpions. And I think the whole idea is just to try to silence them because they are...to silence the Scorpions so that they can get away with murder, the leaders can get away with murder. Iâ\200\231’m very worried about that.

Before we started the interview you said something to me...you said you thought the LRC was on its decline. What gives you that sense?

Look, even before I leave the LRC, that was the last AGM that I attended, Arthur (Chaskalson) was addressing us and he was saying that the new Constitution is coming, there is some...possibly the government is going to come with...the government will be refocused in the sense that it will no longer be as abusive as the apartheid government used to be. Organisations like the Legal Aid Board will become more sensitive to human rights as well. And for that reason, the LRC will have to take away...to stop doing some of its work. And of course the other thing is, financially a lot of money is being channelled to government and I get an impression that NGOs

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are no longer being funded as much as they used to be. And I know for a fact that some of the offices of the LRC are closed already. That actually worries me a lot.

The other concern that the LRC is faced with, and largely due to funding as well, is that itâ\200\231s unable to attract good quality lawyers, particularly young black lawyers because the argument is that they are snapped up by the corporate law firms...

That is also a problem, yes. That is also the problem...that problem is...that is also a problem because we obviously...money speaks a lot, hey, nowadays. When you are working you can sacrifice up to a point, but at some stage youâ\200\231re going to have to ask yourself, where am I going? Iâ\200\231ve got to have a house to live in, Iâ\200\231ve got to have a car, Iâ\200\231ve got to get all...now even an organisation like the LRC doesnâ\200\231t have enough money and theyâ\200\231re not able to match the salaries that are paid out there, obviously lawyers will possibly go away to other organisations and itâ\200\231s a pity.

Given your job in the Department of Justice, I was wondering what you think are the main focus areas that the LRC as a public interest law organisation should be focused on in terms of law? Whatâ\200\231s your sense of what are the important areas out there? Is it social welfare...?

Well, Iâ\200\231’ve mentioned like the constitutional challenges, the constitutionality, challenging the Constitution, compliance with the Constitution. That is a very important area. Unfortunately, you know, I donâ\200\231t know whether the Legal...well, the other work that is done by the Legal Aid Board, they are doing it but they donâ\200\231t seem to get good lawyers, like medical negligence. So many people go to hospitals and they have...or they get, medically are badly treated by doctors and unfortunately they go to Legal Aid Board and the Legal Aid Board sends ill equipped lawyers, poorly...you know, lawyers who are not so well trained and well skilled to do those cases, and they end up losing the cases. Not because of the fact that they donâ\200\231t have good merits but because the lawyer just doesnâ\200\231t know how to do the work. So it would have been...itâ\200\231s a pity...but it would have been nice if the LRC was involved in these kind of things. Correctional services matters. These are matters involving the prisoners. There are fundamental rights involved there. And it would be nice if the LRC was also to some extent lending a helping hand to prisoners, yes. There could be quite other fields but Iâ\200\231m...the list is not exhausted.

Absolutely. Webster, Iâ\200\231ve asked you a range of questions, I’m wondering whether thereâ\200\231s something Iâ\200\231ve neglected to ask you which you really feel ought to be included in...as part of your LRC Oral History interview?

No, not really...I donâ\200\231t really have much, but I just wish the LRC could get funds and could actually re-establish itself again and there is still a lot for it out there. I believe there is still a lot for the LRC out there. And of course the kind of training we get here itâ\200\231s not easy to get anywhere else. Ya.

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The other thing I wanted to ask you, Webster, is there a particular memory of either a client or a lawyer, something to do with the LRC that you treasure even now?

Whoa, itâ\200\231s not an easy question hey!

Something that stands out in your mind...

Ya, itâ\200\231s quite a while ago, hey. Itâ\200\231s quite a while ago. But I must tell yo u, I enjoyed
being trained by George Bizos, really.

Tell me about that a little bit.

He brought a...it was some kind of a mock, some facts of a case which are not really for...it was just facts of cases, not necessarily a particular case as such, and a real existing case as such. And he was giving us an exercise on how to cross-examine, and I enjoyed how he went about showing us to close the avenues of escape for a witness. That was a very good exercise. And I can still remember Mr Navsa as well with his demand for authority. You know in law itâ\200\231s not good enough to simply think that thi s
is fair, this is unfair. You know the law is at the end of the day youâ\200\231ve got to ha ve
authority in terms of what are you saying. Why do you think this is not right? Is there any authority for that? Yes. And...ya, what was touching me as well was the day when Arthur...when we had a farewell function for Arthur Chaskalson. Phew, Nelson Mandela was there at that evening. I canâ\200\231t remember his speech but he was very emotional when he spoke to us to address us. I can still recall, I can still visualise how he was talking to us. In fact he started making his farewells, his goodbyes, in our last AGM in 1993. He was very emotional. And of course the other thing is, you know, a man like...with a man like Arthur Chaskalson I understand he was a very highly respected lawyer. He was making a lot out there but he sacrificed to establish an organisation like the LRC, where he wasnâ\200\231t making anything next to what he used to make as counsel out there.

Sure. Webster, I wanted to thank you for a very, very interesting interview and of course I really enjoyed meeting you as well. Is there anything else youâ\200\231d like to a dd
before we end?

No, thank you so much. I greatly appreciate, thank you for inviting me.

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