

As a litigation attorney specialising in Family Law at **Phatshoane Henney Attorneys**, family life is everything to Ilze Strydom. That's why you'll see her in court fighting for the right cause.

"I really enjoy the fact that what I do has a direct influence on people's lives."

Ilze grew up in Vanderbijlpark as one of three daughters. Her mother is a professor at the North West University's School of Educational Sciences, and her father works as a Human Resources Manager. "I believe that my decision to become an attorney was hugely influenced by my father's career," says Ilze. Ilze and her sisters attended Oospark Primary School in Vanderbijlpark, which Ilze believes taught her a lot in terms of compassion and humility. "Although the school had an excellent academic and sport record, it is situated in a less advantaged and poor area of town. I believe that attending Oospark has taught me not to judge people easily and to see the good in all people." Ilze's years studying at the North West University's Potchefstroom Campus and her four-year stay in the Vergeet My Nie hostel was filled with unforgettable moments and impressive achievements. She graduated Cum Laude and as second best student in her class. "I was introduced to Naudés Attorneys, as it was still known then, by my husband, who at the time was studying in Bloemfontein." She got a job as a candidate attorney at Naudés where she started working in 2010. She was admitted as an attorney in 2012 and became a director of the Dispute Resolution Department of Phatshoane Henney Attorneys in 2015.

Family Law

Ilze's work includes assisting clients with divorces – both local and international maintenance disputes and Maintenance Court matters, disputes regarding parental rights and responsibilities, Children's Court, guardianship issues, post-divorce disputes, co-habitation relationship issues and domestic violence cases. "I have a passion for surrogacy matters and adoptions, and intend to broaden and expand my practice into these fields soon." She's passionate about looking after the best interests of children, while also protecting her own client's interest.

"I know that this is one of the biggest clichés around, but I really enjoy the fact that what I do has a direct effect on people's

lives and mostly has a positive influence thereon, specifically on the children involved in the matter," says Ilze. Furthermore, the fact that Family Law is not a black-and-white field of law, is what keeps Ilze on her toes. "I love being able to think creatively and find solutions that fit every individual matter. I love being in court and thankfully get the opportunity to litigate many of my own matters in the field that I specialise in."

The best decision Ilze has made, was to move to Bloemfontein, although she was scared and unsure at the time. "I have made friends who have become like family, found a job that I adore and I am very happily married."

Pulling out all the stops

Ilze works extremely hard to achieve her goals of finding the best solutions for her clients. "I am committed to my clients and believe that being honest in the advice I give and the way in which I approach a matter is essential. I will fight to the bitter end to protect my client's interests." Her department believes in the quote by Haruki Murakami: "Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional."

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"We try as far as possible to help clients through what are in many instances some of the most emotional times of their lives, with efficiency, empathy and dignity."

Work and play

The legal world can become quite overwhelming at times. To make sure she gets enough relaxation, Ilze loves playing golf and hockey, and tries to exercise regularly. "I also enjoy spending time with friends and family. I love good food, great wine and sharing a laugh with people I care for."

Ilze's top tips for young professionals

"There is no substitute for hard work."

"You are always stronger than you think you are, so push yourself and what you believe your limits are, constantly. Appreciate the people who help you do what you do. Without them, you won't get far."

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