

# THE MARITIME LAW ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Affiliated to the Association of Law Societies of SA  
Member of the Comite Maritime International



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From the office of the Secretary

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## Eulogy

### SHANE MICHAEL STEPHEN DWYER

It is with sadness, and with huge admiration and affection, that we say farewell to Shane Dwyer, a past president and founding member of this association.

He leaves a huge void in South Africa's maritime legal fraternity, and indeed in legal and maritime insurance circles worldwide.

To quote from the circular sent by Shepstone & Wylie to their clients to announce his death:

*Shane commenced articles with Shepstone and Wylie in 1972 and such was his ability and drive that he was made a partner in 1975. His contribution to S&W was extraordinary.*

*Even though he was able to retire in 2012 (having turned 66) it was unimaginable that he would retire and be lost to Shepstone and Wylie. He therefore continued to serve Shepstone and Wylie up until a couple of months ago—an extraordinary period of 50 years' service.*

During that time, not only did he place his indelible mark on shipping law in South Africa, but he moved naturally into the leadership of Shepstone & Wylie which, under his guidance and with his personal dynamism and vision, he modernised and expanded dramatically to the force it is today.

He was a moderniser, a totally out of the box thinker and innovator, yet he stayed true to his academic roots and could quote extensively and incisively from Roman Dutch law, learned with distinction at Stellenbosch University.

Those enquiring qualities and his extraordinary vision were seminal in the incubation and emergence of our world-renowned 1983 Admiralty Jurisdiction Regulation Act. Shane's shrewd intellect and force of character were instrumental in creating the modern maritime legal environment in which we operate. Indeed, the concept of associated ship arrest was something he very first mooted when the MLA began working on the new legislation.

When Shane started at Shepstone & Wylie as a youngster in 1972 (having first captured the heart of and married the then senior partner's daughter, Susie Oosthuizen), Roger Gifford was probably the only shipping lawyer in Durban. Roger could be said therefore to have been the first real shipping specialist, but with the arrival of his protégé, the practice of maritime law moved up a notch and then took off. Shane had the instinct, vision, and forcefulness to lead the thrust of maritime law in this country out of the 1890's (the English Admiralty Act of 1890 still applied when he started out) into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, putting South Africa squarely on the legal map. One could say that Shane laid out the maritime legal playing field on which today's maritime lawyers happily play, very largely thanks to his massive contribution to maritime law in this country.

Although often an intimidating person to work for, he was a superb mentor and teacher. There are many very successful lawyers in and outside his own firm, at the South African and English Bars, in commerce and in the leading law firms and P&I Clubs around the world who have learned their trade under his (demanding) guidance. All hold him in huge regard and affection.

Shane was a legal opponent to be feared. However, although he radiated absolute personal and professional confidence, outside of the gladiatorial arena he had a deep dislike of the spotlight, flattery or praise. In his personal life, he liked nothing more than standing in the river on his farm in Underberg, fishing for trout, Castle Lager and pipe in hand. He adored his wonderful wife Susie, an absolute rock throughout his career, and his children Sean, Kate and Patrick, and our sincerest condolences go out to them.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sharmila', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**SHARMILA DEVARAJ NAIDOO**

**SECRETARY**

**THE MARITIME LAW ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA**

*(This letter has been signed electronically)*