

Natasha Fletcher

Counsel: Real Estate



Q *What led you to pursue a career in Real Estate?*

A I fell into Real Estate quite by accident. I passed Matric with exemption, but was not sure what I wanted to study, though Law had always been on the horizon. I enrolled at university to do a Bachelor of Arts degree, with a view to changing course once I was certain, but just before I was due to start the semester, I decided that I didn't want to go to university without being completely certain of what I wanted to study – "money doesn't grow on trees."

My Dad was adamant that I could not go out into the world with just a Matric, so I enrolled in a year's course at a secretarial college to learn to type, do shorthand, bookkeeping and other secretarial functions. Some subjects included legal documents and aspects of conveyancing. After the year at college, I was employed as a junior secretary in the real estate department at a law firm, and my passion for conveyancing was ignited.

After a couple of years in the real estate department, and helping out in the litigation department, I was sure that I wanted to study law. My Dad informed me that he had already paid for my tertiary education and that if I wanted to study further, I had to pay for such studies myself.

I duly enrolled at Unisa to do my LLB, and continued working as a secretary in the real estate department. It was hard going and, if anything, taught me perseverance and the value of time.

After graduating, I continued to work as a secretary in the real estate department until I

started my articles of clerkship. Even though I had been exposed to other aspects of law, I still gravitated towards conveyancing.

I wrote and passed the four Board Exams, the Notaries Exams and the Conveyancing Exam while serving articles. One of my proudest moments was the day I was admitted as an attorney, notary and conveyancer.

Q *If you could change one thing on your career path to date, what would it be and why?*

A It was seven years before I commenced articles, so maybe I would have pushed harder to get them, but it was probably fear that held me back. I was already doing the work that I loved; I just could not prep and execute. However, I firmly believe that we all walk the path that we are meant to walk, and so I don't dwell on the 'what ifs.'

Q *What piece of advice would you give a young woman working on her first deal | transaction?*

A Breathe. Trust in your abilities – you are more capable than you give yourself credit for. Take it step by step and, if necessary, make notes or lists for yourself so that you do not forget anything. Trust your instincts. Ask questions for clarity when you are unsure and, more importantly, ask for guidance or assistance when you need it. If there are hiccups along the way or things don't quite go according to plan, don't be too hard on yourself (others may be); learn from it, grow. Be patient and kind to yourself – we can't possibly know everything. Put in the time and effort; you may not see the reward on your first transaction but, down the line, you will.

Q *What do you do to celebrate the closing of a large transaction?*

A If it has been a particularly trying transaction, a chocolate or a cup of tea with a big slice of cake. And sleep. Seriously though, it is usually a huge relief when the transaction is registered and all the finances have been attended to. And in my view, all registrations, no matter how small or how large, are worth celebrating.

Q *What do you do to unwind | get away from the stress of work?*

A I get lost in a novel or I knit squares and binge-watch a TV series. Over the years, I have knitted enough squares to make up blankets for gifts or to donate to charity.

My favourite way to unwind, however, is a road trip, even if only for the day. An early morning start, breakfast on the road (bought or packed), out of the city and into the country. Within an hour or two on the road, I can usually feel the tension leave my neck and shoulders.

FUN FACTS

Current book on your nightstand:

The Midnight Rose by Lucinda Riley and *Churchill & Smuts: The Friendship* by Richard Steyn. I usually have two or three books on the go. What I read depends on how the day went.

Dog or cat person: Both.

Item not yet completed on your bucket list:

A Trans-Siberian railway journey.

Preferred holiday destination:

South Africa, or Europe. 🇿🇦