

WOMEN WHO LIFT



Inside the mentorship of Mirren Sharp by Hafiesa Samsodien

In a demanding profession that requires resilience, commitment and precision, the relationship between Partner, Hafiesa Samsodien and Senior Associate, Mirren Sharp reflects the benefits of mentorship in the legal field. Their story began in 2021, with a well-timed phone call.

Hafiesa was looking for a dedicated associate to support her growing practice. Mirren, in another team at the time, was quietly considering a move into corporate law. Hearing about this through internal channels, Hafiesa called Mirren on a Friday afternoon to offer her the role in corporate law. Within weeks, Mirren made the switch, and they've been working closely ever since.

Both describe their relationship as a collaboration built on agility, loyalty and a shared dedication to producing quality work. Trust is also an important aspect of the relationship, as Hafiesa explains:

"Trust plays a big role. As a partner, you rely on your team to take care of the details while you maintain oversight. Over time, and through close collaboration, we've developed the kind of trust that gives me confidence that matters are being handled with the care and diligence our clients expect."

Mirren agrees, adding, "When we started working together, Hafiesa put in a lot of time to teach and supervise me directly. That has given me the confidence to deal with aspects of the work independently, but I always know I can turn to her for guidance when necessary."

Striking the balance between guiding someone and giving them space to lead is something Hafiesa approaches with intention. "To do this successfully, you need to understand how your juniors address challenges, where they're confident and where there is still room to grow. This informs the degree to which I may step in to provide direction and when I step back. It's a dynamic process, and the balance shifts as juniors develop."

For Hafiesa, mentoring has also shaped her own growth as a leader. "It's made me more intentional about how I provide feedback, how I build my practice and how I support others in their development. I think it has also made me open to fresh perspectives that juniors may bring." When it comes to spotting rising talent, Hafiesa values "a good work ethic, responsiveness, critical thinking and initiative." And what does she admire most about Mirren? "Her excellent sense of humour and sparkling personality."

Mirren, in turn, reflects on how this mentorship has influenced her career trajectory. "Had it not been for Hafiesa giving me the opportunity to move to the team and giving me access to great work, I'd be in a very different position professionally." Beyond the technical skills, Mirren says the most valuable lesson she's learnt is to forge her own path in the industry. "Hafiesa has taught me not to wait for someone to pave the way, but to take responsibility for my own career." 🙌

WOMEN who lead

Over the years, I've learned that true leadership is full of paradoxes — it's being strong yet gentle, decisive yet compassionate, confident yet humble. It is about holding these contradictions with kindness and care for people. When we do, we create spaces where everyone can grow and thrive.

- Safiyya Patel

Managing Partner, Webber Wentzel

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