



## Janke Strydom

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# FASKEN

**Q Where did your journey begin and how did you end up where you are today?**

**A** I studied at Stellenbosch University and having a love of law, studied both a BCom Law and Bachelor of Laws: Law and Commerce and not shying away for my passion of learning, went on to complete a Doctorate of Law. I commenced articles at Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr in 2012 and was appointed as an associate in 2014 in the Commercial Real Estate department. I worked at Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr for 10 years, and was fortunate to learn from exceptional attorneys. To build on my experience, I recently joined international law firm Fasken as a partner in the Corporate and Commercial Practice Group, where I work with the team on various transactions in the M&A and Financial Markets industry.

**Q Did you have a mentor and if so, tell us about that person and include the most valuable thing you learnt from them?**

**A** I have been fortunate to have a few mentors in my legal career so far.

I completed my doctorate degree under the guidance of the late Prof André van der Walt, who was the head of the South African Research Chair in Property Law. Prof van der Walt ensured that I have a strong theoretical understanding of property law and constitutional property law. Werner de Waal, an M&A, corporate and commercial, projects and infrastructure attorney has been my mentor since 2021. I work alongside Werner and enjoy the collaborative and knowledge-sharing approach in the work that we do.

**Q Which deal challenged you the most and why?**

**A** I enjoy the challenge of unique transactions and commercial matters, different challenges crop up but in my experience working through these and navigating the complexities is very fulfilling.

**Q What has been the Best and Worst day in your career so far?**

**A** The worst day was the passing of a friend and colleague as a result of COVID. The best days are when a transaction runs smoothly and clients are happy.

**Q What advice would you give to other women thinking of entering the M&A and Financial Markets industry?**

**A** My advice would be to read as much as possible and to learn from an attorney who has years of experience in the industry.

**Q How would you describe yourself?**

**A** Resilient but a “softie”.

**Q What qualities would you say are essential for a woman to thrive in the M&A industry?**

**A** Confidence, resilience and curiosity.

**Q What would you say to another woman who was thinking of changing fields because the industry is so male-dominated?**

**A** I would recommend a career move for personal growth reasons. However, if the reason for the move is a male-dominated industry, my advice would be - stick it out, focus on the work and clients will hopefully follow.

**Q What are the biggest changes you have seen in the industry in the course of your career?**

**A** Technological changes – not always easy for lawyers who prefer pen and paper and a textbook to information on a screen.

**Q Who is your female role model and why?**

**A** My female role model is any woman who finds a balance between career, family, health and who has time to pursue other interests.

**Q What is one goal you have set yourself for 2022 and are you on track to reach it?**

**A** Learn as much as you can. I would say I am on track.

**Q Do you have any unusual hobbies?**

**A** Ballet, reading and ceramics. I am currently handbuilding three lamp bases and I am trying to throw ramen bowls on the potters wheel.

**Q What is your go-to power song?**

**A** Anything by Florence and the Machine.

**Q What is your favourite quote?**

**A** “For my part, I know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream.” (Van Gogh).

**Q What is your favourite holiday destination?**

**A** Vietnam, Kenya, Namibia. There’re also many European countries that I have not visited and that are on my list. 🇧🇪