INTRODUCTION

Life is full of curve balls but seldom are they as dramatic as the COVID-19 pandemic. The global impact of this particular virus is well known; its reach and the consequences continue to unfold and the only thing of which we can be certain is that our world is unlikely ever to be quite the same as the one we knew before the pandemic blotted the landscape.

The Class of 2014 gave me plenty of opportunity to play detective and while I have found many of the group, there are some who seem to have disappeared. As is always the case, some people have not responded but the responses of those who have are worth reading. There are a few things that stood out for me as I read the responses from the Class of 2014: how their attitudes at university have continued in their professional lives, what they have achieved in a short space of time and their positive attitude about the future despite the uncertainty. It was interesting that they commented on the positive outcomes of lockdown. People on all rungs of the legal ladder have seen not only how possible and effective remote working is, but also how efficient digitisation is. COVID-19 will likely be the death knell of some of the traditional but archaic ways of the legal world. It is a determination to succeed, despite the obstacles, that will likely ensure the success of this group.

One of South Africa’s top lawyers has often commented on the need for marketing of firms not only to potential clients but also to other law firms which may require an area of expertise they don’t have. without prejudice has been fortunate to have received many articles providing the opinions of well-respected lawyers, some of whom were certainly ahead of their time in recognising the value of marketing both their own brand and that of the firm for which they work. While there are those attorneys who jealously guard their knowledge on the basis that others should not benefit ‘for nothing’, we have witnessed the impact of knowledge shared through articles and, in our new world, working together and providing information for others is what will be most valuable.

An international firm, with offices in many jurisdictions, made the important observation that, as a priority, very definite consideration needs to be given to the private lives of those working for the firm in what top management believes will be the ‘new normal’ – remote working. It is well known that frequently there is little observance of work time and personal time in legal practice. It is to be hoped that, in future, greater concern is given to the impact of expecting practitioners always to be available. The number of people who suffer from mental illness is, or should be, a concern in the legal profession, particularly to the leaders; perhaps COVID-19 has given everyone time for introspection and recognition of what is most important in this one life we have.

without prejudice looks forward to catching up with the Class of 2014 in 2024.

Myrie Vanderstraeten

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A quiet personal reflection on self-esteem and feeling worthy

PAUL GILBERT

A few weeks ago in May, it was Mental Health Awareness Week in the UK, and I wanted to write something positive and encouraging about mental health and wellbeing.

In 2016 I wrote about being diagnosed with depression. Thankfully it was a relatively light brush with a deeply uncomfortable illness. With love and support I recovered well and believe I have learned to manage the odd dip since.

I do not feel my depression has gone forever, but I now have a perspective on it that gives me hope it will not overwhelm me again. Partly for me this has been about acknowledging that my vulnerability should not be hidden. I do not think we can pretend to be invulnerable and cope well forever. I have found that it is better to accept vulnerability as part of the mosaic of our lives and to let it make the picture so much more vivid and real.

Therefore I would like to share a little about self-esteem and self-worth. I know when anyone is struggling it is easy to think that everyone else is coping brilliantly. Our weaknesses make us feel very lonely, I hope, therefore, that it might be helpful to someone if I write a few words about the fact that I have never coped brilliantly with, or indeed felt worthy of, any role I have ever had.

I have heard people say lots of kind things over the years; they say I can be an inspiring speaker and sometimes a funny writer and some people think I am an insightful mentor. Such kind words are appreciated and I count my blessings every day, but it is not the same as what I feel.

As a director of the business I founded in the year 2000 I have worked all over the world from Singapore to Cape Town to Washington. However, I am certain there has not been a single day when I felt worthy of the opportunities I have been given.

In twenty years I have not been able to accept even one compliment without an overwhelming wish to say back “yes, but you’re wrong…”

How can it be that in my late fifties I have so little regard for my experience that I still feel gripped with anxiety before a presentation?

I have been part of a team that has created wonderfully enriching developmental events, but I do not sleep for days beforehand and afterwards I struggle to read the often beautifully thoughtful feedback from a grateful delegate.

I love my mentoring work. The people I work with are gifted and kind, and they inspire me with their courage, and their commitment to being thoughtful and brilliant contributors. To help such brilliant people fulfil their potential feels like one of the greatest blessings of my life, but I have never asked any of them if I have helped.

I love writing, but I would be mortified to have my words critiqued. I write mostly to calm my swirling mind and so that my exhausted ideas may rest away from the noise inside my head. I was once told by a lawyer that he was disappointed with a report I had written. “Is this it?” he asked before destroying my work. He concluded his email saying, “you know you are not as good as you think you are”. I thought to myself “Mate, you have absolutely NO idea!”. The email is years old and it is still the only feedback I can remember word for word. And the trouble was, I believed him.

My self-doubt is part of me. On a good day I can appear like I have it all under control, I can trust that I have done things before and I will therefore be able to do these things again. But on a poor day I doubt I will ever work again.

The reason I feel it is important to share this most private of fears, in this Mental Health Awareness Week, is because it is also the twentieth anniversary year of our business and I want to say out loud, proudly and with certainty that my fear has not defined me.

My fear has not stopped me from being a contributor and helping other people. My fear has not stopped me from being valued by others. My fear has not stopped me from trying to be kind.

There are a few things at the heart of the way I work, and I would like to share them with you. I think they are the most important things I have learnt in my whole career and without these thoughts I would have been lost a long time ago.

First, if you feel that you cannot love yourself you must still allow others to love you. I know I am not the best judge of my worth, but I trust others who love me to guide me and help me.

Second, if you cannot easily ask for help, please surround yourself with people who will step in to help you without being asked. The best teams look out for each other. The people I work with inspire me every day. The people around me have changed my life for the better, for ever.

And third, if you fear a bad day is closing in, try to let it pass, a good day will not be far behind. Your talent and your values are a constant, a stormy mind is not. In the hauntingly beautiful words of John O’Donohue:

“This is the time to be slow,
Lie low to the wall
Until the bitter weather passes.
Try, as best you can, not to let
The wire brush of doubt
Scrape from your heart
All sense of yourself
And your hesitant light.
If you remain generous,
Time will come good;
And you will find your feet
Again on fresh pastures of promise,
Where the air will be kind
And blushed with beginning.”

Whatever our fear, however it feels, it emphatically does not define us. Fear may want to engulf us, but it cannot do so. It is just one feeling, and we have so many others to rely on. Fear can shout and make a din, but noise is not the same as truth. Despite my fear, which I have had for as long as I can remember, I know it is possible to have a career full of blessings, full of achievement, full of love and kindness and friendships for a lifetime. That is the truth.

Perhaps it is because of my fear that I have found the most beautiful and cherished people to work with; people full of soul and kindness. Perhaps it is because of my fear that I know there is such untapped potential in everyone, and I believe in everyone’s opportunity to be the wonderfully kind, thoughtful and fulfilled contributor that they and their talent deserve to be. Perhaps it is because of my fear that I feel it is my life’s work to stand beside others and their fears.

Gilbert is CE of LBC Wise Counsel.
without prejudice posed five questions to The Class of 2014: Has being a top student helped so far?; Where are you working, as what and is this what you anticipated when you graduated?; Where do you see yourself in 2024?; Do you think COVID-19 will affect your career in the long run? and What are you reading at the moment? These are their responses.

University of Cape Town

Lauren Midgley
Being a top student helped me get into Bowmans but not to Survivor: South Africa.
I am working at Bowmans – which I greatly anticipated – as an associate in M&A. Best lawyers, best people.
By 2024, I see myself working in M&A, but back in the office, wearing shoes again.
I have no idea if COVID-19 will affect my career in the long run. It has certainly affected my long runs though.
I am reading Dostoevsky’s ‘Crime and Punishment’ and COVID-19 memes.

Max Taylor
Success at university has definitely assisted with job opportunities. I am working as an attorney in Bowmans’ Litigation department in Johannesburg. I did not have a clear idea what I would be doing in 2020 when I graduated!
By 2024, I see myself in academia.
In the long run, hopefully COVID 19 will not affect my career, but anything still seems possible at this early stage of the pandemic.
I am reading Ian McEwan’s ‘Nutshell’ and JM Roberts’ ‘History of the World’.

Andrew Gilliam
I’ve certainly used lessons that I learned as a top student at UCT, but I’m finding skills that I’ve developed on the job more valuable.
I’m working at CDH as a senior associate, which is what I anticipated when I graduated.
Looking at 2024, I can only say, can we get through 2020 first? I think it’s very difficult to say given the current climate.
I think COVID-19 will affect everyone’s career, particularly in how we approach work and working environments.
I am reading ‘All the Light We Cannot See’ by Anthony Doerr.

Amy-Leigh Muir
Being a top student helped me get into Webber Wentzel but once you start working no-one really cares what your marks were as long as you get the job done.
I am a senior associate at Webber Wentzel. I have never been one for long term plans so I didn’t really know where I would be when I graduated. I am struggling to think past lockdown at this stage so who knows where I will be in 2024. I don’t think any aspect of our lives will be untouched by COVID-19. I am hopeful that some changes will be positive ones though
I am re-reading the Harry Potter series and just finished ‘Educated’ by Tara Westover. I highly recommend both.

Amy-Leigh Muir

University of the Free State

Samantha Bonato
Being a top student opened the door for me to work at two of the Big Five law firms, CDH and ENSafrica.
I am an associate in ENSafrica’s employment law department. While I never expected to specialise in the field, practising labour law is different to theory, and way more fun. I’m loving it.
I can’t believe 2024 is less than four years away. I hope to be a partner, or at least somewhere close to that, while maintaining a happy and balanced life.
COVID-19 has resulted in a new normal for most people. Many new employment related scenarios will likely also present themselves and make my job more interesting.
I’m reading Dan Brown’s ‘Angels and Demons’. Unavoidably I’m also reading a lot of COVID-19 related content and Disaster Management Regulations.

Elni Pieterse
Being a top student has come up in almost every interview that I’ve had. Potential employers and my
clients like knowing that they have a hard working person at their disposal.

I work at GCI Wealth as a Wealth Manager (financial adviser). Not at all what I expected, I thought I’d become a legal adviser.

In 2024 I see myself with the same company in the same position working with higher net-worth clients.

COVID-19 has not really impacted me – I’m able to do 100% of my job remotely. I am reading ‘Sondag’ by Irma Venter.

**Joani van Vuuren (van Kasterop)**

I believe being a top student has helped kick-start my career. I am a senior associate at Webber Wentzel in the Employment, Health and Safety practice group. This is definitely in line with my goals set when I graduated.

By 2024, I see myself as a partner in the Employment, Health and Safety practice group of Webber Wentzel.

I think COVID 19 will affect my career, but not necessarily in a negative light. I believe the legal sector can learn a lot from this time and it can only be strengthened going forward.

I am reading the Harry Potter series. I feel that we all need to escape from reality every now and again.

**Sicelo Chris Gama**

To a certain extent, being a top student has helped but the characteristics of a top student (hard work, discipline and dedication) have played a huge role in my career thus far.

I am at Figrroup Swaziland, as Financial Planning Specialist. I recently attained the highly sought after CFP®. This is certainly what I wanted to do after graduating.

I am investing a lot of resources towards becoming a better and effective leader. In 2024, I hope to have assumed an executive role within the regulatory and compliance space in my industry.

COVID-19 has definitely impacted my career prospects in the short term but in the long run, I think it will be minimal. It has also created the need to innovate how we service current clients and generate new customers.

I have just finished “Dare to Lead” by Brené Brown.

**University of Johannesburg**

**Jaloudi Badenhorst**

Being a top student has opened doors to both prestigious organisations and elite programmes offered by universities abroad.

After practising as an attorney, notary public and conveyancer for a large firm in South Africa, I enrolled at the University of Leiden, Netherlands, where I am pursuing an advanced master’s degree in Air and Space Law. I have always wanted to further my knowledge in the aviation industry.

By 2024 I hope to be practising as an aviation specialist.

COVID-19 most certainly is affecting my career prospects at the moment, however I am positive that it will not impact my career in the long run.

**Maud-Pia Hill**

Being a top student helped me obtain articles at a top law firm (CDH), an invaluable experience and a fantastic start to my career. I am a corporate and commercial senior associate at CMS RM Partners. I wanted to practice in this field and it has been rewarding in ways I could not have anticipated.

Looking to 2024, I see myself continuing to go from strength to strength in my chosen career, working in a very dynamic and challenging specialty.

The global pandemic is going to change the way we do business, how we operate and interact with colleagues and clients.


**Kelita Hoffman**

Being a top student has given me options as far as job opportunities and helped me getting into my LL.M. at a top global university (Berkeley in the United States).

I work at a corporate law firm (CMS) as a financial regulator and funds lawyer.

I don’t think COVID-19 will affect my career in the long run. I work at full capacity from home and still consult with my team and clients digitally. I am probably working harder.
I am reading about offshore pension fund investments and their tax consequences. And, Thomas the Train Engine of course (my son’s favourite).

Nigel Masendekе
2014 was one of the greatest years of my life: I realised that I have the potential to achieve the best; being a top achiever helped me secure interviews with the best and top law firms in the country.

I practise with a law firm in Roodepoort; the practice of law is still exhilarating to me. In 2024 I see myself being a force to be reckoned with in the legal fraternity; I take every matter I handle as a learning experience to better myself.

COVID 19 has had a negative impact but has also helped our courts to go digital which I view as being long overdue.

I am currently writing a book about my life and wish to publish it within the next two years.

Terrick McCallum
Whilst the term ”top student” has never sat well with me, my performance at UJ has been invaluable to my career. I did articles at a prestigious firm (CDH) and utilise the skills I learnt at varsity.

I joined Baker McKenzie where I practise as an associate in the International Arbitration Practice, on secondment in the Dubai Office. I specialise in construction disputes.

I would take being out of Lockdown in 2024 as a win. In all seriousness, I would like to be a partner at Baker McKenzie by 2024.

Whilst the effects of the Pandemic have been devastating, the positives to come out of the “new-normal” include increased remote working and a move away from the long entrenched billable hour.

I am reading a particularly riveting 200 page statement of claim. Oh, and a takeaway menu, since that is allowed again.

Dickson Muchada
Being a top student made me competitive enough to get a job at one of the best corporate law firms in Zimbabwe. The effort I put in all my work is informed by the need to maintain a top standard.

I work at Dube, Manikai & Hwacha Commercial Law Chambers (DMH). It is more than I anticipated; the quality of knowledge I acquire is second to none.

By 2024 I hope to be a partner either at DMH, or another law firm of the same status. Alternatively, leading a vibrant investment company in Zimbabwe.

COVID-19 has shown that the future is digital; my approach to work will be shaped along those lines.

I am reading “The fundamental principles of effective trial advocacy” by Willem H. Gravett.

Chelsea Ramsden
I believe being a top student has made a difference; getting a job is incredibly difficult and any little advantage can make all the difference.

I am currently studying a Master’s in International Human Rights Law at University College Dublin, Ireland.

In 2024 I will hopefully be in policy and advocacy development and research at an international NGO advancing human rights protection.

COVID-19 may, unfortunately, assist my career as there is potential for abuse of power leading to human rights violations.

I have just finished reading ‘The Stand’, by Stephen King. The similarities with current times are slightly eerie.

Chанё Stievenart (née Ismail)
I believe it’s more the desire to be excellent in everything that has assisted me than having been academically strong.

I work at Tedcor (Pty) Ltd as a Legal Consultant. Not what I anticipated but the timing was perfect for this season.


I believe the time COVID-19 has given me to reflect will definitely affect my vision and career direction positively.

I am reading seven books at the moment (absolutely love reading!), Books by L.M Montgomery, Joseph Prince, Terri Savelle Foy and Valerie Burton.

Pieter Carnelley
It definitely has helped being a top student, I am very grateful for the opportunities this has afforded me.

I am the governance partner at Prosus and Naspers. I did not really consider going in-house when I graduated, but absolutely love being more involved in the business aspects of a company.

I intend to stay at Prosus and Naspers and hope to be more established in the group. I also hope to have done an MBA by 2024.

COVID-19 has changed the way the world does business. I think legal services will have to adopt technology more aggressively to meet the changing landscape.

I’m reading ‘Homo Deus: A brief history of tomorrow’ by Yuval Noah Harari.

North West University
Nerine Coertse (de Villiers)
As a top student, I believe that having the strong knowledge of theory has equipped me to easily apply it in practice.
I work at Bouwer & Olivier Inc., as an associate attorney. In 2024 I see myself continuing to further my career in the legal field as a successful attorney and conveyancer.

No, I don’t think COVID-19 will impact my career in the long term, but I do believe that it will have an effect on the legal system.

I enjoy reading articles about travel and cooking.

Belinda Gunda (Ruzvidzo)
Being a top student challenged me to want to be better than before and achieve more.

I am working at the NWU as a part-time lecturer while also pursuing my PhD studies. I am also to be admitted as an attorney in the next two months.

By 2024 I will be finished with my PhD, running my own law firm and continuing as an academic on a part-time basis.

The effect of COVID-19 can only be positive because it taught me to adapt.

I am reading 'Becoming' by Michelle Obama.

Est-Marie McCallaghan (Lochner)
Being a top student only assisted in my appointment five years ago. I had to work extremely hard in my career to get where I am today. Being able to get the job done matters in real life, not academics.

As anticipated, I am working as an associate at Van Velden-Duffey where I served articles.

In 2024, I anticipate being a director of a large, reputable firm.

I believe COVID-19 will bring about the modernisation of the legal profession that many young attorneys crave. It has been the push we needed in our industry to modernise our offices and our courts to an international standard.

I am reading a lot of entrepreneurial motivational titles which I believe will assist me in my career. I am also busy with my master’s degree, which entails reading many legal journal articles and books as research.

Jacolene Jansen van Vuuren (Louwrens)
I have been able to utilise all the knowledge I have gained since inception of my studies on a daily basis.

I am an associate at Hammond Pole Attorneys in the defended litigation department. Not at all what I anticipated, however, I do enjoy what I do. By 2024, I hope to be a director at a firm.

COVID-19 has and will improve my career in a more digitally advanced manner. Who would have thought we could reinvent ourselves this way?

I am reading Deon Meyer’s ‘Kobra’.

Lorraine Ncube
Being a top student helped a lot, especially at the workplace in terms of recognition, networking and being given the opportunity to engage in legal opinions.

I am a junior compliance officer at African Bank; who would have thought? It is not what I anticipated; working at Goodyear ignited my interest in compliance. I have worked for the Competition Commission, Goodyear SA and now, African Bank. The experience has shaped me; the road has not been easy but it has been worth walking along.

By 2024 I see greater things: admitted attorney, completed my Masters in Corporate Law and, being in a different compliance role.

When it comes to COVID-19, one can never be sure about the future, one can only hope and pray that it does not affect our careers in the long run. Positivity and hope!

I am reading “Becoming” by Michelle Obama.

Anna-Mi Nel
Being a top student has helped me so far. I am currently working as Entertainment Attorney at MilderGrace Studios, a Motion Picture Studio in Bryanston. It was not what I was planning on doing but I thoroughly enjoy it and see the need for this field in SA.

In 2024, I hope still to be at MilderGrace Studios as head of their legal department in all their extensive branches with undeniable knowledge in the entertainment space.

COVID-19 is nothing compared to my student loan.

I am reading ‘Unstoppable’, a book about being mentally and physically productive where one attacks the cause of the problem and not the conditions that problem causes.

Mulalo Tshikovhele
Being a top student helped me cope with the high-pressured work environment by adopting the resilient and flexible mindset I had in university.

I am a legal advisor at Allan Gray. My goal has always been to be in a space that will present career opportunities beyond my traditional legal role.

In 2024, I see myself as a seasoned professional in the financial services industry, with expertise to provide creative and practical solutions.

COVID-19 may potentially affect operations within the financial services industry and may have an effect on my role.

I am reading ‘A Thousand Splendid Suns’ by Khaled Hosseini.

Esmé van Rooyen (Voogt)
The foundation that you lay (hard work, determination and focus) that makes for a top student, uti-
Danielle de Bruyn
The same discipline needed to be a top student is equally as important when it comes to being a good attorney.

I am working as an associate in construction and engineering law at Weavind & Weavind Inc. Let’s just say nothing compares to practice, let alone litigation.

In 2024? Level 1 (hopefully)? On a serious note, I hope still practising in the field of construction and engineering law, but the certainty ends there.

COVID-19 has already opened numerous doors in my field of practice, and as such, the answer is yes, it will affect my career in the long run, but in an innovative way.

What am I reading? Does thousands of emails count? We are busy with a major case and I have to wade through (literally) thousands of emails as bed time reading.

Stephanie Goncalves
Being a top student has been a tremendous help in terms of my professional development as a lawyer. The skills I attained throughout my studies are skills that I have carried throughout my professional career.

I work as an associate in the Banking and Finance Department of Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr. I feel that my background in commerce drew me to commercial law. What I enjoy about the Banking and Finance Department is the complex nature of the work and the ability to combine the knowledge I gained through both my BCom and LLB degrees.

In 2024, I see myself as a business woman, leveraging the skills I have obtained through my qualifications and my practice. I don’t like putting myself in a box – I am open-minded and always looking out for opportunities that challenge me.

In certain respects COVID-19 will have a positive effect on the profession. I think law firms and professionals realise that remote-working, consultancy work and reliance on legal technology is inevitable. It has introduced a new way of working that provides more flexibility for legal professionals.

I am reading ‘The 5am Club’ by Robin Sharma.

Carina Havenga (Botha)
The hard work and dedication it took to be a top student I apply in my career, which I firmly believe has helped me. I’m a B-BBEE Analyst at Accountants-on-Site. Although not what I anticipated when I graduated, I wouldn’t change my career path – I love focusing on such an intricate and evolving aspect of the law.

I hope to be an experienced Technical Signatory by 2024.

With regard to COVID-19, the public outcry against government’s stance to only assist small businesses which meet black empowerment criteria might influence B-BBEE as a whole.

I am reading pregnancy and parenting books, as my husband and I are expecting our first-born in September 2020.

Janine Heggenstaller
Being a top student has helped; it requires learning how to balance hard work and everyday life equally, not allowing either to overpower the other.

I am legal adviser/office manager at an agricultural contracting firm. This is not what I anticipated, but I prefer it to working at a law firm.

By 2024 I plan to have emigrated, write more books and become a wife and mother.

I don’t think COVID-19 will affect my career in the long run, but it will create initial financial challenges, especially in relation to social distancing measures and hygiene.

I am reading ‘Origin’ by Dan Brown. I have written my first novel – it has always been a hobby – and I will publish soon.

Raaqiq Ismail
I believe that my work ethic as a student, as well as my academic background, has assisted me in progressing my career in the working environment. I continue to work smart and be results driven.

I work at Balwin Properties Limited as Head of Legal and member of the Executive Committee. It is not what I anticipated, but I am definitely in the right company and thoroughly enjoy the challenge.

In 2024 I will probably still be working at Balwin Properties Limited. However, I hope to have completed my MBA.

If anything, COVID-19 has resulted in an increase in the need for sound legal advice and risk assessment.

I am currently reading a book on Corporate Governance.

Gizela Parker
Being a top student has opened doors to opportunities and helped me develop valuable life skills. I am now completing my masters in clinical psychology at the University of Wollongong and working as a provisional psychologist at the university.

By 2024, I will be practising as a clinical psychologist in a private practice.

I believe COVID-19 will have a significant and long-term impact on many people’s mental health.

I am reading ‘The Silent Patient’ by Alex Michaelides.
Danelle Prinsloo

Being a top student helped me to secure articles at a reputable firm. From there, the hard work starts all over again.

I am a senior associate (financial regulatory practice) at Webber Wentzel. This was not anticipated, but probably hoped for at graduation.

I still believe life happens whilst you are making other plans, so only time will tell where I will be in 2024. COVID-19 forced us to consider our “normal” — it will affect our lives (and inevitably our careers) in some way or another.

I am reading ‘12 Rules for Life – An antidote to chaos’ by Jordan Peterson.

Etienne van der Merwe

Being a top student has not awarded me any preferential treatment. However, it has equipped me to respond skillfully to the demands of the fast-paced industry.

I am employed at Lanham-Love Attorneys as a senior associate which is a position I currently enjoy. I hope to continue to succeed at being a contributing member at Lanham-Love Attorneys.

Communication, now centralised to virtual platform, due to COVID-19, will remain an integral component to successful engagement in the foreseeable future.

I am reading “The Three Musketeers” by Alexandre Dumas — “The merit of all things lies in their difficulty”.

Simon Weber

Being a top student has opened some doors for me, yes. But being dedicated, and having a passion for law, has brought me much further. The hard work only begins when you graduate.

I am an associate at Edward Nathan Sonnenbergs Inc. (ENSafrica). It is definitely not where I imagined I would be when I graduated!

Difficult to say where I will be in 2024 — definitely practicing law. "What" and “where” to be confirmed.

For the time being, it seems that COVID-19 will not affect my career trajectory.

I am re-reading George Orwell’s ‘1984’. Very apt.

Rhodes University

Tamzyn McClure (Cooper)

Getting my first role as a candidate attorney at Webber Wentzel would not have been possible (or, significantly more unlikely) had I not been a top student. Once you start working, you start with a clean slate — it will not help you unless you continue to work hard.

I am working at Allens (in alliance with Linklaters), a large commercial law firm in Australia. Did I anticipate that I would be working in Australia five years ago? Definitely not! But I am very happy here.

By 2024 I will hopefully be starting a family with my husband and figuring out how to balance a career and kids!

I think COVID-19 has made companies and employees alike realise how convenient (and efficient) working from home can be; this will ensure flexible working hours become the norm, which is a positive thing.

I am reading ‘Conversations with Friends’ by Sally Rooney.

Robyn Farmer

The strong work ethic required to maintain a top student position has helped me tackle the real working world. Not a lot can compensate for hard work and dedication in ensuring a successful career.

I am a senior associate at Gill, Godlonton and Gerrans, the largest law firm in Zimbabwe. Four years in South Africa with Falcon and Hume Attorneys provided a great foundation, but returning to the ever-changing legal environment in Zimbabwe elevated both my substantive work experience and innovative thinking.

Hopefully not still in lockdown in 2024! By then I will either be a partner or have opened my own practice.

Zimbabwe is, as always, an experience unto itself. COVID-19 has had minimal impact on my career thus far; most professionals adjusted quickly to working remotely.

I am reading ‘The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business’ by Charles Duhigg.

Armand Swart

Being a top student helps you get your foot in the door — but it is applying what I learnt at varsity becoming a top student that has really helped me.

I am a senior associate at Werksmans in the commercial space. I couldn’t be happier with where I have ended up. By 2024 I hope to be a partner at Werksmans.

COVID-19 has most certainly made me a more agile and resilient lawyer.

Apart from a lot of COVID-19 related regulations, directives and articles, I am reading "The Diary of Iris Vaughan”, which I would highly recommend.

Stellenbosch University

Jason Fraser

I’ve applied the same work ethic and dedication to my career as I did to being a top student and, once again, it’s paying off.

I am an associate at Webber Wentzel. I took a bit of a detour shortly after articles — joined the in-house legal team at a ‘Big 4’ audit firm before returning to practice. The field of law I practise is not something I anticipated, but I enjoy it and it’s rewarding.
By 2024 I see myself as an established expert in the anti-corruption field. I have already published articles in leading journals, and have presented at international conferences. Already COVID-19 has affected our lives, so everyone should adapt to remain relevant.

I am reading ‘Darkness at Noon’ by Arthur Koestler.

Sheilla Kudzai Maribha
I was awarded a scholarship to study Legum Magister (LLM) at the University of Western Cape & Humboldt Universitat zu Berlin thanks to being a top student.

I’m now a law lecturer at Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University and a public prosecutor. These have always been my career goals.

By 2024 I hope to be the holder of a doctorate in law, having registered a civil society organisation, leading the fight in transitional justice.

COVID-19 will offer a myriad opportunities; remote working it eliminates lengthy commutes thereby giving me a flexible working scheme.

I am reading for my Doctorate degree. For pleasure, I’m reading “The Last Trial” by Scott Turow.

University of Venda
Jorum Duri
Being a top student meant that I immediately got a full DAAD scholarship to pursue my LLM studies at Humboldt University of Berlin and University of the Western Cape. Graduating cum laude again earned me another full DAAD scholarship to pursue my Doctor of Laws.

I work as a Research Coordinator at Transparency International-Secretariat in Berlin, Germany. The experience of working with leading experts in the anti-corruption field has been amazing.

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goal-oriented, future-focused, and knowing your priorities. This is something that has worked for me as a student and still works for me now as a practising legal practitioner.

I am working at Bowmans as an associate in the M&A department. After completing my LLB, I also completed an LLM at UCT which delayed my articles. I would say this is definitely what I anticipated when I graduated.

I see myself as a partner in a corporate law firm in 2024.

Although COVID-19 might affect my growth to a certain extent, I do not think it will necessarily affect my career in the long run.

I am reading ‘The Power of Habit’ by Charles Duhigg.

University of the Witwatersrand

Joshua Broll

Being a top student has helped me, however, in practice, it really comes down to working hard and putting your best foot forward to succeed.

I am an associate in the litigation department at ENSafrica – this is in line with my aspiration when I graduated to work on high profile and complex matters.

By 2024, I am hoping to have progressed up the corporate ladder and to have grown as a person and practitioner.

COVID-19 will definitely affect my career. I think both COVID-19 and technological developments will completely impact the way of practice in the future.

I am currently reading ‘The SAM Club’ by Robin Sharma – it is about a revolutionary morning routine to maximise productivity.

Batool Hayath

Being a top student has been more of a motivating factor for me to continue to work hard, have a good work ethic and always be open to gaining as much knowledge as possible.

I am working at Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr as a senior associate in the Corporate and Commercial Department. I had hoped to progress my career at one of the top law firms in South Africa and I am grateful for having been afforded this opportunity.

By 2024, I would hope to grow further in my career and possibly pursuing further studies as well.

COVID-19 will force law firms to adapt to new ways of working and result in the digital transformation of the legal industry.

I am reading ‘Crime and Punishment’ by Fyodor Dostoevsky.

Zara Sher (Kretzer)

Being a top student has helped both in securing employment and more importantly in having the dedication and work ethic to perform my job.

University of Zululand

Sithandazile Gabellah

Being a top student has assisted me greatly in that I was able to secure articles of clerkship as soon as I completed my LLB Degree. I opened my own law firm soon after my admission as an attorney in 2017.

In 2024, I see myself as a seasoned attorney, contributing to my community and also mentoring candidate legal practitioners.

Initially, COVID-19 did affect my career negatively, however, going forward, I do not see it affecting my career as long as I adhere to the prescribed safety measures and use alternative means of carrying on business, for instance conducting consultations via Zoom.

I am studying Gawie le Roux’s notes for Conveyancing as I prepare to write my next examination.

I am a senior associate in the Dispute Resolution department and Insurance Practice group at ENSafrica – exactly as planned.

In 2024 I would like to be an Executive at ENSafrica in the Dispute Resolution department and Insurance practice group.

COVID-19 will affect my career negatively due to the economic downturn but positively due to my exposure to COVID-19 related insurance claims.

Yonaton Sher

Getting good grades definitely helped my career from a CV perspective.

All I anticipated was that, whatever I would be doing, it would be interesting and exciting; which is definitely the case. After several years at Bowmans, I relocated to London where I joined Anglo American to assist with the spin-out of AP Ventures in late 2018.

I work in the deal team, I’m involved in the origination and execution of deals to capitalise pioneering companies and technologies that are revolutionising our world.

When looking at 2024, my response in the 2015 feature remains as true now as it did then.

Wherever I will be, I have no doubt it will continue to be exciting.

I do not think COVID-19 will directly affect my career.


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