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## Media Statement

*Note: Please attribute the statement below to the Judge President of the Kwa-Zulu Natal Division of the High Court, Judge T P Poyo Dlwati and the Judiciary in the province.*

### IN MEMORIAM: MR JUSTICE ACHMAT NAAIM JAPPIE

It is with immense sadness, and at the same time with tinges of fond memories, that we mourn the passing of our friend and colleague, Achmat Naaïm Jappie (or Aggie or Japs as his friends called him). He passed away in the early hours of 22 April 2026 in hospital, where he had been confined for the past 10 days or so. His wife, Soraya (Judge S K Hassim of the Pretoria High Court), was at his bedside.

Judge Jappie was born in Port Elizabeth on 21 June 1954. He spent his junior school days there where he attended the Hindu Primary School. When the family relocated to Durban, he spent his high school years at Bechet College from where, in 1972, he matriculated. The pernicious racial classification laws of the day dictated that he would have had to study in the Cape (at UWC) if he wanted to further his education. However, like many others, exploiting a loophole in the regulations, he indicated a desire to study Hindu and Islamic Law (a course not offered at UWC) which permitted him an exemption to read law at the University of Durban Westville. He graduated with his BA (Law) in 1976 and with his LLB in 1978. He served pupillage with Mark Harcourt at the Durban Bar, and practised as an advocate there from 1979. He soon developed a very busy practice. During the tumultuous 1980's he gave much, particularly in the then Eastern Cape and Northern Cape, to defending the countless activists facing political prosecutions. And, through all of this, when the call was made of him, he also gave of his time to serve on the Bar Council.

Judge Jappie was recommended and appointed to the then Natal Provincial Division on 1 May 1998. He took to the bench like the proverbial duck to water. He was efficient in the discharge of his judicial office, polite but firm, and always fair. No one, not counsel nor litigant, left his courtroom feeling hard done by.



While on the bench Judge Jappie gave back to the bar by rendering service on the National Bar Examinations Board. He remained a serving member of the Board past his retirement and until his death.

Judge Jappie was appointed Deputy Judge President on 7 February 2013 and on 1 June 2015 was elevated to the office of Judge President of the Division. As the leader of the Division he presided with an even hand, requiring of his cohort of judges only that they carry their allotted share of the judicial burden, and when they did, he demanded no more. He retired in 2021 after what can only be described as a distinguished career.

Post retirement Judge Jappie continued to serve. As mentioned, he continued on the National Bar Examinations Board. He also continued to serve the judiciary by sitting on boards of enquiry and judicial conduct committees as and when he was asked to.

Judge Jappie is survived by his wife, Judge Soraya Hassim, and as immediate family, his three children from an earlier marriage, Jameel, Nadhir and Aneesa, as well as his sister and father. We extend to them, and the wider family, our sincerest condolences and know that they will have the reserves of strength to carry them through the days and weeks ahead.

When all is said and done, and when anyone asks, it will do well to say that he was a gentleman, a great mentor and an all-round decent human being.

Go well brother Japs!

**Ends.**

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