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□ Savesh Chetty is a tax
consultant with KPMG and can be
contacted at 031 327 6200

Big Apple bite of the law

NETWORK REPORTER

JABU Thobela, newly appointed director of Deneys Reitz, has returned from a year working in New York city.

Thobela was one of four – and the only KwaZulu-Natal – candidate to be awarded the Cyrus Vance Centre Scholarship, which had been running for two years at the time she won it.

The Cyrus Vance Centre, part of the Association of the Bar for the City of New York, runs the South African Visiting Lawyer Programme which affords an opportunity to young black South African lawyers to spend a year in New York law firms, working on large commercial transactions.

The South African Visiting Lawyer Programme aims to expose young black lawyers to transactional law in the United States so that these lawyers return to South Africa to practice corporate and commercial law, thereby contributing to the increase in the number of black practitioners who practise commercial law.



JABU THOBELA

“There were a number of applicants to the programme in my year: 14 of us were short-listed

for interviews and then four of us were finally selected,” Thobela said.

“New York is the business capital of the world so I was very excited to be given this opportunity. I spent my year with international law firm, Melveny & Myers LLP.

Thobela said: “One of the highlights of living in New York city was the incredible energy I found both in relation to the transactions I worked on and in just walking the streets of Manhattan. The largest deal I worked on was a \$1.3 billion acquisition where we acted for the buyer – it was very challenging.”

She says: “Hard work definitely pays off. If I had not worked hard at university, Professor Rycroft would not have thought of me when he saw the advert calling for applicants to the South African Visiting Lawyer Programme.

“The same hard work has resulted in my appointment as a director of one of the top law firms in South Africa. This acknowledgment is important to me,” said Thobela.

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