



## Women in Leadership: Natasha Theunissen

### Description

August is a very special period in the calendar year. Where I am from, August signals the end of winter and the beginning of spring. Those howling Cape Town winds and the pouring rain pack up operations and make way for the spring season. The sun shines lustrously, never too hot, never too weak. The skyline is a beautiful mix of blue and orange hues as the sun dips over the mountain. The city really comes into its own. It is a beautiful time of the year.

It is no coincidence that Women's month begins at the start of spring. If you asked my opinion, I'd say every month should be Women's month. Because they are simply irreplaceable and if we are to celebrate them as we ought, thirty-one days is simply not enough. How disastrous would life be without the precious 'woman's touch'? Women's month in South Africa is a tribute to the many women, over 20 000 of them, who marched on the Union Buildings in 1956 in protest against the extension of Pass Laws to women. Women are not strangers to standing up for their own rights, nor to marching for those who cannot stand for themselves and speaking up for those without a voice. This month we recognise those and countless women today who are mothers, sisters, entrepreneurs, artists, breadwinners, employees, friends and leaders.

The team at the Bellwether Digest decided to play a small role by shining a light on women in leadership. And this week we spoke to Natasha Theunissen.

### Who is Natasha Theunissen?

Natasha is a third-year law student at the University of Cape Town and is a leader in a number of student-run organisations. Just from our interview, one immediately believes her when she says that she wants her life to mean something, to really make an impact in people's lives. She teaches Spanish on a part-time basis at a primary school in Cape Town and also tutors the language online. She is the Chairperson of the Students for Law and Social Justice, the Vice-Chairperson of the Moot Society and the Secretary-General of the Student Y organization.

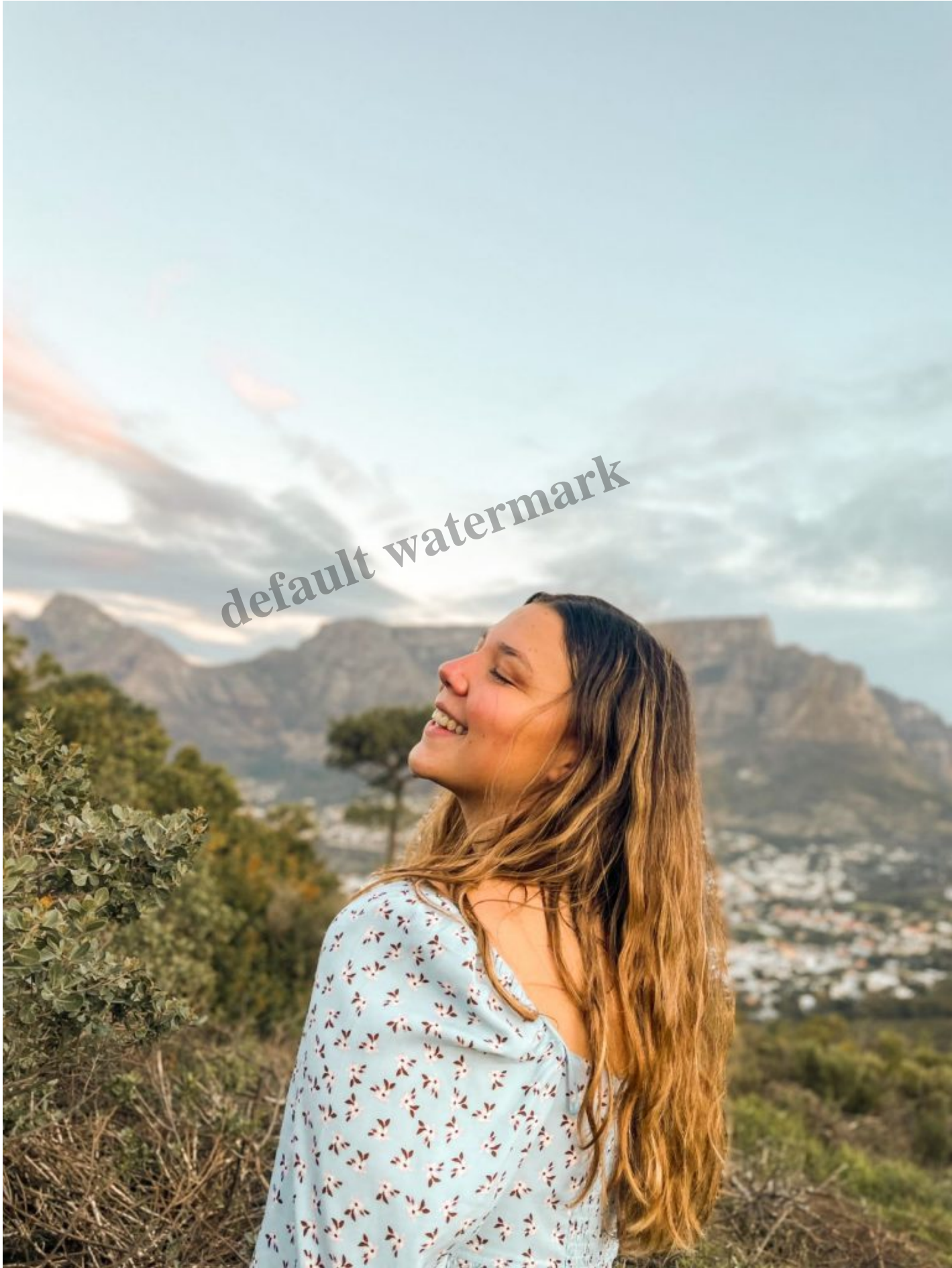
Time management is not an issue for her. Granted that some days are harder than others but if you are organised, there are enough hours in the day. The important thing is that she has taken all these

commitments because she is passionate about them. And what better way to what's important in your life than to give back than through service.

Her level of commitment is evidence for example in the Moot Society where she started off as a bailiff in 2019, became Secretary-General in 2020 and is the current Vice-Chairperson of the society. Honourable mentions were made on UCT News for the intervarsity moot competition that was hosted by the UCT Moot society in October 2020, in which, no doubt she played a heavy hand as the Secretary-General in ensuring a smooth competition, despite the difficulties that the Covid 19 pandemic posed. (<http://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2020-10-22-ucts-budding-legal-eagles-soar-at-moot-competition>)

Much similar sentiment that if you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life; you get the same impression when she talks about her involvement in the SLSJ. The society runs legal aid clinics on weekends in an effort to play a role in addressing the nationwide issue of access to justice. In the legal clinics, students provide legal advice in a group setting and under the guidance of a trained and registered attorney to members of society who can not afford the usually exorbitant fees of an attorney. The society is also involved in a mentorship program that connects high school girls from underprivileged backgrounds with university students: the students serve to inspire and assist the girls through any challenges they may face as they navigate their adolescence. It should be no surprise at this point that Natasha is in the eye of this storm. She is the SLSJ Chairperson.

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” I wanna have a legacy that transcends me and leave the world a better place. To have impacted many lives...” – Natasha

### **What goals has she set for the future?**

In 2022, which would be her final year in the LLB program, Natasha feels passionate about contributing further to making the Moot society a safe space for students to build their mooting and public speaking skills. In her opinion, there is some more work that could be done to mentor students in preparation for the professional workplace and the skills required by the law school. Natasha seems the perfect candidate for the position of Chairperson.

At the SLSJ she feels has served her time and that now is a perfect time for new ideas and personnel to take over the society.

In the long term, she has set goals to graduate and become a lawyer. Aiming to enter the corporate sphere and practice commercial law with an emphasis on intellectual property. These goals run alongside starting a family and her other hobbies which are travel and sustainable vegetable farming.

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### **Date Created**

August 19, 2021

### **Author**

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