

PAFSA

Professional Association for Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
Passion for the profession



Lifetime Achievement AWARD

**presented on South Africa's
Secretaries day - Wednesday
7 September 2016
to René Potgieter
in recognition of a lifetime
of selfless service to the
secretarial profession in
South Africa**



The Professional Association for Secretaries and PAs (PAFSA) presented René Potgieter a PA at First Rand, with the first Lifetime Achievement Award recognising selfless service to the secretarial profession.

At a Gala Lunch, held at Emperors Palace on Secretaries Day, and in front of 200 peers, Rene Potgieter, was recognised and rewarded for her outstanding contribution to the enhancement of the secretarial profession spanning a period of 28 years.

Ana-Maria Valente, head of PAFSA's EXCO, said: "I have known René for two decades, and always in her capacity of serving or leading committees. She never turns away from an opportunity to contribute of her time or knowledge if it's for the good of her peers. I have never seen her ask for anything in return, least of all, for recognition – and that is what makes her truly one of a kind.

"René is always open to asking for help or advice when she herself needs, and always ready to give it when it is asked. PAFSA is honoured to have her as head of its PA of the Year Award, and honoured to count on her experience and expertise when needed. We salute her, and know that she is the best pioneer-recipient of this Lifetime Achievement Award in South Africa."

The Citation read on the presentation of the Award on adjacent page.

Citation

René entered the profession in 1978 when she was 19 years of age and decided this was to her career. This is how her commitment to the profession and not just her career began.

In 1988, she saw an article in the newspaper regarding a meeting of the Secretary Club - ESCSA - which was to be held in Tygerberg, being a regional chapter of the Club.

This caught her attention and she went to the meeting and met two great professionals, Estelle Engelbrecht and Penny Nel, who inspired her to join as a member.

The next year, 1989 the Club's name was to change to PSA - Professional Secretaries' Association and she was part of this change.

René worked in Grabouw and lived in Somerset West which did not make it easy to always attend the meetings which were mainly held in Bellville/Durbanville quite a distance away.

Together with a peer, Magda de Kock, who worked for KWV in the Paarl area, she was instrumental in pioneering the opening of the Boland chapter for the PSA in 1990. During this time she also chaired the secretarial in-house forum at the company she worked at.

As a new chapter, getting members was very important and René volunteered to be the membership officer of the first committee. Later, she was elected as vice-chairman of the chapter.

It was during this time in the Boland Chapter - and now in the year in the year 1994 - that she got involved in the PSA's Secretary of the Year competition at chapter level.

The following year, in 1995, with her husband René relocated to Pretoria, but before she even left the Cape Region, she was elected as Vice-Chairman for the Pretoria chapter.

The following year she was to return to the Cape, but in the capacity of representing the Pretoria Chapter as the PSA was hosting the International Summit for secretarial associations from world-over.

This is where she met Ana-Maria Valente editor of CareerSuccess magazine who later founded PAFSA. This meeting was to eventually result in Career Success becoming the mouthpiece for PSA.

In the year 1996, she was elected to the Secretary of the Year committee which organised the competition in conjunctions with all the chapters country wide.

From committee member she was to be elected the Chair of the committee within one year (1997).

And her role and commitment just kept rising.

The following year, now in 1998 she was elected as Vice-President of the PSA as a whole.

The following year, to no-one's surprise, she was elected President of the PSA (1999).

Her slogan for her presidency was: "If you can dream it, you can do it" (Walt Disney) and this slogan has been her signature inspiration all through the years!

In 1999 she was invited to be the guest speaker at the graduation ceremony of the Pretoria Technikon, and to sit on the Advisory Committee for the Office Management and Technology Department, which she was subsequently invited to chair.

The same year, she attended the International Conventions and Education Forum in IAAP annual conference in Portland, USA in representing South Africa. She delivered a speech on the PSA before 2000 secretaries/Admin assistance from all over the world.

Not surprisingly, she was elected the following year, in 2000, as Honorary Life Member of the PSA and was appointed to the financial committee of The PSA.

In 2003, she had the honour of representing The PSA at the 5th International Secretarial Summit which was hosted by The Institute of Qualified Profession Secretaries (IQPS) in London. The summit was attended by 150 people from 18 countries.

And her commitment to the profession continues to be outstanding to this day. Despite holding a full-time job all of this time, René contributes to various initiatives and projects.

She was the chairman of the committee putting together a Secretary Helpmate

She was involved in the writing of the Blueprint for Secretaries

She has been a regular contributor for editorial/articles for the A to Z guides for Secretaries and Office Managers

She was a member of the first advisory committees for SSETA on the secretarial profession

From 2004 to 2006 was chair of the secretarial in-house forum where she worked.

In 2006 PAFSA introduced the PA of the Year Award and she was invited to head up the team that organised the award. Subsequently, was officially appointed as Chair of the Award and as the Ombudsman of the Judging panel; positions she hold till today.

PAFSA EXCO