

# The JP Karuaihe Trust Fund

## WHO WAS J P KARUAIHE?

Judge Johannes Paulus *Fonnie* Karuaihe was not only a child prodigy, but a pioneer in many of his life's accomplishments. He made history by being the **First Black lawyer** in Namibia to open a legal practice, *Karuaihe & Associates*, followed by many other **FIRSTS**. He was not only the **First** Black lawyer to be elected to the Council of the Law Society of Namibia, but also the **First** attorney to appear in the High Court, following passing of the historic Legal Practitioners Act on September 7, 1995. Judge Karuaihe was the **First** Ella Du Plessis High School graduate to become a lawyer. He became the **Youngest** Judge and **First** attorney to be appointed as a permanent High Court Judge by His Excellency the Founding President of the Republic of Namibia, Dr. Sam Nujoma.

Upon his appointment Judge Karuaihe said:

***“It is a huge responsibility and the confidence shown in me to this position. I really appreciate this highly and I know there are others equally, if not better qualified than me. For all those reasons, I appreciate this appointment and intend to do my best and not disappoint the community and the appointing authorities in executing my duties as Judge of the High Court of Namibia. I also regard it as an appointment granted to me in my own small way to contribute on serving my people and my country”***

He served his country in many big and small ways and the Trust Fund is indeed created to continue what he has started. Justice Karuaihe was also the second black person on the bench following the former Judge President Marapi Teek. He served as the Chairman of the Second Delimitation Commission and the Chairman of the Namibian Electoral Commission in addition to various boards in the country.

Judge Fonnie Karuaihe was truly loved as a family man, a brother, a comedian in his own right as well as a professional. This has been told and reiterated by those close to him as well as those who met him. Old and Young he impressed. Former Chief Justice Johan Strydom called him, ***“A man who was endowed with a sharp intellect, who could cut through the legal tangles of a case and get to the crux of the problem”***.

The late Prosecutor-General Hans Heyman said that the ***“Even-tempered Fonnie Karuaihe had shown great potential to really become revered”***.

His father's brother Niklaas Karuaihe remembers Fonnie as a youngster who mostly preferred the company of older people.

Paying homage to Karuaihe, Advocate Theo Frank, who is also a founding Trustee of the JP Karuaihe Trust fund said: ***"The real test of a man is not when he does what he wants, but when he does what destiny has determined for him."***

Inaenda Regine Ndjoonduezu, his mother's sister, who co-raised him, said when they were living in Katutura, Fonnie used to go from school in Khomasdal straight to town to do odd jobs to help make ends meet. And that at a tender age of twelve! **I'll provide the meat and you cook the porridge,**" he'd proudly announced on the days he knew he would clean a yard or help around someone's house in town.

Judge Johannes Paulus *Fonnie* Karuaihe was born on July 25, 1959 in the Old Location in Windhoek, to Johannes Paulus *Raahua* Karuaihe and Kanuma Veneruru Karuaihe. He grew up with seven sisters, three brothers, hordes of cousins and many other relatives in a traditional Otjiherero extended family set up. The Karuaihe family hails primarily from the Omaheke region where they lived in Otjinene, Omaozonjanda and Otjorukune.

He completed a Bachelor of Commerce degree at the university of the Western Cape and obtained a post graduate law degree (LLB) in 1983 at the same university. Justice Karuaihe distinguished himself in the discipline of law. On May 22, 1987 he was accepted to the High court of the then South West Africa He completed his articles with a local law firm, Andreas Vaatz & Associates.

Justice J P Karuaihe died on 6 December 1998 in a car accident in the prime of his life. He was 39 years old.