

Mining legal eagle Lili Nupen loves a challenge



By [Nicci Botha](#)

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Lili Nupen, director of Nupen Staude de Vries, has extensive experience in the environmental and mining legal regulatory arena. She has a deep understanding of the South African mining industry and has practical experience working on transactions involving both international and local mining companies throughout South Africa and Africa.



Lili Nupen, director, Nupen Staude de Vries

■ ***Tell us a little bit about yourself. How did you become interested in the mining industry?***

I am a born and bred, proudly South African, Joburg girl. I have a husband, little girl, and boy who are the loves of my life (other than my work).

I became interested in the mining industry many years ago when I realised that I wanted to remain relevant in the country in which I was born, and where I intend to stay. Gold mining is the reason Joburg was built and everything, and I mean everything we see and use in our world is either grown in the ground, pumped, or mined out of the ground, and that's why the mining industry piqued my curiosity.

In addition, the mining industry is one of, if not the most regulated industry in South Africa with over 24 different acts covering the full scope of mining. For someone who loves the law, this is a playground. Mining is one of the few industries where you get to interact with C-suite executives, local communities, unions, government, and the media, such a rich and diverse range of people who represent all South Africans.

As a passionate South African I love the challenge of having to shift ones perspective and the opportunity to engage with this multiplicity of different people.

■ ***Women's inclusion in mining activities is included in legislation, but are they truly being represented on all levels? Not just C-suite, but operationally and in the mining communities?***

Women are on the path to being represented at all levels of mining although we are not quite there as an industry yet. This inclusion has been continuously changing over the last 25 years and has been accelerated in certain industries through policy, however, there is still significant room for improvement. There are many factors to consider when thinking about women being represented at all levels of mining, legislative, cultural, training, and others.

I am a passionate supporter of women in mining and we are very pleased that our firm consists of more women than men. This is unusual in not only the legal industry but mining as well. We are trying to be a trailblazer in our own small way and it is working for us.

I truly believe that we will continue to see a greater inclusion of women at all levels in mining but it will take time. Multi-generational problems are not solved quickly, but they can and will be solved.

▣ ***What can be done to improve this representation?***

This is a difficult question and I definitely do not have all the answers. We follow the Dr Jordan Peterson's ethos in the *12 Rules for Life*: "Set your own house in perfect order before you criticise the world."

We try to lead from the front by establishing a diverse, rich, productive, and empowered company operating in this industry we love so much. We hope that our example will continue to change attitudes and that we can be a small part of effecting the change we want to see in the legal and mining space.

▣ ***What would your advice be to any young women interested in following a career in the mining industry?***

Go for it!

Don't be afraid, stand up for yourself, be confident, be you, the world needs you and you have so much to give! The world is changing and if mining is your passion then follow it with everything you have, life is too short to do anything you don't love.

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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