

Opening words from the board

In our work, we are closely involved in the developments shaping today's business environment. Geopolitical shifts, technological advancements and volatile markets are redefining the context in which our clients operate. The developments surrounding Nexperia, for example, illustrate how questions of governance can become entangled with geopolitical considerations almost overnight.

Our representation of ING in its defence in the climate case brought by Milieudefensie reflects how global and collective societal issues shape public pressure on, and expectations of, businesses in the climate transition.

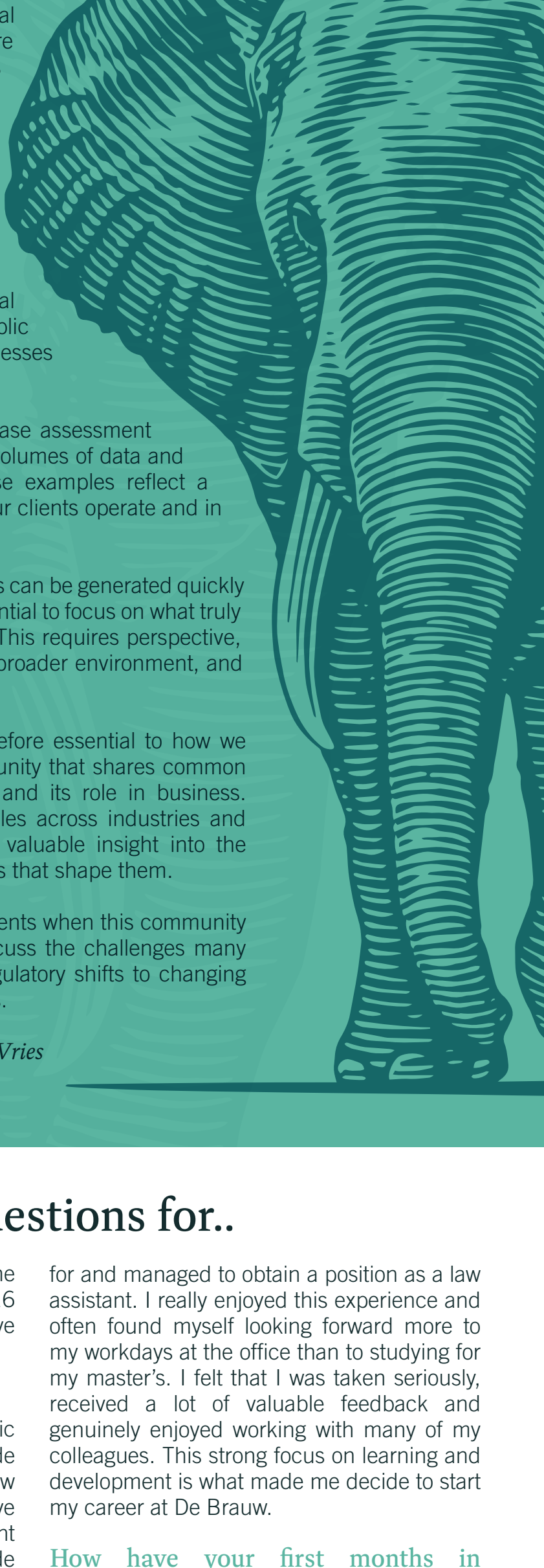
In mass claims, we use AI tools in early case assessment and strategy development, analysing large volumes of data and identifying the most relevant issues. These examples reflect a broader shift in the environment in which our clients operate and in the nature of the questions they bring to us.

Although we work in a context where answers can be generated quickly through AI and other means, it remains essential to focus on what truly matters to the client in each specific case. This requires perspective, careful judgment, an understanding of the broader environment, and a clear sense of context.

Staying closely connected with you is therefore essential to how we work. Our alumni network reflects a community that shares common experiences and perspectives on the law and its role in business. Many of our alumni now hold in-house roles across industries and jurisdictions. Conversations with you offer valuable insight into the realities organisations face and the decisions that shape them.

The 4 June alumni event is one of the moments when this community comes together. It is an opportunity to discuss the challenges many organisations are currently facing, from regulatory shifts to changing market dynamics, among many other things.

Hanne Buis, Dennis Horeman and Klaas de Vries



Brauwertij XLIII: 5 questions for..

Hi! I'm Fleur Walravens and I started in the 43rd Brauwertij two months ago alongside 16 new colleagues. I am 25 years old and I have a law degree from Leiden University.

Why did you study law?

Growing up, I wanted to become a public prosecutor after watching a Klokhuis episode about the subject, so the idea of studying law has always been at the back of my mind. I've also always been very interested in current affairs, politics and justice, which made choosing a law degree after secondary school feel like a natural step.

Why did you choose De Brauw as the place to start your career?

I first came into contact with De Brauw through my student association in Leiden. When I decided to become a lawyer, I applied

for and managed to obtain a position as a law assistant. I really enjoyed this experience and often found myself looking forward more to my workdays at the office than to studying for my master's. I felt that I was taken seriously, received a lot of valuable feedback and genuinely enjoyed working with many of my colleagues. This strong focus on learning and development is what made me decide to start my career at De Brauw.

How have your first months in De Brauw been?

Mine have been really great. The Brauwertij programme has been set up with a lot of thought and effort. At times, it can be quite intense and a little overwhelming but going through the programme together with my fellow Brauwertijers makes a big difference. Sharing the experience with a close-knit group of colleagues creates a strong sense of support and makes it all the more enjoyable.

What has been the highlight so far?

For me, it has definitely been getting to know my fellow Brauwertijers. I like to think that we form a nice group of people with many different personalities, where everyone feels included. We also enjoy spending time together outside of work, and regularly organise social activities and trips. For example, I'm currently planning a surprise trip abroad with colleagues this summer.

What is one thing you hope to have done or experienced by the end of your first year?

Although I've already learned a lot from writing emails and procedural documents, I hope to gain some valuable courtroom experience by the end of my first year. Like many others in the Brauwertij, I secretly hope to be involved in a case that includes summary proceedings.



Fleur Walravens – Brauwertij XLIII

This mattered in...

2001

25 years ago, it was not so much the matters that mattered at De Brauw, but the firm's future perspective.

De Brauw was a wonderful firm, admired by its peers, with an exceptional client list and a diverse (albeit mainly male) range of characters and skills among its approximately 100 partners. But... Anglo-Saxon firms were knocking at the door in the Netherlands.

Having been the first Dutch firm to open offices in New York, Brussels and London in the seventies and eighties, De Brauw had built a good international practice alongside like-minded firms in Belgium (De Bandt), France (Jeantet), Germany (Oppenhoff), Spain (Uria) and Italy (Gianni Orgoni), collectively known as the Alliance of European Lawyers. The firm had also opened joint offices in Eastern Europe following the fall of the Berlin wall, including in Prague in 1992. Linklaters joined the Alliance in 1998 and started discussions with the other firms. Those in Belgium, Germany and Italy soon became part of Linklaters. Uria, however, walked away.

2001 therefore marked a crossroads in De Brauw's history. Did we want to become part of an international firm like Linklaters or remain an independent Dutch firm? The internal debate about this was intense and touched the core of our existence: what kind of firm did we want to be?

That same year, the partnership unanimously decided to remain independent. We did not want to become a "corporate", but rather valued the partnership culture. Internationally, we focused more on US firms in those days, and noticed the weakness of the English Magic Circle firms in this respect. It also helped that also our larger clients did not see any need for De Brauw to merge.

However, merger discussions with Linklaters had also taught us that we needed to increase our efforts to get our house in order and, at the



Jaap de Keijzer

same time, safeguard the typical De Brauw DNA. This resulted in discussions about the scope of our practices; greater cooperation between partners (no more fiefdoms); reducing the number of clients (you cannot be everything to everyone, so we stopped for instance working for the Dutch tax collector); training our young lawyers (De Brauwertij was created); and reducing our offices in the Netherlands to a single one in Amsterdam. If the main reason a client chooses a firm is its proximity, then you may not have the right proposition and type of clients. We also needed to rebuild a credible international network. Thanks to Uria's founding father, Rodrigo Uria, we were soon able to establish close ties with Slaughter & May and Hengeler Mueller, rebuilding an even better network than before. So a happy ending after all. Yes, at the time.

Having said that, you are only as good as your last matter, and today brings its own challenges. How do you keep a partnership culture truly alive amidst increased financial and performance pressure, and how can becoming a "corporate" be avoided? How can you continue to stand out? Can you still attract the best talent, or do they go to US firms instead? Call me old-fashioned but I liked the modesty and likeability factor we had at the time, while still outperforming all our peers. I hope some of that will survive, as that part of our DNA made De Brauw truly special.

Jaap de Keijzer

Something completely different

Alumni who changed course after their time at De Brauw.

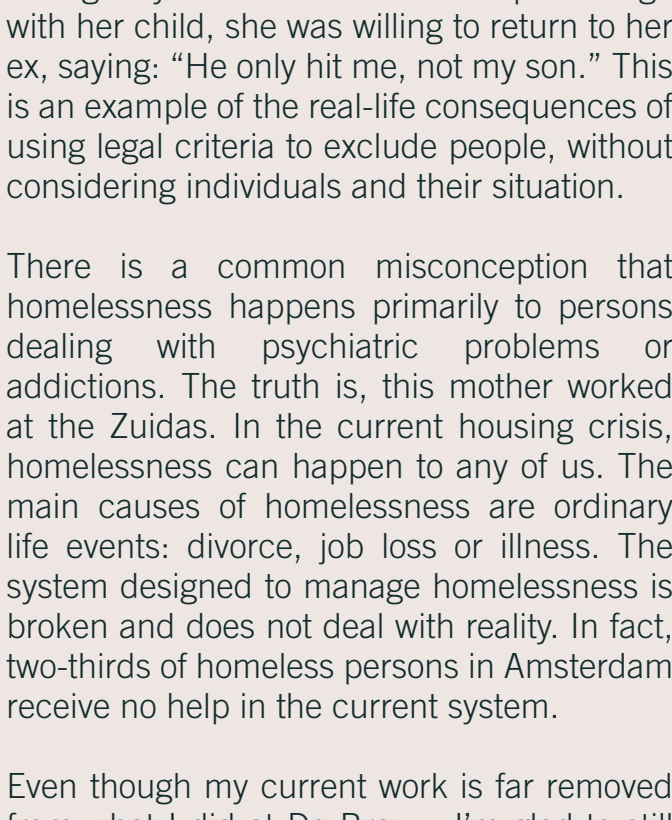
How did I go from providing high-end legal advice to large international corporations at De Brauw to offering free legal advice to homeless individuals in Amsterdam? I began my career at De Brauw as an associate in 2013, later moving to regulatory and criminal enforcement. I loved the thrill of piecing together a case during internal investigations. I enjoyed the work and my amazing colleagues, but the long hours and high pressure eventually caused me to burn out.

It was a challenging yet highly transformative time. My burnout forced me to reflect on what truly motivates me and helped me realise that I want to pursue work with a purpose, where law meets justice and for the benefit of vulnerable people. Maybe it's a strange thing to say, but I'm grateful for that burnout as it gave me that clarity early in my career. And of course, I also have my time at De Brauw to thank for many skills that I continue to rely on today, such as time management, prioritisation and sharp analytical thinking. Learning to set and maintain boundaries in a high-pressure environment has also proven essential in my current role supporting vulnerable individuals. Although the stakes are very different from those at De Brauw, they are still very high here too.

Three years ago, I joined Straatalliantie as a "street lawyer" (straatjurist) for homeless persons in Amsterdam. At the Homeless Office (Daklozenkantoor), we advocate for the rights of homeless and potentially homeless individuals and provide independent client support and free legal advice. The work is incredibly rewarding. Even if we can't solve the issue of homelessness in the short term, people are so relieved just to have someone listen to them without judgement and advocate in their interests.

Though rewarding, the work is also very challenging. Where we jokingly refer to life on the Zuidas as a "golden cage", working with homeless individuals has exposed me to realities beyond my privileged bubble. Every day, I am confronted with the erosion of the Netherlands' social safety net. The legal protection of homeless persons is under severe pressure. The systems surrounding allocation of housing and shelter focus on managing scarcity. This leads to stricter policies and stricter enforcement. The more conditions, forms and checks are introduced, the higher the threshold becomes for effectively exercising rights. The result? People get lost in red tape, are excluded, or simply give up. Not because they lack rights, but because the system increasingly functions as a mechanism of exclusion.¹

¹ As described in this great article: <https://social.net/achtergrond/meer-dan-ooit-moeten-sociaal-werkers-strijden-voor-mensenrechten/>



Lara Santos

This issue is highlighted in a case that will always stay with me. In Amsterdam, homeless parents and their children only have access to emergency shelter if they have been registered at an Amsterdam address for the past four years. One such case involved a mother and her child who had fled from a violent relationship and become homeless. She had been unable to register at their Amsterdam address due to oppression by her ex-partner. Despite being able to easily prove that she had been living in Amsterdam for years, she was denied emergency shelter. Without a safe place to go with her child, she was willing to return to her ex, saying: "He only hit me, not my son." This is an example of the real-life consequences of using legal criteria to exclude people, without considering individuals and their situation.

There is a common misconception that homelessness happens primarily to persons dealing with psychiatric problems or addictions. The truth is, this mother worked at the Zuidas. In the current housing crisis, homelessness can happen to any of us. The main causes of homelessness are ordinary life events: divorce, job loss or illness. The system designed to manage homelessness is broken and does not deal with reality. In fact, two-thirds of homeless persons in Amsterdam receive no help in the current system.

Even though my current work is far removed from what I did at De Brauw, I'm glad to still cross paths with my former colleagues. For example, on behalf of Defence for Children, De Brauw submitted written observations to the Supreme Court regarding preliminary questions about the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in eviction cases. My involvement was limited and behind the scenes. Nonetheless, I was so pleased to see my past and present careers intersect. I look forward to many more moments like these.

Lara Santos

Recent news

De Brauw listed among 30 largest international arbitration practices in GAR
[Read more](#)

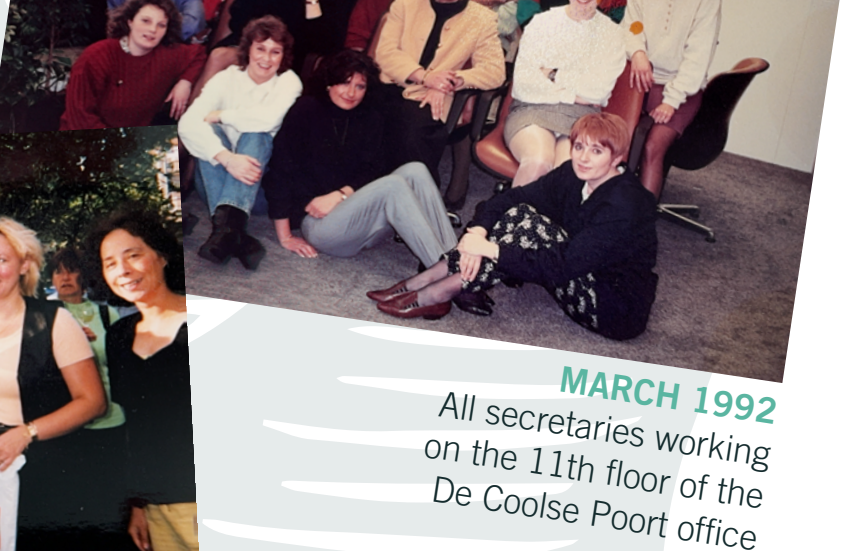
The Danish compromise revisited implications for cross financial sector
[Read more](#)

Jonathan Soeharno receives the Comenius prize 2026
[Read more](#)

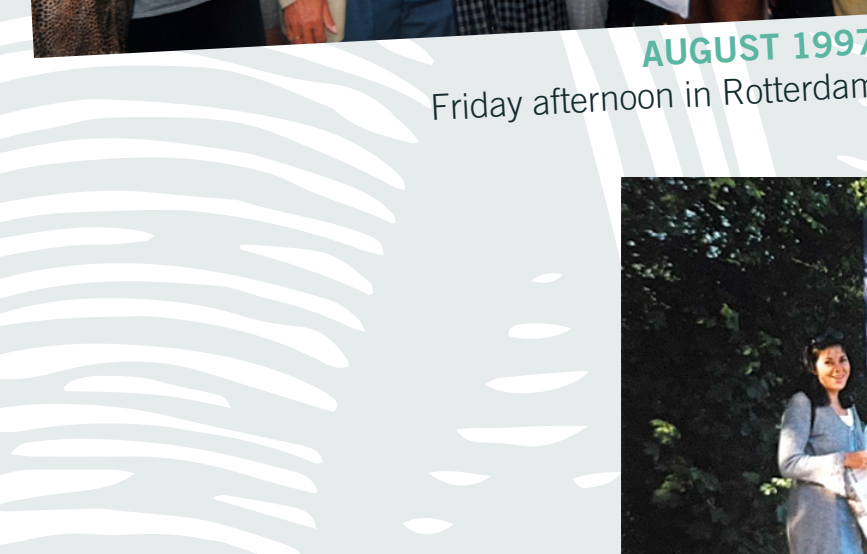
Blast from the past



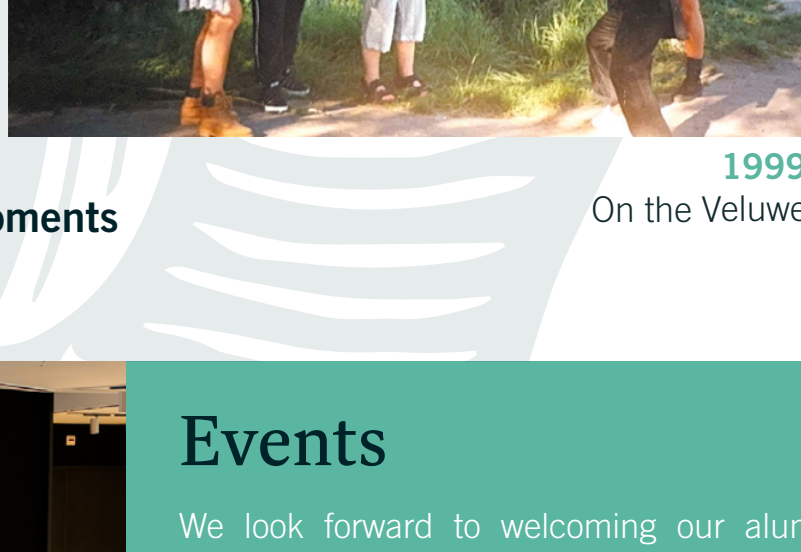
MAY 1988
Shareholders meeting of Holland America Line



MARCH 1992
All secretaries working on the 11th floor of the De Coelse Poort office



AUGUST 1997
Friday afternoon in Rotterdam



1999
On the Veluwe

Share your own De Brauw moments

Email: alumni@debrauw.com



Events

We look forward to welcoming our alumni back to the office soon.

On Thursday, 4 June, we will be hosting our annual De Brauw Alumni Event at Tripolis-Park.

This will be a great opportunity to catch up with former colleagues and to expand your network of alumni contacts.

If you have not received the invitation, please email alumni@debrauw.com. We hope to see many of you there!

[Register](#)