

## **Four Lessons from The Honourable Justice Steven Rares KC on Practice at the Bar.**

### 1. Be a generalist at the Bar.

This is so that you have experience in different areas of law. You can then spot how arguments in one area may work in a different one.

The getting-up may be harder with being a generalist. This because you are spread out across different areas. But after a few briefs, it becomes easier. One way to get up to speed quicker is to read apex court decisions across different jurisdictions so that you have a broad understanding of different areas.

### 2. The most important trait in an advocate: Selectivity.

That is the ability to figure-out the points that truly matter in a case. And to compress them into pithy arguments. The rest of the dross should be ditched.

An example of this, Justice Rares said, is that he rarely cross-examined a witness for more than two days when he was at the Bar. This is because the judge's sympathy starts to shift to the witness, with lengthy cross-examinations.

### 3. Market yourself by writing and speaking on the law.

Not being good at small talk, Justice Rares marketed himself at the Bar by doing little else but writing articles on the law, speaking of legal developments, and doing good work. The effect was that barristers (in his own chambers and outside) and solicitors were impressed with his work and referred briefs his way.

### 4. No case is a goner.

In every case, an advocate should be able to find a point that invites the judge to sink her teeth into. Therefore an advocate should be slow to write-off a case as hopeless or indefensible. The question often is whether the advocate has looked hard enough for that inviting point.