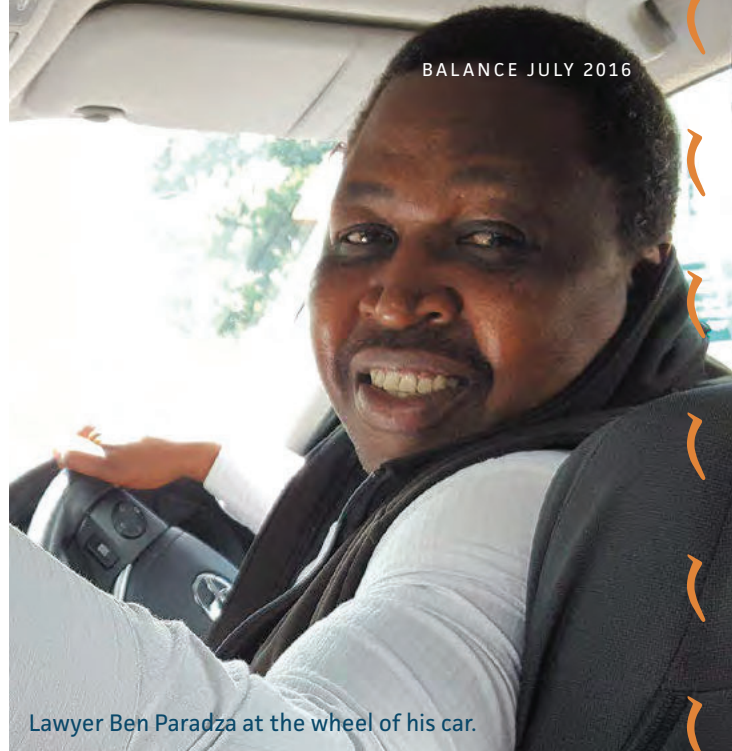


# Tell the judge where to go



Lawyer Ben Paradza at the wheel of his car.

When Ben Paradza was a High Court judge back in Zimbabwe he was entitled to a luxury Mercedes but now, ten years after coming to New Zealand as a refugee, he drives a very tidy, but comparatively small black Toyota. And he drives it a lot.

Although he has been admitted in New Zealand, and has gained a reputation as an employment advocate, Mr Paradza is supplementing his income as an Uber partner clocking up hundreds of miles every week.

“I have family to support here and people relying on me back in Zimbabwe,” Mr Paradza says, “so I needed a more regular income than law cases could provide. Plus I really enjoy meeting people.

“African culture is all about courtesy, cheerfulness and helping strangers, so taking visitors around Wellington ticks all the boxes.”

Mr Paradza says he gets a lot of positive feedback via the Uber customer ratings system. Asked if he missed his judge’s Mercedes, Mr Paradza smiles.

“It was a beautiful car, but there were a lot of hidden extras came with it. Like the assumption that, as a judge you would follow the Mugabe government line”. Mr Paradza did not and eventually had to flee the country, spending two months in the Mangere Refugee Centre before coming south to Wellington.

He was able to bring his wife and children out a month or so later. His wife and the children have flourished, Takudzwa now a member of the singing group Titanium, Kuda teaching mathematics and Fadzi about to complete her studies at Canterbury University.

“They are all doing so well, so it’s up to me to earn my keep as the head of the family,” says Mr Paradza. “I’m not in the judging business any more. I’m happy to be anyone’s driver.”