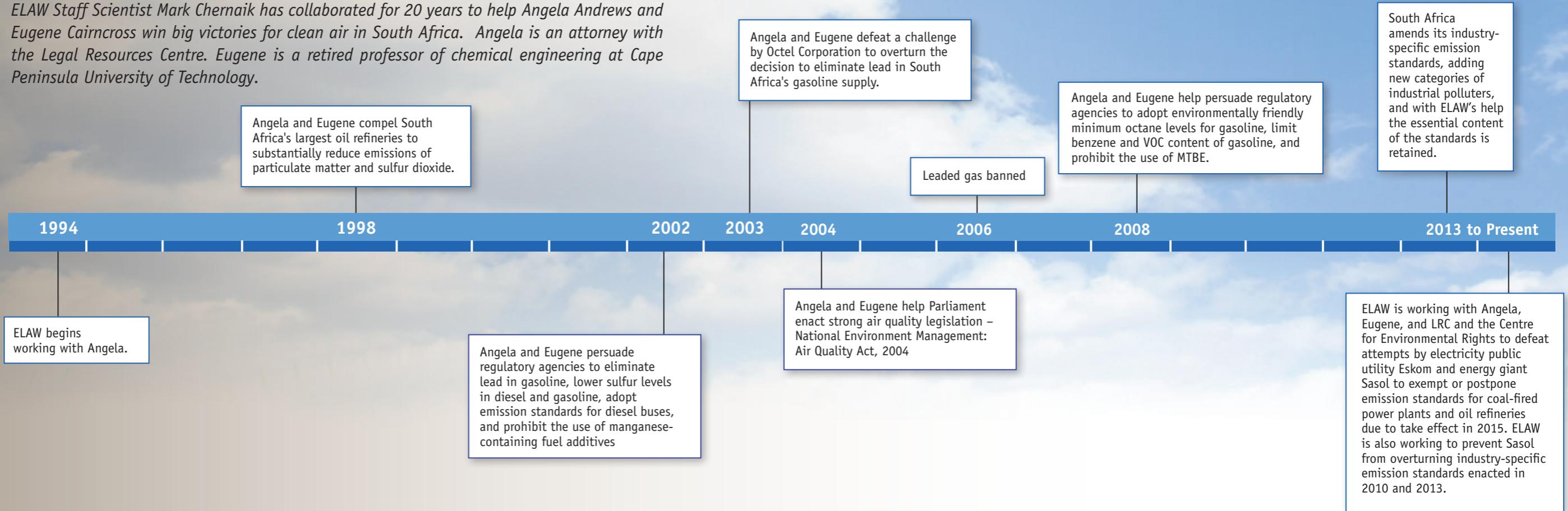


# AN EPIC BATTLE: Cleaning up the Air in South Africa

**"Partners in South Africa have dedicated themselves to this important goal for two decades. Helping them draft, implement, and now defend strong air quality standards that benefit public health is one of my most satisfying achievements."**

Mark Chernaik,  
ELAW Staff Scientist

*ELAW Staff Scientist Mark Chernaik has collaborated for 20 years to help Angela Andrews and Eugene Cairncross win big victories for clean air in South Africa. Angela is an attorney with the Legal Resources Centre. Eugene is a retired professor of chemical engineering at Cape Peninsula University of Technology.*



# AN EPIC BATTLE: Cleaning up the Air in South Africa

Twenty years ago, air quality regulations in South Africa were weak, factories belched pollutants without enforced limits, and vehicles powered by leaded gas added to a toxic cocktail of air pollutants in crowded cities like Johannesburg.

Much has changed. In 2006, South Africa became the first country in Africa to ban leaded gas and by 2010 strong industrial emissions standards were in place.

"These have been epic struggles," says Angela Andrews at the Legal Resources Centre's Cape Town office.

Angela and Eugene Cairncross, a recently retired professor of chemical engineering at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, have worked with ELAW for nearly 20 years to clean up the air in South Africa and hold polluters accountable.

"In the South Durban Basin and the City of Cape Town, our air is visibly cleaner," says Angela.

Angela, Eugene, and ELAW Staff Scientist Mark Chernaik collaborated closely to win a Cabinet decision banning leaded gas in 2006. The world's leading manufacturer of lead additives, Octel Corporation, sought to delay the phase-out until 2010, but Angela challenged the proposed delay, and won.

"Throughout the 20 years Mark has been a tireless source of scientific advice and regulatory information, particularly appreciated during critical battles with industries and sometimes reluctant regulatory agencies," says Eugene. "As a frequently lone local scientific voice, I am particularly grateful for Mark's willingness to wade through and critique mountains of documents, to act as a sounding board, and to assist in interpreting technical data."

Mark, Angela, and Eugene worked to push for stronger emission limits for industrial facilities and strengthen South Africa's Air Quality Act. Angela represented the public in the parliamentary deliberations and drew on Mark's support to ensure that new emissions limits compel compliance and call for using the best available pollution control technology.

"Establishing a strong, effective foundation for healthy air quality in a country where few laws existed requires a long-term focus," says Mark. "Our partners in South Africa have dedicated themselves to this important goal for two decades. Helping them draft, implement, and now defend strong air quality standards that benefit public health is one of my most satisfying achievements."

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