



Admissions Ceremony (1) 17 March 2003

Chief Justice's observations

The responsibility of protecting and advancing the legal interests of other people is by nature unique, and uniquely challenging.

Although contemporary clients are increasingly well informed, they necessarily lack the capacity ultimately to assess reliably, the accuracy and quality of the specialized assistance a lawyer renders. It follows that lawyers are rightly expected to exhibit scrupulous honesty, and the highest standard of competence and ethical commitment.

What is the broader significance of a lawyer's work? By advancing the interests of the particular client, the lawyer reinforces the authority of the legal system, and thereby, on whatever scale, ensures implementation of the rule of law.

There lies the professional essence: public service; and what is especially challenging in this 21st century, the elevation of public service over the private pursuit of material success.

If we recognize that simple stipulation, that our community orientation transcend personal gain, then we may properly regard ourselves as professionals, and our conduct will help lift public attitudes to our profession beyond the scepticism, indeed cynicism which in some quarters prevails.

I hope you will always recall that simple truth, and ensure it regulates your approach to professional life. If it does, we will see you serving your clients well, and additionally, the community, as for example by pro bono work, participating in the collegial life of the profession, and lending your skills to the voluntary work of community organizations.

It is interesting that you join the legal profession on St Patrick's Day; interesting as a further reminder that you should contemplate the deeper significance of the step you have taken.

Especially in these days of global insecurity, the community expects much of those who have the intellect, training and maturity not only to solve a client's immediate problem, but to influence dispassionately the determination of broader issues.

We all hope your professional lives will be a source of great personal satisfaction and substantial public application. Congratulations to you all, while recognizing gratitude must also flow to the families and friends who have assisted you to this important milestone and will no doubt continue to render valuable support. Well done!

Admissions Ceremony (2)

17 March 2003

Chief Justice's observations

You today join a vibrant Queensland legal profession, a profession which has adapted well to the quite substantial changes in approach which have occurred in recent years. Examples are the embrace of the mechanisms of alternate dispute resolution with consequent retreat from adversarialism, and the extent to which court presentations are now reduced to writing with consequent limitation on oral advocacy; and in the solicitors' offices as in the courts, electronics have provided almost indispensable new tools facilitating the disposition of our work. As you enter this exciting new world, we urge you to rise above the utilitarian: always remember the essence of your newly acquired professionalism, its embrace of the ideal of public service; recognize the critical importance of continuing legal education; suffer no dereliction in your dedication to the highest ethical standards; look broadly towards the community, participate in pro bono schemes and voluntary community endeavour; and recognize that every human being, to survive and flourish, depends on the support of others, especially so with professionals subject to the pressured demands of contemporary life. You have to this point achieved very highly and that leaves us sanguine as to your future prospects. You leave with our congratulations, and our acknowledgement of the undoubtedly valuable assistance which will have been given to you by your parents, family and friends. You have our warm good wishes for your future professional careers.