



Admissions Ceremony

10 November 2003

1st ceremony

Chief Justice's observations

We congratulate you on your admission to the legal profession.

You have become what we term "officers of the court". That terminology reflects your predominant duty, to the court and the administration of the law, a duty which predominates over the duty to the client and is important to the court's discharge of its role – the delivery of justice according to law. That designation also reflects the reality that you owe your professional legitimacy to the court: it is the court which admits you, and it is the court which will as necessary impose sanctions for ethical dereliction. I fear the lawyer's dependence on the court is often these days regrettably overshadowed by the commercial demands of competitive practice. I hope that for you, it remains an enduring consideration.

You have been admitted today because you have shown the scholarship and practical persistence necessary to achieve the relevant academic qualifications and practical experience. To meet the demands to which the effective contemporary lawyer is subject, you will need to demonstrate many qualities: qualities which extend beyond up-to-date appreciation of the intricacies of the law, to embrace the more subtle wisdom to be called in aid to solve the ethical conundrums which inevitably arise. Collegial interaction will assist as you progress in the profession. So will the wise counsel of family and friends, which no doubt has already contributed substantially to your reaching this milestone today. And I hope you will display the moral depth to appreciate and demonstrate that the core of your new professionalism is service to the public – not only through the professional skills you will utilize in assisting clients, but also through participation in the host of community and pro bono thrusts currently available.

Whether you practise at the Bar or in a solicitor's office, whether you deploy your talents in the corporate world or the cloisters of academia, you will always appreciate the intellectual

rigour and moral underpinning which base this new qualification – of which you are justly proud.

We congratulate you, and your families and friends, and we wish you well as you go forward into this exciting new domain.

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On behalf of the Judges of the Supreme Court, I congratulate you on your admission to the legal profession. You join an honourable profession which discharges a publicly significant role. We trust you always recognize that public orientation, and that you are not unduly distracted by the competitive and material pressures which characterize contemporary practice.

The most commendable lawyer is driven to assist his or her fellow citizens, and that extends, with indigent clients, to working for nothing to advance a meritorious cause. We hope you maintain a real concern for those without privilege in our community, and assist not only through the direct provision of legal services, but also by involvement in community affairs and measured consideration of social concerns.

In your work, whether in court or in the solicitor's office, we expect high standards of attention to legal competence and ethical obligation. Just as the court admits you, it is to the court, as necessary, that the professional boards bring aspects of alleged dereliction. It is to the court that you owe your professional lineage. We will therefore follow your professional development with interest.

I am increasingly concerned that young practitioners may very quickly these days forget that it is the relationship with the court which gives them that legitimacy, and which distinguishes the legal practitioner from members of other professions. The busy-ness of modern practice, an unfortunate preoccupation with so-called "billable hours", and the intensely competitive nature of the contemporary profession, can shift the focus from measured professionalism to out and out commercialism. I hope you are able to keep your professional balance, and also a balanced lifestyle, for your work-time occupation, although important, is ultimately but one of a raft of important aspects of living.

You rightly bask today in the lustre of these new qualifications, a glow which you share with your parents and friends who will have assisted you to this point of great achievement. We sincerely hope you continue to draw on their well of wisdom and encouragement.

Congratulations and best wishes to you all.