



Admissions ceremony 1 27 April 2015

Chief Justice's observations

Congratulations on your entry to the ranks of the legal profession.

This is a truly momentous day for each and every one of you. You are finally reaping the fruits of your years of dedication, diligence and determination. Be proud of this achievement. As I am sure each and every one of you is only too well aware, admission to the profession is no easy feat – you must travel a long and often demanding road to reach this point.

It stands as a testament to your willpower and strength of character – qualities which will undoubtedly serve you well throughout your professional careers.

Taking a photo with the Themis statue has become something of an admission day tradition. However, the Greek Goddess of Divine Law serves a purpose far greater than simply making our courts more picturesque or photo friendly. She embodies the values of justice which are at the very heart of the law and the courts.

With one arm outstretched, she holds the scales of justice aloft for all to see – a symbol of transparency. The scales are universally associated with fair judgments made in accordance with the law. They may also serve as a symbol of judicial decision-making whereby all considerations are balanced and given their due weight.

Her other hand grasps a sword firmly at her side. The sword is representative of the power and enforceability of the law.

For those of you who find yourselves near Themis today, take a moment to reflect and feel proud that you are now part of this ancient profession devoted to ensuring that the ends of justice are achieved.

I wish all of you the very best as you embark on your legal careers.

Admissions ceremony 2

27 April 2015

Chief Justice's observations

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the legal profession. Admission is a testament to the *sacrifices* you have made throughout your undergraduate degree and practical legal training, your *perseverance* in the face of obstacles and the *diligence* you have employed in the countless tasks you have completed.

Congratulations on reaching this milestone. If the significance of this occasion has not yet dawned on you, I assure you that in time you will view it as one of the great achievements of your professional life.

I would like to draw your attention to an important aspect of professionalism that is frequently overlooked in the increasingly demanding, competitive and commercial atmosphere of the legal industry. I am referring to access to justice – a key tenet of the rule of law. This fundamental principle is enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which states that “all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law”.

Still fresh from university and membership with various student societies, many fledgling lawyers are filled with vigour on their entry to the profession and are eager to make a meaningful contribution to society. However, becoming immersed in the commercial culture of the law firm has the potential to dampen the enthusiasm of these once bright-eyed graduates.

I challenge each of you not to lose sight of the *noble* profession you are now a part of. Do not forget those sections of the community who remain on the fringes of our legal system due to disadvantage. As members of the legal profession, you are responsible for providing a public service – not just for those who can afford it, but for all.

As you venture out into the legal world, hold fast to your aspirations and engage in pro bono work whenever the opportunity presents itself. You will find that this work is personally rewarding as well as professionally enriching.

I wish you the best of in your professional lives. Enjoy the rest of your day.

Admissions ceremony 3

27 April 2015

Chief Justice's observations

Congratulations to each of you on finally reaching admission – this is first day of the rest of your professional careers. No doubt, years of intense study, dedication and conscientiousness have brought you to this point. This is a significant achievement of which you should all be rightly proud.

A truly enjoyable part of my role as Chief Justice is the opportunity to speak at admission ceremonies. There never fails to be an atmosphere of cheerfulness and excitement permeating the Banco Court. It is delightful looking around at all the beaming faces of loved ones and friends in attendance to honour admittees.

I cannot stress enough the importance of holding on to these ties throughout your professional lives. It is no secret that the life of a lawyer is sometimes onerous and that work has the tendency to be all consuming. Aside from the long hours already put in during the working day, the dynamic nature of the law requires lawyers to remain ever vigilant in keeping abreast of changes in their area of law in order to provide optimal service to clients.

Ensuring that you maintain a healthy balance between your professional and personal life is the key to sustainability. When challenges present themselves in the workplace or if the work itself proves to be overwhelming, you will find that a strong support network provides a continual and necessary respite. I also encourage you to achieve a decent work-life balance by pursuing outside interests and engaging in a variety of non-work related activities whenever possible.

None of you are strangers to hard work, or you would not be sitting here this morning. Of course, hard work is vital for any legal practitioner wanting to perform at a consistently high level. I only caution you to distinguish between “working hard” (which you should always do) and “overworking”, as the latter may prove difficult to sustain in the long run.

For those of you who do strike a balance, law is an extremely rewarding and stimulating profession. I wish you all the best as you move into this exciting new chapter of your lives.
