

IN THE MATTER OF ADMISSION CEREMONIES, 26 OCTOBER 2015

SESSION ONE

On behalf of the Judges of the Supreme Court, Justices Fraser, Henry and I congratulate you and welcome you to the legal profession. To arrive at this point is an exciting stage of your career, and you've achieved it through application and intellectual effort.

I also welcome your family and friends. Congratulations must go to you for your support during a long and demanding course of study. You also deserve to feel proud, and probably quite relieved that this part's over.

You're admitted today to a profession with a long history. The ceremony you've taken part in is a time-honoured one. Lawyers have been taking oaths on admission for half a millennium.

Legal practice is far more than a business. The legal profession plays an important role in a democracy, securing the rule of law. That entails a commitment to justice, equal application of the law to citizens, corporations and government, and access to independent Courts.

Your task now is to preserve the rule of law, to act fearlessly for your clients, and to honour the obligations that you've accepted as officers of the Court. The Court expects integrity, judgment and industry from you.

Don't forget, too, your responsibilities to yourself. Members of the legal profession are at higher risk than other professions from

stress and depression. Try and achieve balance in your life; I know it's easier said than done, but maintain your interests.

Don't think that because you're professionals now you no longer need the kind of informal support group you may have had as students. It's more important than ever to have people in similar situations to whom you can air your frustrations and anxieties. You may not get great advice, but problems always diminish in size once they're articulated for someone else.

And in your work, one way of balancing your professional life is to engage in pro bono work. Your legal knowledge and skills are a privilege which you can put to use on behalf of the disadvantaged and community organisations which do useful work. It's a good way of achieving professional satisfaction, perhaps learning new skills and improving your legal knowledge and making contacts in the profession.

On the question of learning, I have some sorry news for you: you haven't stopped. What you've learned thus far will only be a miniscule proportion of what you need to know; and even that will be rendered obsolete over time by statutory change and judicial decisions. You'll always have to keep abreast of changes in the law. But that's what makes it an exciting and stimulating profession.

I'm sure you come from a variety of backgrounds, and you'll follow a variety of paths: in private practice, government, work for corporations. We welcome the energy and initiative you'll bring to the profession.

On behalf of the Court, I wish you satisfaction and fulfilment in your professional lives.

Adjourn the Court.

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SESSION TWO

This morning, I sit with Justice Fraser and Justice Henry and together we congratulate you on your admission as legal practitioners of this state. Your admission is a reflection of academic application and perseverance for which you should be proud. Your friends and family, who've no doubt contributed to your success, should also be proud of you.

After progressing through years of university studies, though, and practical legal training to make it here today, I'm sorry to inform you that your learning's not complete. You'll continue to learn over the coming years. That's one of the exciting aspects of working in the law; by its very nature, it's constantly evolving, whether through the passing and amendment of legislation or the development of case law. You're now in a position where you may be able to contribute to the evolution of the law.

Now that each of you is admitted, you are an officer of this Court. You owe duties to the Court which are paramount, which are more important than the obligations owed to your client or your employer. The Court expects of you integrity, competence and sound judgment.

Whatever your intended employment, private, corporate, public service or academia, you now have useful skills and a useful

qualification. They'll serve you well. But think beyond the money your skills and qualifications can make you to think how they can be used for the social good.

Don't let anyone convince you that it's naïve to be idealistic in the practice of your profession. You might wish to act pro bono for clients who can't afford to pay or for community organisations; you might be able to engage in public or private debate to correct ignorance about how the law works.

You join a large profession, but it's a profession of real collegiality. It's a profession in which you'll always find someone more senior willing to help you for no other reason than that you are both lawyers. You in turn will have the opportunity to help others in the profession, and also to make a difference for the better in the lives of your clients.

Again, on behalf of the Court, I congratulate you all, welcome you to the profession, and wish you fulfilment and happiness in it.

Adjourn the Court.

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SESSION THREE

To the newly admitted practitioners, friends, family, godparents, welcome to the Banco Court. Congratulations to you, new lawyers. This is the culmination of years of study and hard work. You're entitled to feel proud and happy that you've accomplished your goal. You'll probably have received a lot of support over that time from your family and friends, and no doubt you will be thanking them appropriately after the ceremony.

To become a lawyer is a very important step. That's why we mark it with this ceremony. You have become part of a venerable profession, and you share the responsibility to preserve traditions and values essential to our democracy. Regardless of which path in your career you choose to take, as admitted legal practitioners, you have this in common: the duty you owe to the Court as officers of the Court which overrides your own interests, the interests of your employer and those of your client. Judgment, integrity and industry are expected of you, whether you practise as solicitors or barristers, in private practice, the corporate world, the public service or academia.

One of the exciting aspects of this profession is its range. It can take you anywhere, from taking instructions at the remand centre to advising Rio Tinto. The next 30 or 40 years over which you may be practising are likely to be years of rapid and accelerating changes in technology and, particularly, forms of business and social communication. They'll advance more and more swiftly. From where I sit, it all looks a little tiring, but I'm sure you'll face it with energy and enthusiasm.

And although you may feel that you've done enough learning in the last few years to last a lifetime, I must break it to you that learning never stops, in law: you'll never at any stage of your career know everything there is to know. Chaucer said of a different subject matter, "The life so short, the art so long to learn." It fits pretty well for the law. But that's part of intellectual attraction and the challenge of the profession. And perhaps today, for just a little while, you can relax and celebrate.

As students, you might have had a group of peers with whom you studied and, possibly, partied. Don't think that because you're professionals now, you no longer need that kind of informal support network. It's more important than ever. You need people in similar situations with whom you can share your work-related frustrations and anxieties. There's a lot to be said for the adage that "a trouble shared is a trouble halved".

Wherever you choose to practise and deploy your legal skills, we congratulate you on this achievement, and we wish you fulfilment and contentment in your chosen careers.

Adjourn the Court.

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SESSION FOUR

On behalf of the Judges of the Supreme Court, Justice Fraser, Justice Henry and I congratulate you and welcome you to the legal profession. To make it this far entails intellectual effort, determination and resilience. I also welcome your family and friends. Congratulations must also go to them for their support during what's a long and demanding course of study; you're also entitled to feel proud today.

It's an exciting day, but it's a day on which you assume serious responsibilities. You have become officers of the Court, with all of the ethical obligations that entails. Your duty to the Court prevails over all others, whether they be the obligations owed to your client, or to your employer; we expect of you integrity, competence and sound judgment.

This is only the beginning of your career. The legal profession is a diverse one. You may end up working in an area very different from that where you begin. Traditionally, lawyers pursued a career as a solicitor or as a barrister, but today, a person with a law degree may work as a government lawyer, as in-house counsel, academic or even as a policy adviser, a diplomat. Being a solicitor may see you working in a large firm, as a sole practitioner, or in a community legal centre, just as working as a barrister may entail working for commercial clients, small business or individuals.

And you'll have to be adaptable, to cope with change. In the years since I and Justice Fraser and Justice Henry started practising, the major change agent has been the advent of computers, which has dramatically increased the pace of working life in the law. You'll no doubt find that a little quaint; but I feel sure that you'll find yourselves having to deal with some equivalent phenomenon that's quite unforeseeable now. But I'm sure you'll meet those challenges with energy and enthusiasm.

You join an honourable and venerable profession which safeguards important traditions and values critical to the maintenance of democracy. The numbers of the profession are large, but one of its best characteristics is collegiality. You'll always find more senior practitioners willing to help you for no other reason than that you are both lawyers, and you in turn will have the same opportunity to help others in the profession.

On behalf of the Court, I wish you long and rewarding professional lives.

Adjourn the Court.

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SESSION FIVE

On behalf of the Judges of the Supreme Court, Justices Fraser, Henry and I congratulate you on your admission to the legal profession. This is the culmination for you of years of study and hard work. No doubt you've also benefited from the support of your family and friends, whom we also welcome to the Banco Court today. It's an exciting day, but it's one on which you assume serious responsibilities. You have become officers of the Courts and owe an ethical duty to the Court which comes before your clients' interests, let alone your interests, but it's also a day for celebrating, as you gain entry into a great and time-honoured profession.

Ignore the lawyer jokes. This is a profession which individually and collectively does a lot of good for the community. I hope you will contribute to that. Whatever your area of practice, you can work for the benefit of the community in many ways; through pro bono work and through engaging in public debate so as to correct the many misconceptions about how the justice system works. Don't be swayed by those who affect a cynical attitude to practice. Disentangling the law for those who need your help is a very worthy job and an emotionally and intellectually rewarding one.

No doubt you come from a variety of backgrounds. The legal profession is stimulated by the energy and the benefit of diverse experience and perspectives that new practitioners such as yourselves bring, and you'll have a variety of goals and career paths. Some of you may become advocates. Some of you may

seldom appear in a courtroom again, but whether you move into practice, academia or some other area of practice as your professional destination, you now have a qualification which will stand you in good stead throughout your lives.

But your legal education isn't complete, and it never will be. The practice of law is a constant battle to learn more and, at the same time, keep abreast of ever-changing statutory and common law. It's as true for Judges as it is for first-year lawyers. It can be a stressful and demanding profession. You should try and maintain a balance. Keep your outside interests and don't become work-obsessed. It's a collegiate profession, and one of the great virtues is that you'll always find support from other members of it. In turn, as you gain experience, you'll help others. Wherever you choose to deploy your legal skills, we wish you satisfaction and contentment, and congratulate you on this achievement. It's a proud day for you and for your family and friends.

Adjourn the Court.

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SESSION SIX

Present with me on the Bench today are Justices Fraser and Henry. We constitute the Court that in the exercise of its jurisdiction has admitted you to the legal profession. It's an honour to preside over these ceremonies and to congratulate you and welcome you on your admission, and we welcome to the Banco Court today your family and friends, who have no doubt stood by you in these years of study and practical training. No doubt you'll be thanking them appropriately after the ceremony.

Admission's an important milestone which we mark with this formal ceremony. You're entitled to be extremely excited and pleased with yourselves, but it does carry responsibilities. You have become officers of the Court and are now subject to high professional standards of competence and ethics. You are members of a profession which has a long and proud history of integrity and independence.

I'm sure you will have come to this Court through different paths. Some of you may have been set on the practice of law since you were at school. Others may have taken a more circuitous route, and you may be headed for different destinations. Whatever your intended employment, private, corporate, public service or academia, you now have useful skills and a useful qualification which will serve you well. But think beyond the money your skills and qualification can make you to how they can be used for the social good. Don't listen to people who suggest that it's naïve to be idealistic in the practice of your profession. Consider what you might do by way of pro bono work, and what you can do either publicly or privately on the individual level to correct the many misconceptions which arise about the Justice system.

Sadly, although you are thinking that your years of study are over, I have to tell you that in law you never stop learning. There's always more to know, and not much is immutable, but that's part of the challenge and the thrill; and perhaps you can take just today off to relax and celebrate and save the big achievement.

You've become part of an ancient and venerable profession, one which plays an important role in upholding the values essential to

democracy. We welcome you to that profession, and we wish you well in your careers.

Adjourn the Court.

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