

Unveiling of portrait of Sir Samuel Griffith

Queensland Club 6.00pm
Friday 23 March 2001

It is additionally historically significant this evening, that the portrait of "Queensland's" first Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia has been unveiled by "Queensland's" current Justice of the High Court of Australia. I would enclose each of those "Queensland's" in inverted commas, because judicial officers of that eminent rank – as indeed with all of us, forsake upon appointment any relevance, to the discharge of their duties, of their parochial origin.

But Sir Samuel Griffith was nevertheless an ardent Queenslander, as well as an ardent Australian; and it would have been of great moment to him, both that this portrait should now exist in his fine club; and that one of his successors in the highest judicial office of the nation should have inaugurated it.

Thank you Justice Callinan. We valued your words: not the least, your gracing us this evening with your presence.

As another matter of interest, of the seven Queensland delegates who attended the 1890 Convention, as many as five were members of this Club: Griffith, McIlwraith, AJ Thynne, J Donaldson and TM Paterson. JM Macrossan, the leader of the Northern Secessionists, who died during the convention, was not himself a Club member: but two of his sons were, and so is a grandson - all three reached the position of Chief Justice of Queensland.

My own respectful admiration for the legendary Chief Justice Griffith – iconic of judicial wisdom, exemplar to all judges, whether Queensland or not, has been well published already. What I have previously said suffices, without more, for my now asking you to join with me in toasting the pivotal public contribution of "Sir Samuel Griffith"