

**VALEDICTORY CEREMONY TO MARK THE RETIREMENT OF
THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE J B THOMAS, AM
Friday 22 March 2002
9:15am
Banco Court**

Chief Justice's Observations

We assemble to farewell a Judge of great distinction. Appointed to the court in February 1982, Justice Thomas has over two decades served the people of Queensland very well, the last 3½ years as a Judge of Appeal.

The fundamental public contribution of Judges is their judicial adjudication. We do not, it should be said, presume to write judgments for posterity, but the legal perspicacity and abundant common sense which characterize His Honour's judgments ensure their valuable legacy will endure.

Justice Thomas has brought tremendous legal talent to the court, talent accumulated through a model professional progression: 24 successful years at the bar, then 9 years on the court until 1991 when it was reconstituted into divisions, 7 years on the Trial Division as such, concluding with more than 3 years on the Court of Appeal. The State obviously now loses a wealth of judicial expertise.

Judges discharge many substantial responsibilities beyond the court room. An important example is their participation in the collegial administration of the court. Justice Thomas has been very helpful in the administration of the court, willingly providing wise counsel and support, and for that I express my thanks and those of our colleagues.

Another of the Judge's most notable legacies is his seminal work, "Judicial Ethics in Australia", first published in 1988, with a second edition in 1997. This work is widely acclaimed, nationally and internationally, an invaluable source of guidance in an area fraught with potential concerns for contemporary judges.

His Honour was in 1994 honoured by admission to the Order of Australia, fittingly for his dedication to the fields of judicial ethics and music education, especially.

The extent of attendance at this morning's ceremony bears testimony to the high regard in which His Honour is held. His legal acumen, his common sense, his unflinching courtesy – these and many other fine qualities mean that the court is diminished by his departure.

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A number of Judges of this and other courts have been unable to attend here today – all would however wish to join me in this tribute to His Honour's judicial service. Justices Spender, Kiefel and Dowsett of the Federal Court, and the Hon Alan Demack, asked specifically to be mentioned. I note with pleasure the presence of the Chief Judge and other Judges of the District Court, Judges of the Family Court, and retired Judges of this court.

We all join to wish Justice Thomas well in retirement, and add our expression of gratitude and best wishes to Mrs Joan Thomas, who has always strongly supported the Judge in his judicial work, and has been a much-loved member of the court community. His Honour depends much upon his family, as they do on him, and we welcome today so many of its members.