



Admissions Ceremony 10 June 2003

Chief Justice's observations

Ceremonies for the admission of barristers and solicitors form an important part of the work of the Court of Appeal. We always delight in sensing the excitement of those newly admitted to the profession, and the pride – no doubt also, dare I say, sometimes, relief – of family and friends who will invariably have contributed to the individual successes celebrated today.

It is a great personal achievement; the precedent course of study is demanding in many respects, as is the required practical training. Completing the requirements for admission demands intelligence, application, fortitude and endurance. We Judges congratulate you, ladies and gentlemen, and acknowledge, on your behalf, the usually unstinting support which you will have received from family and friends.

Whether you actively pursue a career of professional practice, or utilize your qualifications in other ways – working for a company, for example, or in the world of academia, that support from others will, we expect, continue to underpin the confidence with which you progress.

My point is that the truly effective practitioner will be affected by John Donne's reminder that we fragile human beings necessarily affect and depend on others. Accordingly, the collegial thrusts of the professional associations are designed both to monitor your fulfilment of the stringent ethical obligations to which you are now subject, and to promote your professional development. In our highly competitive contemporary professional situation, you will need continually to hone and expand your knowledge and skills: active participation in the educative initiatives of the professional bodies should facilitate that.

You join a noble profession which is in this State committed to the highest ethical standards and appropriate levels of competency and expertise. In this courtroom on Thursday, we will with a ceremonial sittings celebrate the centenary of the Bar Association of Queensland. The Bar Association has shown fine leadership of our independent bar which is central to the delivery of legal services in this State. As to that independence, I can do no better than repeat some words of Sir

Gerard Brennan, who practised for some 25 years at the Queensland bar and was latterly Chief Justice of Australia. He said:

"The independence of the Bar is as valuable to the client as it is to the public welfare. To the client, it gives an assurance of such accuracy as knowledge and skill can contribute; to the community, it gives the service of applying the law in the manner in which the law is intended to act. It is independence that makes the barrister essential to the administration of justice according to law; independence that cannot be bought in a market; independence that will not be bartered for money, or privilege, status or favour or even for a momentary success."

We are, as I have said, very pleased to have Sir Gerard present here this morning.

Now you will all – barristers and solicitors – ultimately justify the privileged position which attends your newly acquired qualification, if you continually recognize the corollary of that privilege, which is service of the public. In an era where courts and the public are, more than ever, vigilant to ensure maintenance of high standards within the profession, we expect your motivation to surpass the purely personal satisfaction which may come from material things: the lawyer worthy of commendation will work willingly for those deserving clients who cannot afford to pay, contribute talent to community organizations which do good work, and participate in public debate about issues going to the roots of our freedom under the law.

We wish you well as you embrace these substantial public responsibilities, and again, congratulate you on the personal success you and your families rightly celebrate today.