



# Admissions Ceremony

## 11 July 2005

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**Chief Justice, Paul de Jersey**

### **Acknowledgement of the passing of the Rt Hon Sir Harry Gibbs**

It is fitting that we begin this ceremony by noting the passing, on 25 June last, of the Rt Hon Sir Harry Talbot Gibbs GCMG, AC, KBE. As well as being a Justice of the High Court from 1970 to 1981 and Chief Justice of that Court from 1981 to 1987, Sir Harry was a distinguished member of this Court, from 1961 to 1967.

Although he lived for many decades in Sydney, Sir Harry maintained a lively interest in Queensland and the workings of this Court.

This is not the occasion to dilate on our former colleague's juristic eminence, beyond noting its towering proportion. It is, however, my own opportunity to offer Sir Harry, to our aspirant practitioners, as a superlative role model, an epitome of conscientious devotion to the critical mission, not idiosyncratic or subjective justice, but justice according to law. His judicial career, and subsequent contribution, exhibited uncompromising devotion to principle.

The Court extends sincere sympathy to Lady Gibbs and her family, and acknowledges, with gratitude, Sir Harry's immensely valuable contribution to the law, the State and the Nation.

A memorial service was held from 11am today in Sydney. Justice Williams of our Court of Appeal – who as a law student was Sir Harry's Associate – is attending that service as the representative of this Court.

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Welcome to the legal profession! You have been admitted on a day of otherwise considerable significance, with the commencement formally of the new court year. Earlier, at St John's Cathedral, representatives of all branches of the legal profession joined in the traditional way to affirm publicly what is the essence of our commitment – public service. While the profession is sometimes criticized for material self-interest, the Queensland profession shows a lively commitment to pro bono work, and other public contribution, and I sincerely hope you will join in that. The dimension of your new qualification is not confined to the intellectual: the moral acuity which has brought you to this milestone will we hope lead you to a real concern for the legal affairs of the weak, the marginalized and the friendless.

These ceremonies are attended by a fair degree of ceremonial tradition. Its purpose is to remind you of high significance of the responsibility you now undertake. Of course tradition is not immutable, but the traditions which characterize our professional approach are I believe beneficial. Representing those who in abstruse fields cannot represent themselves is a grand mission, and properly presented as such.

May we finally acknowledge your families and friends. Probably their encouragement has been instrumental in your reaching this point. I hope you will continue to draw inspiration from them. The most effective lawyer is not blinkered: a broad focus on community life is most desirable, and above all, the benefit of exposure to the compassion and common sense of family life is immeasurable. We warmly welcome your families and friends here today.

We wish you well as you go forward now as members of the legal profession in this State.