

Chief Justice, Your Honours, Mr Attorney, Mr Solicitor, Mr Stewart, Ms Mahon, distinguished guests, members of the legal profession, ladies and gentlemen.

Chief Justice and the other judges who I join on this bench: your welcome to me has been overwhelming. I know many of you from the days before you became judges. Without naming individuals, you were many things to me in those years. You taught me at Law School. When I was a junior barrister, you led me. You mentored me. In forensic contests as opposing Counsel you mauled me, and I still have the scars to prove it. In recent years, you have even mediated me. Now you have welcomed me into your midst.

To the members of other Courts, and to the members of tribunals: your presence honours me.

I was an associate to two judges. Being an associate twice may seem like repeating Grade 12. In a way it was, and I had two very good teachers. It saddens me that the former Chief Justice of Queensland is not here in person today, but I know that he is here in spirit. If I can be half as good as the junior judge of 1981, I will be a very good judge.

I am delighted that Justice Spender of the Federal Court is able to join us today during one of his visits to Australia. I had the great benefit of Your Honour's wisdom, advice and generosity in 1986, and that launched me upon a career at the Bar.

Mr Attorney, thank you for your kind words. I am conscious of the confidence placed in me by the community to administer justice according to law.

Mr Solicitor, I was in a happy and collegiate place named Bracton Chambers with you for 22 years. In a chambers with leaders like O'Regan, Keane, Sofronoff and Gotterson, to name but a few, I was always conscious of the scope for self improvement. I mention Dr O'Regan of Queens Counsel: gentleman and scholar, humanitarian and jurist, at the top of that list.

He mentored you as a young man. He later mentored me. In 1982 I encountered him at the back of the Coorparoo bus, reading a volume of the Queensland Reports. I asked him what he was reading, and he said he was trying to find a special leave point. He found the point, and it was a winning point in *Neal v the Queen*. The lesson to an articled clerk was that cases were not won just by advocacy on the day. They were won by reading lawbooks on the bus.

Mr Stewart, I appreciate your words on behalf of the Bar. The Bar has been very good to me. I am sad to leave it. I can hardly think of a day when I did not want to go to work, and few people can say that about their workplace. We have had the good fortune of being supported by loyal personal staff, and I single out for special mention Mrs Kerry Harkins who has cared for us for ten years.

Ms Mahon, thank you for your kind words. At the risk of sounding like the Welsh barrister from the *Rumpole* series, I have three daughters to feed and educate, and the support of the solicitors of Queensland has enabled me to do so.

Speaking of my daughters, brings me to my family: immediate and extended. There will be other private occasions when I can more fully express my gratitude to you. On this public occasion, I wish to particularly thank my parents, my sister, my parents-in-law, my daughters and my wife, Janelle, for their constant love and support.

Mention has been made of my involvement in community organizations, and like the Bar, I leave that part of my life behind. My contribution has been small compared to the work of many others.

My initial involvement in law reform in the late 1970's brings me back, in a way, to the Judiciary of this State.

In 1977 Mr Justice Lucas of this Court delivered a report calling for reform of the interrogation of suspects. His recommendations were not implemented at the time. The first serious piece of law reform research that I did was to read transcripts of cases that showed that the problem had not gone away. These were cases in which judges rejected tainted evidence under things called the Judges Rules.

Reading those cases as a law student gave me a respect for the Judiciary that has never diminished.

Reference to Mr Justice Lucas and the generation of judges who served in the Second World War may seem to some people, including Generation Y, as "so last century", even "last Millennium". That is the point I want to make in conclusion.

The constitutional and legal traditions that this Bench continues do not just date back to the 1970's, or even last century. They date back centuries. They make our society relatively safe and secure. The rule of law is fundamental to our material prosperity. Subject to the sovereignty of Parliament, we enjoy personal freedoms under what Chief Justice Spigelman, in a lecture in this Banco Court a few months ago, described as "The Common Law Bill of Rights". This is a precious inheritance.

In speaking of this system of laws that dates back centuries, I do not wish to seem oblivious to another system of laws that dates back centuries: that of the traditional owners of the land upon which we gather. However, that is a different story.

The constitutional and legal traditions that this Bench continues this century are precious.

With the assistance of the legal profession, and the example of judges who have graced this Bench, I hope to uphold those traditions.

Thank you for honouring me, and this Court, with your presence.