



Valedictory ceremony on the retirement of  
the Northern Judge, the Honourable Justice Cullinane AM  
Supreme Court, Townsville  
Friday 15 July 2011, 9:30am

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**The Hon Paul de Jersey AC  
Chief Justice**

In welcoming all distinguished guests present this morning, I particularly acknowledge the presence of the Honourable the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, the Mayor and the local member, the Chief Justice and Justice Dowsett of the Federal Court of Australia, (former members of this court), Mr David North SC the Northern Judge designate, Justice Monteith of the Family Court of Australia, the Chief Judge and the Chief Magistrate, Magistrates and retired Judges, and of course, members of the Cullinane family.

We gather to mark the retirement from judicial office of the Honourable Justice Keiran Anthony Cullinane, the 11<sup>th</sup> successive holder of the office of Northern Judge since the appointment of Edmund Sheppard in the year 1874.

Justice Cullinane was appointed to the Supreme Court on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1992 following a highly successful 26 year career at the bar, for the last decade as the first Queen's Counsel to be appointed outside Brisbane.

His Honour's judicial service has been exemplary. As Northern Judge, he has shown strong and highly respected leadership of all branches of the North Queensland legal profession.

His community contribution has embraced substantial commitment to James Cook University, serving on its Council, and acting as honorary lecturer in comparative law, contributions which led to the conferral by the University of an honorary Doctorate of Laws in the year 2007.



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His Honour's judicial and other community contributions were appropriately recognized by the nation in 2009, with his admission to the Order of Australia.

When he was appointed to the court, Justice Cullinane paid substantial tribute to his immediate predecessor Sir George Kneipp. Justice Cullinane's judicial contribution over almost 19 years has been comparably immense, also of legendary proportion.

It may be said that the people of North Queensland have been well-served by the profession and the courts. The Northern Judges have themselves exhibited the diversity of talent and varying commitment one might expect, from Edmund Sheppard unsuccessfully engaging in various manoeuvres to return to Brisbane; privileged Sir Pope Cooper, who went on to become Chief Justice, but is remembered largely for turmoil over circuit expenditure; the well-rounded Charles Chubb; the exceptionally careful William Shand; the universally admired Sir James Blair, who also went on to become Chief Justice, but apparently not a particularly effective one; R J Douglas, an effective Northern Judge for as many as 30 years, and commendably exhibiting no desire to leave the Townsville he loved; Thomas O'Hagan, plagued by ill-health and dying at the age of only 55 years; the earnest Bernard Jeffriess; the painstakingly careful Russell Skerman; the legendary Sir George Kneipp; and now for many years Justice Cullinane (cf, generally McPherson: Supreme Court of Queensland, Butterworths, 1989).

Justice Cullinane leaves his office, as a Judge of the Supreme Court, as a veritable model of high level judicial commitment; and he leaves his particular office as Northern Judge, as a model judicial leader in this region for which he has always felt such close affection. A Judge unaffected by pretension, he has earned the unfeigned respect not only of his judicial colleagues and the profession, but of the entire North Queensland community.

The role of Supreme Court Judge is intrinsically significant. The roles of the Northern Judge established in 1874, its somewhat younger cousin – the Central Judge from 1895, and its much younger cousin the Far Northern Judge dating comparatively recently from



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1997, carry added potential which, if fulfilled, can enure greatly to the benefit of the court and the community. The State is reassured that all three holders of those offices discharge that additional responsibility willingly and well. I am very pleased that the Far Northern Judge and the Central Judge join the Northern Judge and me on this bench this morning: it is an important demonstration of our commitment to decentralization.

Occupying the longest-standing of the three regional offices, Justice Cullinane's contribution has been marked by the best of all desirable features: unrelentingly strong commitment, high quality performance, and as I have said, outstanding yet unpretentious leadership.

Justice Cullinane would be the first to acknowledge the vast support given to him, in the discharge of this large and important public commitment, by his wife Anne and sons Brendan and Patrick. Anne has been a much loved member of the Supreme Court community, and her support of the Judge has been extremely important, not only as I have said in facilitating the discharge of his work in the courtroom, but in another dimension especially important in the region: and that is, in his role as leader of the northern legal profession, at its interface with the community it serves. As the Judge is acknowledged with profound respect and gratitude, so is Mrs Anne Cullinane.

All Judges of the Supreme Court have felt honoured to be members of a court which includes Justice Cullinane. Consistently with that, we have by video link secured the virtual presence in this Townsville courtroom this morning of all other members of the Supreme Court who cannot be here in person, save for Justices Chesterman, White, Margaret Wilson, Philippides, Ann Lyons, Daubney and Peter Lyons who are out of the jurisdiction and asked especially to be associated with my remarks, as has former Justice Demack. I am confident that all our colleagues would wish to be associated with the remarks I have made this morning, and to join me in wishing Justice and Mrs Cullinane all the very best as they enter a new chapter of their lives together.