



Introduction to the Hon Murray Gleeson AC
Supreme Court Oration
Wednesday 30 May 2012, 5.30pm
Banco Court

The Hon Paul de Jersey AC
Chief Justice

I welcome you all to the Banco Court this evening, acknowledging in particular the presence of the Honourable the Attorney-General, our guest of honour the Honourable Murray Gleeson AC, and many Judges.

I also at once thank our generous sponsor, Thomson Reuters. The company has yet again provided valuable financial support for a major public event in the life of the court, and it is greatly appreciated. I am very pleased to commend Thomson Reuters in the presence of so many members of the profession, and no doubt “customers”.

I will shortly speak of our honoured guest speaker, but may I first say something about our venue?

Over the last decade or a little more, this courtroom – which is now nearing the end of its life – has witnessed a great variety of presentations on diverse subjects of interest not only to the profession, but to the broader community as well, most recently last week, during Law Week, with the “rehearsed reading” of Robert Bolt’s “A Man for all Seasons”, during which three of our Supreme Court Judges betrayed their thespian bent.

Also, over the 31 year life of the building, this courtroom has been the venue for the admission of an enormous number of budding practitioners – as many as 17,337 practitioners over 293 individual admission ceremonies. It has witnessed the swearing-in, on my Associate’s count, of as many as 50

Supreme Court Judges, and four Chief Justices: 50 Judges of the 112 appointees in the court's 150 year history: I have been privileged to swear-in 23 of those 50 Judges.

The High Court sat annually in this Banco Court until the opening of the Commonwealth Courts building in 1993. I say that recognizing our guest speaker's lineage, and that the High Court sits again in Brisbane next week.

Many emotions will have featured in this space, from the exultation of new admittees, to the despair which will have permeated major criminal trials, like the trial of Mr Long the Childers backpacker murderer – not to forget the dismay of Counsel, including me, as the apparent strength of their submissions evaporated before a properly discerning bench.

The courtroom presents this evening in rather denuded state, as portraits of Chief Justices are being progressively restored. But in its heyday, it is fair to say, this was the space within this courthouse which people actually liked.

I say these things in the context of our move in July to the new building.

As I recently confirmed to the Attorney, the new Banco Court will be used for sittings of the Court of Appeal, particularly when I preside, and also for the great variety of events which presently occur here. It is a grand space which will be put to substantial use.

This evening in this historic courtroom we are guaranteed a focus on what will interest and entertain. We are extremely privileged that the former Chief Justice of New South Wales and of the High Court of Australia, the Honourable Murray Gleeson, is with us to deliver an address on this subject drawn from the celebrated case of Donoghue and Stevenson, this year reaching its 80th anniversary.

Mr Gleeson, as we know, is recognized throughout the world as one of Australia's most outstanding jurists of all time, and we were unsurprisingly

very pleased when he agreed to deliver this significant oration, for which in anticipation I express gratitude.

Mr Gleeson...