



Valedictory ceremony upon the resignation from judicial office
of the Hon Paul de Jersey AC
Banco Court
Friday 27 June 2014, 9:15am

The Hon Paul de Jersey AC
Chief Justice

Well Your Honour, President McMurdo, Mr Attorney and Presidents: our children and grandchildren will be wondering either of whom you were speaking, or how little they have really known of their father and grandfather. As has been said, the experience today is akin to being at your own funeral, no-one may say anything but good of you, and the corpse even has a right of reply.

I am happy to wallow in exaggeration. But I should correct the statement that I was an Open Scholar. And as to Daphne Roemermann, who jointly tutored the President and me, I should say that some years ago after witnessing a performance by me on television, she took the trouble to tell me: "Paul, your vowels are terrible!". I note also Mr Doyle that your junior Mr de Jersey rose when you addressed the bench, which is unusual: the junior usually remains seated while the senior makes his submissions. Contrary to the old tradition, Mr de Jersey has not generally risen when I have entered rooms at home. I can only assume that he rose today in response to your specific direction.

On the other hand, you have described any legacy I have wished to put in place, and if we, and I mean "we" ... have achieved that, then I leave here with considerable satisfaction.

I am enormously honoured by the presence of each and every one of you, and our regional colleagues. But may I be pardoned for singling out the Honourable Marilyn Warren, the Chief Justice of Victoria, and the Honourable Diana Bryant, the Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia, dear long-standing colleagues and friends. I am deeply honoured, as is the Court, that they are here today, and we are also by the presence of the Shadow Attorney-General Ms Annastacia Palaszczuk. Dame Sian Elias, the Chief Justice



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of New Zealand, had intended being here, but it became impracticable at the last moment, and she telephoned me yesterday to convey her regret.

On the Speaker's Green at Parliament House on 26 February, I was asked by a journalist whether I would, in earlier times, ever have contemplated the possibility of my being asked to accept appointment as our State's Governor. I responded then, as I recall, that personal dismay attended not only that appointment, but also, my appointment as a Judge in 1985 and then as Chief Justice in 1998.

You have been reminded today of the substantial good fortune which has been a consistent feature of my professional career, of which Kaye and my family have been both the grateful beneficiaries, and also the long-term and often long-suffering supporters. For that support I have been profoundly grateful.

I leave a court which is highly regarded nationally, and I may say, internationally. It serves the people well. Increasingly, our Judges are "driving" court proceedings, intolerant of delay, undue complexity, obfuscation.

And I leave a profession remarkable for its efficiency, ethical commitment and established independence.

Any legacy of mine is for others to judge, but any such legacy is the legacy of many people, including my wonderful support staff and the court's administrative and Registry officers, and departmental officers led so ably by the Director-General John Sosso: they all know of my gratitude.

And I mention now particularly my peerless PA Marie Bergwever, my driver of 16 years Rod Travers, my wonderfully attentive tipstaff Paul Ryan, and my Associate Mark Eade whose term has so unjustly been cut in half – but I am sure we can look after Mark. My driver has repeatedly told me, by the way, in response to most regular questioning, that



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there is absolutely nothing he can recall of the conduct of any of the five Chief Justice predecessors of mine he has driven: that is very reassuring!

I have spent a lot of time with Mr Travers sitting in motor vehicles, and I apologize for the many times I have kept him waiting. We have done the maths. Aggregating the periods, he has endured my company for at least nine months continuously. Our sad failure is that over that period we have conspicuously failed to solve the problems of the world. Mr Travers has always been a great source of information for me: yesterday for example he was able to explain to me something which had troubled me for a long time, and that is the meaning of the term SUV.

Ultimately the residual legacy, instrumentally, is that of my judicial colleagues, who have worked with me over so many years with great support and cooperation.

Speaking of what's been achieved, may I be allowed to add, also, that I am "pretty proud" of the Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law? And so touched, Mr Attorney, that the "Supreme Court jacaranda" is on the way to be growing at Government House. Depictions of the parent tree, photographic and water-colour, show it as an advanced mature tree in the late 1960's, and it survived the fire in 1968. The soundings are propitious. I am grateful to my PA for suggesting propagating cuttings, to the Director-General for progressing the possibility, and to the arborists for fulfilling it.

People have suggested to me in recent times that 16 years as Chief Justice and 29 years on the court will have been records. That is not so in fact. Sir Pope Cooper for example served as a Judge of the Supreme Court for as many as 30 years and Chief Justice for 18 until the age of 76.

Until offered the position of Governor, it was certainly my hope to remain as Chief Justice until the compulsory retirement age of 70. But when I was offered that vitally important position at the age of 65, Kaye and I had absolutely no hesitation in reaching the view that it must be accepted.



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I hope it may be accepted that a sense of duty has in truth impelled pivotal decisions in my judicial career, as first up, in accepting appointment to the court in 1985 after only three years at the senior bar, at the fairly young age of 36, with incidentally a consequent overnight reduction in income of 500%. The then Supreme Court Judge's salary of \$84,600 per annum has since been appropriately increased I am glad to say.

Any basic sense of duty had been enhanced, indeed entrenched, by service in the Citizens' Military Force in the 1960s, in the Queensland University Regiment, although my service was pale by contrast with that of my colleagues Justices Muir, Byrne and Dowsett. That military service over some years did inculcate a level of discipline and some capacity for leadership which I hope have subsequently served us all well.

I have been greatly privileged to have been a member of this court, and to have led it for so long, and to have led, in a sense, the whole State judiciary and the entire State legal profession.

The judicial role is inherently demanding, and I salute especially the Judges who have recently presided over major long-running murder trials.

The role of Chief Justice is quintessentially demanding.

From another place, I will follow the courts and the profession with abiding and close interest, although I should make this clear: I will have absolutely no interest in being informed of even a skerrick of Bar gossip, and neither will Kaye! But still feel free to call us!

Thank you, speakers, for your kind and reassuring observations.

And now I bid you farewell.