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THE SUPREME COURT OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

FULL BENCH

WELCOME TO THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE TERENCE PALMER

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT PERTH ON WEDNESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2025, AT 4.17 PM

**QUINLAN CJ:** The Court sits this afternoon to welcome the Honourable Justice Terry Palmer as a judge of this Court. In doing so, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Court sits, the Whadjuk people of the greater Noongar nation, and pay our respects to their elders past and present. We warmly welcome again members of his Honour's family who are here present, Lachlan and Henry, who are getting good at these kind of things, and his Honour's mother and father, Margaret and Norman, and we welcome many other members of his Honour's extended family, colleagues and friends.

His Honour's wife, the Honourable Justice Fiona Seaward, of course, does not need to be welcomed because she is, of course, one of us doing the welcoming. Indeed, astute observers will note that her Honour is very appropriately looking over Justice Palmer's judicial shoulder. Long may that continue.

We also welcome many other distinguished guests here this afternoon, including their Honours Justices Banks-Smith, Coleman, Jackson and Feutrill of the Federal Court of Australia, her Honour Judge Julie Wager, Chief Judge of the District Court, and many of our judicial brothers and sisters from the District Court of Western Australia, Ms Joanne Stampalia, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Justice, Ms Kelly Martinelli, Executive Manager of the Supreme Court, Mr Craig Bydder SC, Solicitor-General for Western Australia, Mr Robert Owen SC, Director of Public Prosecutions, and Ms Jenny Thornton, Senior Vice President of Women Lawyers of Western Australia, together with many past members of this and other courts.

Finally, I welcome those who will address the Court this afternoon. The Honourable Attorney-General John Quigley MLA, Ms Paula Wilkinson, immediate past President of the Law Society of Western Australia, and Mr Michael Sims SC, Vice President of the WA Bar Association. Justice Palmer's appointment fills the vacancy left by the retirement from this Court of Justice Vandongen, who was appointed to the Federal Court of Australia in December last year. Justice Vandongen served as a judge of this Court for approximately two years, and I record and acknowledge his Honour's contribution to the Court over that time.

The circumstances of Justice Vandongen's retirement were such that with a State election looming, there was very little time available within which to fill the resultant vacancy. That Justice Palmer's appointment was

made possible at all in such a short period of time was not only due to the good grace of Chief Judge Wager, but to the commitment of the Executive Government through you, Mr Attorney, to the resourcing of the courts in this State. Mr Attorney, this sitting of the Court will be the last time that you will appear before it as the First Law Officer of the Crown.

The Court takes this opportunity to acknowledge your almost eight years of service in the Office of Attorney General, an office whose apolitical role within our representative system of Government and in ensuring the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary cannot be underestimated. During your term in that office, Mr Attorney, you have consistently supported that independence and been responsive to the needs of the Court, including by the increase of judicial resources available not only to this Court but to other courts in the State. A great many appointments to this and other courts have been made during your tenure, including all but one head of jurisdiction in this State.

Of the 23 members of the Court that sit on this Bench today, sixteen of them have been appointed by the Governor upon your recommendation, Mr Attorney. In that eight years of service, you have displayed not only a commitment to the number, but also to the diversity of the judiciary in this State, diversity in all its forms. At another welcome ceremony some 18 months ago, I had cause to reflect on the diversity of the men and women who comprise this Court, variously born in Western Australia, interstate and overseas, from a variety of backgrounds and cultural heritage including English, Irish, Italian, Greek, Croatian, Dutch, African and Aboriginal.

That diversity continues to grow with his Honour Justice Palmer's appointment. His Honour being the first judge of Asian Australian heritage appointed to this Court in its 164 year history. Such diversity, of course, should be expected as the natural consequence of the diversity of the community from which the judiciary is drawn.

Nevertheless, that naturally occurring diversity, drawn from the diversity of the community, will only be reflected in the judiciary if appointments are based on excellence and expertise without regard to artificial barriers or discrimination at all levels of the legal profession and the judiciary. And that is what has characterised your tenure, Mr Attorney. Appointments that are based on excellence and expertise without regard to

artificial barriers or discrimination.

The Court extends its gratitude to you, Mr Attorney, for your service to the administration of justice and the rule of law, and wishes you well in your future endeavours. Like many other members of this Court, your Honour Justice Palmer comes to the Court from the District Court, having served with great distinction as a judge of that Court since July 2023.

Prior to your Honour appointment as a judge, your Honour conducted a broad commercial practice at the Bar, including as Senior Counsel from 2021, including in corporations law, financial services, insurance law, and building and construction, all areas of expertise ideally suiting you to the jurisdictions of this Court. As both counsel and as a judge, your Honour has a reputation not only for legal excellence but also for your quiet, calm and courteous manner - attributes that are so essential to the judicial task.

In the short time that your Honour has been with us on this Court, your new judicial brothers and sisters have also remarked upon your great sense of collegiality and conviviality - traits that you have no doubt cultivated at the District Court and which will continue to contribute to the strong ties between our two courts. Justice Palmer, the judges, master, registrars and staff of the Court are delighted that you join us on the Court and bring your talents and skills to our work. Please be assured of our continuing solicitude and support throughout the continuation of this distinguished judicial career. Yes, Mr Attorney.

**QUIGLEY, MR:** May it please the Court, and thank you, Chief Justice. I would like to begin by paying my respects to the Traditional Owners of the lands upon which the Court convenes this afternoon, the Whadjuk people of the greater Noongar nation, pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging, and my utmost respect to any First Nations people present here today.

May I also join your Honour in welcoming the distinguished guests that are here this afternoon, and would also like to acknowledge Justice Palmer's family, who join in the celebration this afternoon, and notice that his wife, well obviously, Justice Seaward present, of course, but also his children, Henry, Lachlan and your Honour's parents, Norman and Margaret.

I also welcome your Honour's extended family and friends, including those who may be viewing this ceremony online. Of course, when I came to prepare my speech, it was a reprise of a speech I gave in August of 2023 at the welcoming of your Honour to the Bench of the District Court.

At that time, and I've mentioned this earlier this week in another welcoming, the appointments are only undertaken, and I take a recommendation to Cabinet after extensive consultation undertaken on my behalf by the Solicitor-General. The feedback I got, that not only were you an excellent lawyer, a very nice person and a kind person, but the other feedback I got was, "Why haven't you put him on the Supreme Court?"

At that time, there was not the opportunity to do so, but I knew that the District Court needed urgently a civil lawyer par excellence, and it was in that regard that and I didn't have the opportunity to make an appointment to here. However, since July '23, there have been additional appointments to the District Court and they've got a strong civil hand, and this time around the only feedback I got concerning your elevation to the Supreme Court Bench was some groans of disappointment from the District Court Bench, who will much miss you in that Court.

So I should note that your Honour was admitted to practice back in 1998, having graduated from the University of Western Australia with a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Arts in 1997. Early in your career, your Honour spent 10 years working as a solicitor in private law firms. Your Honour also served as a Special Counsel at the Australian Securities and Investments Commission for two years from 2006 to 2008.

Your Honour practiced as a barrister for 15 years after being called to the WA Bar in 2008. You were one of the founding members of Quayside Chambers, which has gone on to become an established set of highly respected chambers in this city. At Quayside, your Honour conducted a wide commercial practice which encompassed corporate law, financial services, insurance and building, and construction law, and you were appointed Senior Counsel in 2021.

Your Honour was a long-standing member of the WA Bar Association's Council. Your Honour also regularly involved in the teaching and advocacy of new practitioners and barristers as part of the Bar Readers Trial Advocacy

Course, and for a time you actually ran that course. You have also been a member of the Council of the Law Society of Western Australia. In addition to these commitments, your Honour has also been a member of the WA Bar's Diversity Committee and a long-standing member of the Health Services and Human Research Ethics Committee of the King Edward Memorial Hospital.

Your Honour was also a long-standing supporter of the Australian Asian Lawyers Association and volunteered as a mentor as part of the Association's mentoring program. Indeed, your Honour has been long known as an outstanding lawyer, an outstanding mentor and a very kind human being. As I said, your Honour was appointed to the District Court in July '23, and you served there with distinction until your elevation to this Court. The universal satisfaction of your Honour's appointment to the District Court was also tempered by a sense of loss at the Bar. The Bar felt a loss when you left them and the District Court feels a loss as you come here.

So your Honour's elevation to this Court is tempered with a sense of loss by your previous colleagues and brothers and sisters at the District Court. It's also important to note, as the Chief Justice has noted, that in the diversification of this Bench, you become the first person of Asian descent appointed. We've had a Justice, of course, Justice Lundberg, in Indigenous descent. A better representation of women who have all been appointed on their merit. So, Justice Palmer, your appointment to the Supreme Court is a testament to your hard work and dedication to the courts, the legal profession and the community that we all serve.

You bring to the Court a wealth of experience and expertise that will serve the people of Western Australia well. On behalf of the Government and the people of Western Australia, I congratulate you on your appointment and wish you all the very best as you continue in your service to the people of Western Australia.

May I be permitted also to say I respond to the Chief Justice's remarks about me this afternoon. I feel very humbled by those remarks. I can remember my first appearance before the Full Court of Western Australia was on the day of my admission, as presided over by then Chief Justice Sir Lawrence Jackson. It was a while ago. I've now done 50 years. It's time to go.

But having served as the State's Attorney-General for

these last five years has been a huge privilege and honour, and I felt very humbled by the feedback I've had from both the profession and by the judiciary that I've made a fair effort. And so this is perhaps my last court appearance. The robes bag will be retired and I look forward to other opportunities. Before I resume my seat, I sincerely wish you, Justice Palmer, all the very best in your new career as a Supreme Court Justice. May it please the Court.

**QUINLAN CJ:** Thank you, Mr Attorney. Yes, Ms Wilkinson.

**WILKINSON, MS:** May it please the Court. The Law Society joins in acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, and on the Society's behalf I pay my respects to their elders, past, present and emerging. Your Honour, it's a great privilege to be here today to appear on behalf of the Law Society as the former President, to welcome you to the Bench of this Honourable Court. I welcome and congratulate members of your Honour's family who are here today. I congratulate your wife, her Honour Fiona Seaward, and your sons Henry and Lachlan.

This is Henry and Lachlan's third welcome ceremony since March 2023, and it could be said that they are now veterans of our welcome ceremonies here at the Supreme Court. I welcome your parents Margaret and Norman, and I welcome your friends Suzanne, Alan and Nigel, who are here today. And I acknowledge other friends here today, and colleagues, distinguished guests and members of the judiciary. In preparation for today, I was fortunate to have a discussion with your Honour about your life, and I would like to share a little bit of what I've learned.

Although I have to say I have not been able to detect evidence of this in your accent, your first 18 years of your life were spent in the UK, mainly in London. Your school years were spent at St Mary's Primary School in Isleworth and then at St Benedict's College in Ealing. You secured a university place, but it doesn't appear that you have any plans when you left school except to move to Western Australia and have a gap year, because your parents were coming here, and this was when you were 18 years old. And the reason for your move, as I understand it, was that your father, Norman, was going to take up a role teaching biochemistry at the University of Western Australia.

So you had plans to take a gap year before starting university, and you hoped to find work here in Perth, but you were thwarted because you arrived in 1990 during the

recession that we had to have. Many of us will remember those times of record interest rates and unemployment at 10.4 per cent. And unsurprisingly, you could not find work. When I asked you if you could recall anything striking about your life in Western Australia in 1990, you commented on how surprised you were at the friendliness and kindness of the locals who you met.

You recalled an older gentleman who sat with you and tried to strike up a conversation at a bus stop in Mosman Park. Your experience of growing up in London had taught you that it was not at all a done thing to attempt to strike up conversations with total strangers in the street, and you felt, with the benefit of hindsight, that you had been, to use your own words, very rude to this gentleman. You didn't realise until several weeks later that the way that locals interacted here with each other was exactly like that.

And you still remember to this day your reaction to that older gentleman, and you felt concerned about this encounter and your response to it. But it was a completely new situation for you as a very young person in a very different country, and it's clear you were taken off guard. As a result of the economic disruption in which you arrived here, you followed the advice of your family and you started studying in Western Australia at UWA, earlier than expected, in the 1991 academic year.

You moved into a combined law/arts degree. By the time the law aspect of your degree kicked in, it appeared from our discussion, and I may be completely wrong about that, that you didn't have any particular enthusiasm for the law at all. But that enthusiasm must have emerged at some point, however, as your Honour commenced practice in 1998, and then you spent 10 years as a solicitor in private practice, and then moved into Government.

And in 2006, your Honour became Special Counsel at the Australian Securities and Investment Commission. From 2008, your Honour practiced as an independent barrister, most recently at Quayside Chambers, and prior to that at Francis Burt Chambers, and you were appointed Senior Counsel in 2021. You categorised yourself to me as a generalist litigator, which is how Justice Seaward described herself in 2023.

But as with Justice Seaward, I suggest that you are so much more than that. You have appeared in a startling array of complex cases in recent years in a broad

commercial practice that encompassed corporate law, financial services, insurance, building and construction law, mining, oil and gas.

In July 2023, which feels only as long ago as the blink of an eye, maybe even to Lachlan and Henry, your Honour was appointed to the Bench of the District Court of Western Australia. Your accession now to the Bench of this Honourable Court tells us all we need to know about how your judicial career is progressing. And adjacent to your illustrious career, your Honour, you have also shown a commitment to serving the legal profession and community more broadly. You were a member of the Bar Council and you were regularly involved in teaching advocacy as part of the Bar's Essential Trial Advocacy Course.

And of course, your Honour served on the Law Society Council in 2022 and in 2023, until your appointment to the Bench. You were also a member of the Commercial Law Committee. And the Law Society, your Honour, is very grateful for the contribution of your skills, expertise and downright decency during that time. And decency, your Honour, is a word which has emerged often when former colleagues described your Honour to me. Other descriptions included a provider of practical good sense, and a man of action also made appearance.

Her Honour Judge Hayley Cormann, a former work colleague of your Honour, described you as never being too busy to help anyone out and always approachable to juniors and seniors alike. Her Honour also expressed the utmost faith in your Honour's judgment, never hesitating to approach you with a difficult or troubling ethical question or for help to understand a particular legal issue or area of law. Your Honour is by all accounts someone who others feel comfortable discussing a range of matters with, knowing you would break the problem down in a sensible fashion to reach a precise and accurate solution.

Ante Golem, former President of the Law Society, when asked about your Honour and the impact you have had on his life, said he had the privilege of seeing and benefiting from your Honour's generosity and contribution to the Law Society Council. Your Honour made time for that role in circumstances where you already had various other roles and responsibilities. Mr Golem said he would always be grateful for that, as your willingness to make time for us helped to enrich the Law Society's Council, and your presence on council benefited your colleagues and the broader profession.

Your Honour's leadership, work ethic and service to the community continues to be an example to others. It is also the reason we're here today celebrating your Honour's achievements and welcoming you to the Bench of the Supreme Court. None of us could have any doubt that your Honour will bring to this new role the outstanding qualities that have characterised your Honour's legal and judicial career to date. And on behalf of the profession of Western Australia and the Law Society, I do sincerely congratulate you and welcome you. May it please the Court.

**QUINLAN CJ:** Thank you, Ms Wilkinson. Yes, Mr Sims.

**SIMS, MR:** May it please the Court. May I also acknowledge and pay my respects to the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet. On behalf of the WA Bar Association and its President, Julie Taylor SC, it is my privilege and honour to speak at this ceremony to welcome the Honourable Justice Terry Palmer as a judge of this Court. On behalf of the WA Bar, I join in welcoming the many distinguished guests here today, including members of the judiciary, past and present, members of the profession, and your Honour's friends and family.

In particular, may I acknowledge on behalf of the WA Bar the long and distinguished service provided to the people of Western Australia and the administration of justice in this State by the Attorney-General, the Honourable John Quigley MLA, on this the occasion of his last appearance at a sitting such as this one. Your Honour comes to this Court with more than 25 years of experience as a legal practitioner, bolstered by 18 months experience as a judicial officer gained in one of this State's busiest courts. Your Honour is extremely well qualified to serve the State and its people in your new role as a judge of this Honourable Court.

The WA Bar joins with the Government and the other branches of the profession in warmly congratulating you on your appointment and wishing you well in your continuing judicial career. The breadth and depth of your Honour's formidable experience as both a lawyer and a judge has already been spoken about in some detail this afternoon. I will do my best not to cover too much old ground, but alas, I suspect some overlap is inevitable, particularly given that this is the second occasion on which your Honour's praises have been sung in a ceremony such as this in a relatively short space of time.

Your Honour was born in Germany and raised and schooled, as has been noted, in the United Kingdom. In your late teens, your Honour took a gap year to visit your parents who had emigrated to Perth. As has been explained, your Honour commenced an arts degree at UWA and at the end of that year, your Honour decided not to return to the UK but instead transferred into the study of law. The rest, as they say, is history. Your Honour practised as a solicitor between 1998 and 2008 at various firms and government agencies, including Philips Fox, Clayton Utz, and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.

I will return to your Honour's time at ASIC momentarily. Your Honour was called to the Bar in October 2008 and practised initially from Francis Burt Chambers. As has been noted, at the Bar your Honour conducted a very successful broad commercial practice both in litigation and arbitration matters arising across a wide range of subject matter. While at the Bar, your Honour's willingness to serve the community and the profession knew few bounds.

Your Honour was variously a member of the WA Bar Association's Bar Council for many years as well as the Council of the Law Society and the Human Research Ethics Committee at King Edward Memorial Hospital. As a member of Bar Council, your Honour served for a year as Treasurer. Your Honour was instrumental in the creation of the Bar Care Service which services our members to this day, and your Honour also played an important role over a number of years running, coaching and mentoring the Australian Bar Association's Essential Trial Advocacy Course for baby barristers.

In late 2016, your Honour became a founding member of Quayside Chambers. Your Honour's eminence in the practice of the law, combined with your Honour's unquestioned integrity, availability and independence was recognised by your appointment as Senior Counsel in 2021. Your Honour practised successfully as silk from Quayside Chambers until your appointment to the District Court in July 2023. I can say with some certainty that your Honour's loss was felt keenly then by the members of Quayside Chambers and it continues to be felt keenly to this day.

It is, of course, traditional for one in my place to seek feedback from others as to the admirable qualities and skills of the newly appointed judge, and I have done so. Almost uniformly, it was your Honour's dedication, skill and commitment to mentoring, assisting and developing others, particularly junior lawyers, that resonated

throughout all the feedback I received from various members of the profession and the judiciary.

Your Honour was described by your colleagues at the District Court as a much-loved strategic thinker, hard worker who invariably had time to assist others, including your judicial colleagues, your personal staff and the court staff more broadly. Your commitment to collegiality and conviviality, to which the Chief Justice has already referred, was well known when your Honour was at the Bar and continued following your judicial appointment and was greatly appreciated by your colleagues at the District Court.

So much so that I am reliably informed that on the occasion of the announcement of your Honour's appointment to this Court, your Honour personally organised both your own farewell morning tea and celebratory drinks, notwithstanding both functions would ordinarily have been organised by the Court itself. Having noted that it was your Honour's dedication and commitment to mentoring, assisting and developing others that resonated most strongly in the feedback I received from others, I confess I already knew that to be the case first-hand.

I mentioned a moment ago I would return to your Honour's time at ASIC. Your Honour was appointed Special Counsel at ASIC in 2006. It's reasonably well known, I think, that the role of Special Counsel was to supervise and manage complex litigation being run by the Commission from the Perth office and to be the solicitor on the record in such litigation. What's perhaps slightly less well known is that the role also involved being the supervising practitioner for restricted practitioners employed by ASIC.

It was in that capacity in late 2006 that your Honour first met, trained and mentored a just over 30-year-old ex-detective recently admitted as a lawyer and starting out in a new career at ASIC. When that lawyer came to the Bar in 2016 and joined Francis Burt Chambers, your Honour went out of your way to welcome him, to check on him regularly and to assist with his transition to the Bar and ensure it was a success. When that lawyer later moved to Quayside Chambers, your Honour was again a friendly face and continued to be an important mentor.

Thanks to your support, and that of many others, that lawyer is now a much older, much more grey-haired Silk who has been afforded the distinct honour and pleasure of speaking on behalf of the WA Bar at this ceremony. I do

not think in 2006 that either of us would have seen this day coming. At your Honour's welcome in the District Court, your Honour spoke in eloquent and powerful terms of the importance of diversity across the legal profession and the judiciary.

I'm therefore pleased to have been asked to pass on to you the following message from Julie Moore, the President of the WA branch of the Asian Australian Lawyers Association, who apologises that she was unable to be here this afternoon.

The Asian Australian Lawyers Association acknowledges the significance of his Honour's appointment as the first judge of Asian descent to be appointed to the Supreme Court of Western Australia. On behalf of the Asian Australian Lawyers Association, we congratulate Justice Palmer on this well-deserved appointment. May his tenure inspire a future where diversity on the Bench is not a milestone, but the norm. On behalf of the WA Bar, may I gratefully adopt those sentiments and again warmly congratulate your Honour on your well-deserved appointment. May it please the Court.

**QUINLAN CJ:** Thank you, Mr Sims. Your Honour.

**PALMER J:** I wish to join in acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, and I pay my respects to their elders past and present. Thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here this afternoon. There have been a lot of judicial welcomes recently and I'm grateful that you have chosen to attend mine. I'm also grateful to each of the speakers for overlooking my faults and finding something nice to say about me. While I appreciate that that is the tradition on these occasions, I know this may have been challenging in my case.

I am particularly grateful for the Attorney-General for attending today to give the speech at my judicial welcome, and I acknowledge, as all the other speakers have done today, the great service that he has done to the people of Western Australia. At my welcome in the District Court, I said that the only thing I could imagine worse than a ceremony dedicated to speeches about me was having to make a speech about myself. I realise now that that was a failure of imagination on my part. Having to do it all again is much worse.

Mercifully, though, given that I have done this

before, and only relatively recently, I hope I can be even briefer than I was on the last occasion. I will limit myself to speaking about three turning points in my life that have come to define who I am today. The first of these, and we've heard a little bit about this already, was a decision I made in 1991 to stay in Australia and study law. As you've heard, I was not born here. I was born in Germany, but I left there as a baby. I grew up in London, where I lived until I left school at the age of 18.

In 1990, my parents decided to leave London and move to Perth. To be honest, I was not keen to move to a city I had barely heard of and where I knew no one. I reluctantly agreed to move here for a year and to return to England later to take up my place at university at the end of 1991. But in late 1991, I made the fateful decision to stay in Perth and not return. It was a decision which was to alter the course of my life. There are two main reasons for that decision. The first was that by then, I had realised that life in Perth had a lot more to offer me than life in England. Key to this realisation was the group of friends I had made in Perth.

My parents had persuaded me to enrol in arts at UWA at the start of 1991 as a way of meeting people and having something constructive to do before I returned to England later that year. When I enrolled, I was fortunate to quickly make a group of friends who generously took me in and made me feel welcome. That was 34 years ago now. I feel very privileged I have remained in contact with some of those friends, and some of them, Alan Le Map and Nigel Calver, are able to be here today. I am particularly grateful to Alan for travelling from Sydney to be here.

I'm also grateful to Nigel's wife Suzanne for her attendance. I might have known her for slightly less than Nigel, but it is still more than 30 years now. The other main reason for my decision to stay was that by the end of 1991 it seemed likely that I would be able to study law. Until then it had never occurred to me that I would be a lawyer.

My place at university in England was in economics. My plan was to go into banking, if you can believe it. I would have made a terrible banker. When I enrolled at UWA, I realised that if I did well, I could transfer to law. By the end of 1991, it was apparent that that was a real possibility, and I decided to stay to study law if I could. By 1992, that possibility had become a reality and I was studying arts and law.

When I first started studying law, I was not entirely certain that I had made the right decision. The faculty was quite different to arts. It was only when I decided to participate in the mooting competitions offered at university that I thought perhaps a career in the law might be for me. For those who do not know what mooting is, it is a type of mock advocacy competition for law students. I found that I really enjoyed the practical application of the law in the cut and thrust of the courtroom. I decided then that one day I would like to become a barrister.

One of the mooting competitions that I competed in at the time was a Jessup International Mooting Competition. I was part of a team that represented UWA in 1996. The members of that team became fast friends. I'm very pleased that two members of that team are here today, Mr Melvin Yeo and Ms Carmen Yeung. I'm also glad that their partners Brigette and Mark - well, Mark isn't here actually, but Brigette could be here. A member of that team who is well known to this Court, the Honourable Justice James Edelman, could not be here today, but I am sure that he will be pleased to know that I mentioned him anyway.

After graduating, I worked as an employed solicitor for 10 years at various firms, as we've heard. I was lucky to work with some great lawyers in those places, and as Mr Sims has said, I had the pleasure of working with him at ASIC in the early 2000s. But in 2008, I realised my ambition to practise as a barrister when I joined the independent bar practising out of Francis Burt Chambers.

I practised as a barrister for 15 years, first at Francis Burt and then at Quayside Chambers, of which I had the great privilege of being a founding member. I was appointed Senior Counsel in 2021. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Bar and had the opportunity to work with some great counsel and some great instructing solicitors. And that brings me to 2023 and the second of the significant turning points that I wanted to speak about.

That was the year I decided to accept appointment as a District Court judge. As with so many other important decisions in my life, when I was first asked, I was hesitant and uncertain. I knew that a significant amount of the Court's work involved serious crime and my background was civil. I knew that some of the criminal work would be confronting, particularly for a commercial barrister from Quayside Chambers. After some very careful consideration, though, I said yes. I have never regretted

that decision.

On the contrary, I soon came to realise I had made an excellent decision. The District Court is one of the best workplaces that I've had the privilege to work at. The work in the Court could be confronting, sometimes very confronting. The Court's criminal jurisdiction deals with some of the very worst human conduct imaginable, but it was an immense privilege to be part of a judicial system that ensures that complaints are prosecuted in open court, that accused people receive a fair trial, and the guilty a just sentence. It was the people that I got to work with at District Court, though, that really made me truly love my time there.

Dealing with some of the worst people that humanity has to offer, I found some of the best. The kindness and collegiality extended to me whilst I was on the Court was beyond anything that I had experienced in my professional career. No one was ever too busy to help and everyone wanted to. My time on the Court was an opportunity to strengthen old friendships and make new ones. There are many I would like to acknowledge, but I will single out Judges Prior, Black and Curwood for public embarrassment. I am particularly grateful for their comradeship, celebrating the good days and decompressing after the grim.

I also wish to acknowledge my staff who have assisted me during my time at that Court, first Fraser and Daniel and then Priya and Noelene. I could not have done it without them. I cannot speak about the District Court without also thanking Chief Judge Wager. That the Court is such a great place to work is testament to her leadership. I will miss my friends at the District Court. The qualities of the people at that Court have made me wonder whether dealing with the worst people has the capacity to make someone a better person. I would like to think that my time on that Court might have made me a better person.

I am confident, though, that what I have learnt from my time there will benefit me for the rest of my judicial career. Before moving to my third point, I wish to say something about my parents. I was born into a household with parents who love me and who worked hard to give me every opportunity to succeed. Parental love and support is something that can be taken for granted. It shouldn't be. As part of my work on the District Court, I've seen first-hand the neglect and cruelty with which some parents can treat their children and the effect of that treatment on the children.

I will never take my parents' love for granted again. I am enormously grateful for their love, generosity and support throughout my life. That love has shaped my character and has been the foundation of anything good or useful that I have achieved. My mother is Chinese. As you have heard, that makes me the first judge of Chinese descent to be appointed to this Court and the first judicial officer since Master Ng.

I do not know the former Master, but I have witnessed first-hand the unthinking, casual racism that Asian immigrants of his generation have endured. I pay tribute to him. When my mother was born in Shanghai in 1943, her parents would never have imagined that one day her son would be a judge of this Court. That I am speaks volumes about the opportunities that I have been given by modern Australia. I am very grateful for those opportunities.

I hope that Gung Gung and Po Po are watching somewhere and are proud of the son that their daughter raised and are satisfied that she did a good job. Turning then to the third point that I want to speak about. That occurred when Fiona and I made a mutual decision together to raise a family. There is a running joke in my household that I am an unlucky person. If that is true, that is because I must have used all my luck up meeting Fiona. Many here today will know firsthand how patient, kind, smart and hard-working Fiona is. She's also an incredible mother and the glue that holds our family together.

I must admit to being concerned that sitting on the same Bench as Fiona is apt to invite comparison. To manage expectations in advance, I concede now that Fiona is just better than me. She is and always will be my inspiration, and I work hard to live up to her high standards. And finally to my sons Lachlan and Henry, I think you probably deserve a medal. As we've all heard, this is the third of these ceremonies that you've had to sit through. I'm sorry to have been responsible for the last two, but it would not have been the same without you.

You are looking again very smart in your jackets and I'm extremely pleased that we've managed to get another use out of Henry's jacket from my first welcome. Lachie is wearing it today. You are both, and always will be, the most important thing in our lives. Your mum and I love you so much and are so proud of you. And that concludes my remarks. Thank you once again for attending this afternoon. I'm looking forward to fulfilling my oath and

contributing to the important work of this Court.

**QUINLAN CJ:** Thank you, Justice Palmer. That concludes this evening's ceremonial sitting. The Court will now adjourn.

AT 5.01 PM THE MATTER WAS ADJOURNED ACCORDINGLY

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