IN THE DISTRICT COURT

OF NEW SOUTH WALES

THE CHIEF JUDGE

THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE D PRICE AM

AND THE JUDGES OF THE COURT

THURSDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2023

**SWEARING IN OF HER HONOUR JUDGE SARAH HOPKINS AS A JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

The Honourable M Speakman SC MP, Attorney General, on behalf of the NSW Bar

Ms C Banks, President, Law Society of New South Wales, on behalf of solicitors

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 (Commission read)

 (Affirmations of office taken)

PRICE J: The affirmations will be placed in the Court archives as a record of this momentous occasion.

 Judge Hopkins, on behalf of all the judges of this Court, I very warmly welcome you. Your legal career has been devoted to seeking justice for First Nations people and for those who are not so well-off in our community. I am sure that your sense of service, your sense of compassion and justice will serve you well as a judge. I wish you all the very best in your judicial career. Mr Attorney?

SPEAKMAN: I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather, the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, and I pay my respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

 Your Honour, Judge Hopkins, on behalf of our State and the Bar, I am delighted to congratulate you on your appointment as a judge of the District Court of New South Wales.

 I welcome your Honour’s husband, Matt, and your two children, Harry and Amelia.

 Your Honour has nine older siblings. Some are watching overseas and some are here today. Your siblings are John, Jill, Harry, Kit, Bobby, Stevie, Jo, Ann, June and Cherry, who is sadly no longer with us.

 Special mention to your late mother and father Deirdre and David, who will be sorely missed today. They would have been so proud of you. Your Honour has said that your mother would be shouting from the rooftops in excitement.

 Your stepfather Raymond Kirby is honoured to be here today alongside many friends and colleagues.

 Your Honour was born in 1969 in Hornsby. Your mother was a copywriter and Channel 7 weather forecaster, your father an advertising executive.

 They met in Australia after your father had left his home in the United States for work. His upbringing was unique with your grandfather being Harry Hopkins who directed President Frank D Roosevelt's New Deal.

 Your grandfather was also Roosevelt's emissary during World War II and his home for a period was the White House. His life of public service has inspired yours.

 Your family lived in Warrawee with a brief sojourn to Tokyo for your father's work. Days in Sydney were busy with your house usually full of friends and family. Time was usually spent with the siblings playing spotto in the garden or reading many books.

 You attended Wahroonga Bush School and then Abbotsleigh. Your family has dubbed you as an academic superstar.

 Post-school you attended the University of Sydney where you gained Bachelors of Arts and Laws with honours. John, your brother, has stated that he thinks that no one has made better use of arts/law degrees than you.

 Your Honour's professional career has been marked by your compassion, work ethic, collaborative qualities, and love of the law. It started in 1987 during your studies at Sydney University. You were a paralegal with Ebsworth and Ebsworth where you provided support on a range of matters including shipping and commercial litigation.

 Post-graduation you worked in New York as a litigation legal assistant at Mudge Rose Guthrie Alexander Ferdon. This role required you to pass the New York State and Multi State Bar Exam.

 On returning to Sydney in 1993 your Honour studied at the College of Law and you were admitted to practice in New South Wales in December that year.

 You were drawn back to Australia for compelling and deeply personal reasons, justice for Aboriginal Australians and public service.

 In 1994 you worked for William O'Brien Solicitors and appeared in hearings in this Court.

 During this time you were also a volunteer solicitor at the Kingsford and Inner-City Legal Centres. You provided pro bono advice to clients across a range of areas including housing, welfare and criminal matters.

 Your Honour's next step was to an organisation that would define your life as a legal professional, the Aboriginal Legal Service.

 Your friends and colleagues have stated that it is an organisation you have helped defined through your humility, exceptional legal mind and desire to lift others up.

 Your first joined in 1997 as a Solicitor. You became a Deputy Principal Solicitor in 1999 and a Senior Solicitor from 2002 to 2015.

 During that time, you appeared in all courts and tribunals covered by the Service including:

 - the Children's Court,

 - the Local Court,

 - the Coroner's Court,

 - the Parole Board,

 - the District Court,

 - the Supreme Court,

 - the Court of Criminal Appeal, and

 - the High Court of Australia.

 You appeared in a wide range of criminal matters such as bail applications, conviction and sentencing appeals, fitness hearings and trial matters. You acted as instructing solicitor and appeared as advocate in matters in this Court.

 In 2015 you took on the role of Managing Solicitor of Justice Projects and later became Principal Solicitor of Justice Projects Policy and Practice in 2022.

In this last role, you led the Aboriginal Legal Service in its partnership with the Department of Communities and Justice under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. This includes responsibility for delivering on the three justice targets:

 - reducing adult incarceration;

 - reducing youth incarceration; and

 - reducing domestic and family violence.

 This involved developing a program of work identifying key levers across the justice system including crime prevention, policing, bail, sentencing and parole.

 Additionally, you were the Co-Chair of the Justice Targets Officer Level Working Group. You also continued as a member of the Aboriginal Justice Partnership Committee, playing a lead role in the design and implementation of Closing the Gap Initiatives.

 Your colleagues are clear in how you have helped to guide the ALS during your time there. You have enhanced the quality of the Service by fostering the career of other like-minded colleagues. Many law professionals came to work there because of you.

 For your work with the Aboriginal Legal Service you were named Community Lawyer of the Year by the Women Lawyers' Association in 2017.

 Another act of public service has been your work in and input on the Walama List in this Court. The List's aims of reducing re-offending, keeping the community safe and reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the criminal justice system, align perfectly with your personal and professional objectives.

 In 2012, you were one of the visionaries of Just Reinvest NSW, a not-for-profit member-based organisation. As Co-Chair, you have led a small team, using a data-driven, place-based approach, with the objective of addressing the underlying drivers of offending and incarceration.

 You partnered with the community in Bourke to establish the first major site in Australia. Your work included:

(1) implementing justice circuit breakers to disrupt known pathways to prison; and

(2) establishing a network of partner organisations and agencies across the local, corporate, government and non-government sector.

 At the policy level, Just Reinvest collaborated with many representatives from the judiciary to develop a shared position on reforms to expand diversionary options, reduce crime and target recidivism. This resulted in the policy paper *Smarter Sentencing and Parole Law Reform*, launched in 2017. It also formed the basis of your consultations with my office and me in relation to criminal justice reform.

 Your friend and colleague, Peggy Dwyer, has called Just Reinvest a phenomenal achievement.

 Your Honour’s professional life has been filled with many rewards. Your personal life has been equally as fulfilling.

 Your beautiful family is at the centre of it. You met Matt in 1996 and married in 1999. Self-declared opposites, Matt has declared that during your courtship, he did all the chasing and you did all the dumping. In the end, your love was clear, with food being a huge connection and luckily Matt knows a thing or two about that.

 You have two wonderful children and are active parents. Your ability to manage work life balance is reflected in your strong relationships you have with Harry and Amelia.

 You miss Harry deeply now that he is studying medicine in Melbourne and one of your favourite things to do is to have long chats with Amelia or Mim as you call her.

 You live in Coogee, where you love walking your dog, Fred, or going for a swim in Gordons Bay. Matt and you also spend time at your farm in the Central Tablelands. Farming might be the only thing you are not very good at according to Matt, but he understands you love it for the peace and quiet, not the cows and dirt.

 Peace and quiet allows you to indulge in your passion for reading and writing. You are still an avid reader and an accomplished writer.

 In fact, writing counts as your second career or maybe that should be your third or fourth career based on your achievements.

 You have written four books, starting with *The Crimes of Billy Fish* being the first in 2007. Billy Fish was written in between family and professional life and inspired by your career. It was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers Prize and was highly commended in the ABC Fiction Award.

 This side career has led to your friends calling you a renaissance woman. They have called you a wonderful friend. Supportive and attentive. A deep thinker and listener with a curious mind.

 You are also a die-hard fan of the Sydney Roosters. In a perfect analogy to your opposites attract courtship and marriage to Matt, he is a tragic St George Dragons supporter.

 Your love and respect for each other keeps the rivalry respectful, except during the traditional Anzac Day game.

 Friends play a huge part in your personal life. As does your extended family. Being one of ten siblings means lots of family gatherings and trips overseas to catch up.

 Your loved ones are excited by your appointment as a Judge of this Court.

 Colleagues have also stated that there is a real excitement throughout the profession in your appointment.

 You are the first person from the Aboriginal Legal Service to be appointed directly to the bench. A hugely proud moment for this critical organisation.

 Matt believes you will make a brilliant judge due to your empathy and expert understanding of the law. He adds your ability to see and respect both sides of the story will leave no doubt that all parties will have been treated fairly.

 Peggy says you ooze integrity, intelligence and compassion. She thinks it is a genius appointment.

 Your brother, John, sums it up best - to live in a place where Sarah Hopkins is a judge is a hugely positive thing.

 Your Honour, my warmest congratulations and best wishes for your forthcoming career on the bench.

PRICE CJ: Thank you, Mr Attorney. Ms Cassandra Banks of the Law Society of New South Wales.

BANKS: I, too, acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora nation, the traditional owners of the land on which this Court stands, and pay my respects to the Elders, past and present,. I acknowledge and extend my respects to all Aboriginal people who are with us today.

 Judge Hopkins, I am honoured to come before the Court on behalf of the solicitors of New South Wales, to offer congratulations and wish your Honour well in your appointment to the District Court.

 Twenty three years ago, at 9.30am on a Friday in Court LG-2 in the Downing Centre, the arraignment lists were about to get underway. A recent law graduate sat in the public gallery, eager to see what real law was like.

 The first accused was brought up from the downstairs, as they were in those days. The accused, a young Aboriginal man, took his place in the dock, but his lawyer was nowhere to be seen.

 Judge John Williams was presiding, “Have you got a lawyer?” he asked the accused.

 “Oh yeah,” the accused replied.

 “What’s her name?”

 “Sarah! Sarah from the ALS!” the accused told the judge.

“Ah, Sarah Hopkins,” said the judge. “She’s a very good lawyer. It’s not like her to be late.”

 On cue the doors flew open and a young woman loaded down with bags, coats and files rushed in and took her place at the bench table. “Hopkins for the defence,” she told the judge with confidence. The matter proceeded efficiently.

 The young law graduate was impressed. This young woman from the ALS was amazing, bright and rare as a comet. She was clever, effective and clearly respected by her client and the Court. Her work was important.

 This was the kind of lawyer he wanted to be, and the kind of law he wanted to practice.

 So that afternoon, he called your Honour at the ALS and asked how he could become a lawyer like you.

 You would work alongside this young man at the ALS for several years. He is now a magistrate in the Local Court.

 Your Honour, this is one story amongst dozens of stories of the solicitors you have worked with and have mentored at the Aboriginal Legal Service.

 Your service to the State, the legal profession and the Indigenous community is exemplary.

 Your heritage perhaps suggested the likelihood of some extraordinary achievements. We have heard that you are a granddaughter of Harry Hopkins, the architect of the New Deal and advisor to President Roosevelt.”

 Surprisingly studying law did not really occur to you until you received your HSC marks. You were a gifted English student, and a very stylish writer. Once you started tertiary education, you found law almost as intriguing as literature. You took degrees in English and Law.

 While you studied, you worked at Ebsworth and Ebsworth. As we have heard, your Honour travelled after graduation and lived in New York. Here you got a job with the law firm Mudge Rose Guthrie Alexander Ferdon on Wall Street, where Richard Nixon was a senior partner in the 1960s.

 You took the New York bar exam and passed easily.

 When you returned to Sydney, you worked with Marshall Marks Kennedy- hereafter known as MMK - in commercial litigation. While you were there you took two steps into the future. First, you joined the Committee of the Inner City Legal Centre and second, you decided commercial law was not our preferred jurisdiction.

 Your Honour left MMK to work part time and write a novel. You volunteered for the Justice Action and the Criminal Justice Coalition, working to support prisoners with legal rights. Bill O’Brien offered you a job as a criminal solicitor and did not have to ask twice.

 Then in 1997, you started at the Aboriginal Legal Service. In your 26 years there you had a number of different roles, most recently Principal Solicitor Justice Projects, Policy and Practice.

 In 2007, you published your first book, *The Crimes of Billy Fish*. It is worth noting that your children were two and six at the time, and that you worked full time.

 Your second novel, *Speak to Me*, would be published in 2010.

 As we have heard, in 2012, you founded Just Reinvest NSW and as Chair over the last decade, you have worked with communities of Bourke, Mount Druitt and Moree to establish justice reinvestment initiatives.

 Your third novel, *The Picture of You*, was published in 2014.

 Your Honour has expanded this work with the Bourke community since 2012 through the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project. This project won the 2015 National Rural Law and Justice Award.

 Not surprisingly, in 2017 your Honour was named the Community Lawyer of the Year in the Women Lawyers’ Association of NSW.

 Your work with Just Reinvest was recognised with the 2019 HESTA Community Organisation Award and 2019 Australian Human Rights Commission Community Organisation Award.

 Your fourth novel, *The Subjects*, was also published in 2019.

 As we have heard, in 2021 you co-chaired the Closing the Gap Justice Targets, Officer Level, Working Group and have continued to play a lead role in implementing Closing the Gap in New South Wales.

 You have also worked on numerous committees including the NSW Bar Association’s Joint Working Party on the Over-representation of Indigenous People in the NSW Criminal Justice System, the Criminal Law Committee of the Law Society of NSW, the Steering Committee for the Red Cross Vulnerability Report, and as Vice President of the NSW Council for Civil Liberties.

 Your Honour is an accredited specialist in criminal law and has shared your knowledge and experience through lecturing in criminal law at the University of NSW.

 Today, you hold two admirable records - you are the ALS’s longest serving solicitor, and you are the first ALS solicitor to be appointed directly to the District Court.

 Your Honour’s extraordinary work ethic makes it difficult to imagine you have any private life, but you are a devoted wife to Matt (Moran) and equally devoted mum to Harry and Amelia.

 Your good friend, Peggy Dwyer, advises you are the matriarch of a family incredibly competitive at charades, card games and pool. It is agreed that your husband is reasonably accomplished, but it is widely accepted amongst your Honour’s circle of friends that he can win - but only if you let him.

 Ms Dwyer observes that your Honour is just as happy to be debating policy with the Attorney as you are snipping off the tops of Zooper Doopers and working in a canteen for 12 hours, as you did for a recent Block rap party. You were in the mosh pit for Kobie Dee and then scrubbing out twelve bain-maries at about 9pm.

 Your Honour’s career in law to this date is a testament to your legal acumen, searing intelligence and commitment to your clients and the community.

 You have chosen to support and zealously represent the Aboriginal community for a wage that does not compare with what you could have earned at the private bar or in a commercial law firm.

 What your Honour has done instead is rejected the accepted monetary value of a law career, and highlighted the true value of justice and restoration of the Indigenous community and its peoples.

 Your volunteered service to Just Reinvest will bring positive impact to many lives and continues to strengthen Aboriginal communities throughout the State. The dignity and hope it returns to First Nation communities cannot be measured in monetary terms.

 Your work at the Aboriginal Legal Service is priceless.

 On behalf of the solicitors of New South Wales, I congratulate you for the honour you have brought the profession, the encouragement you have provided to each solicitor in New South Wales with this appointment, and most importantly for the path you have forged for reconciliation with and justice for, the Indigenous community. We are thrilled to recognise your appointment today.

 Please accept our gratitude for your service to the profession and our best wishes to your new role.

 As the Court pleases.

PRICE CJ: Thank you, Ms Banks. Judge.

HER HONOUR: Chief Judge, Attorney General, Minister Hazzard, fellow judges, other distinguished guests and former colleagues, my family and friends, thank you Attorney General for your kind words. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land that we meet today Gadigal people of the Eora nation and recognise their enduring connection to the land and waters. I pay respect to the Aboriginal Elders past and present and to the Aboriginal people in the room today many of whom I have had the honour to work alongside.

 Thank you Chief Judge and to other members of this Court for the welcome you have given me and for the warm messages of support since the announcement of my appointment as well as the very generous offers of assistance many of which I have taken up already can I first say how honoured I am and grateful for the opportunity.

 I spoke to a young man recently who at the age of 21 told me with an impressive certainty that he aspired one day to be a judge. It made me ponder on the fact that in spite of my great admiration for so many judges over the years at no time in my career have I given it serious thought. On any view my trajectory to the bench is an unusual one. Leaning more towards more communication and drama when I finished school I enrolled in Arts Law at University of Sydney and found myself taken with some but not all aspects of the law. I lived in New York after completing my degree and found a job and sat the bar exams but when it came to legal practice I still felt something of the observer. And this carried over on my return to Australia and my brief stint in commercial litigation. It was in an effort to carve out time to write novels that I started working part time for Justice Action and the Criminal Justice Coalition visiting prisoners with their legal rights. In that capacity I met Bill O’Brien and he offered me a job as a criminal solicitor which I took on the spot. It was the first time I saw my place in law no longer as an observer but as an enthusiastic participant. It was in Bill’s excellent practice that I had the good fortune of briefing Elizabeth Fullerton SC now Justice Fullerton, learnings from which I have carried throughout my career.

 My first day at the Aboriginal Legal Service I arrived at the Redfern office at 8am to find a mountain of files on my desk for Campbelltown Court, 10am start. I made tracks and somehow got through the day arriving back at the office at sundown to be told by Deb Mundine at the front desk that I was being let off easy only having to cover the one court in a day.

 I was quick to learn at the ALS, it was all hands on deck. There was a wonderful culture of camaraderie among the staff, all the staff, solicitors, admin and field officers like Uncle Bobby Carroll with essential requirements of a sense of compassion, a sense of humour and a thick skin.

 On top of that there was the privilege of working with our clients and their families. I had found my place. I didn’t know then that it meant my place for the next 25 years but it was that allowing me to move in between the Local and Children’s Court, the Parole Board and the Supreme Court, the CCA and the High Court. Many of the ALS solicitors from those early days whom I have been lucky enough to form friendships with have had stellar legal careers to name just a few and I know I am missing out many more, Local Court Magistrate Stephen Barlow and my old boss, Peter Bugden, Ragni Mathur and Troy Edwards both recently appointed senior counsel and many other fine barristers who have walked a well-trodden path from ALS to Forbes Chambers.

 I make the special mention of Peggy Dwyer, you’re probably not surprised, barrister of Forbes who has also dedicated an inordinate amount of time, skill energy and sheer doggedness in sharing the Board of Weave Youth & Community Services and who I have been lucky enough to have as a colleague, a sounding board and most importantly as a friend.

 Beyond the solicitors at the ALS there existed an extraordinary network of support. I want to mention the relationship that formed between the ALS and the Public Defenders in my early years at the Service and which continues to thrive up until today. Beyond briefing individual barristers, the Public Defenders became a lifeline, an endless source of advice and mentorship in our own increasing complex matters. We were fortunate enough to have at the end of the phone the likes of Andy Haesler, Richard Button, Dina Yehia, Leonie Flannery, Anthony Cook, Angus Webb and for me, personally, the now late Senior Public Defender, Peter Zahra, who convinced me early in my early days that I would be right to appear in a two week murder committal when he was double booked. He managed to be available every time I called, Sundays included. For all of those here today who knew Peter there would be no surprise that that level of support never ebbed.

 Over the years there have been some key champions and friends of the ALS and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that I have been lucky enough to work with from all across the justice system, some sadly are no longer with us.

 The kindness of Matt Laffan from the DPP, the pro bono support of the Bar, the brilliance and generosity of Paul Byrne SC in acting pro bono all the way to the High Court to assert the inadmissibility of police identification evidence in the matter of Smith v The Queen. From the NSW Bar, I also acknowledge the excellent work of the joint working party on the over representation of Indigenous people in the NSW criminal justice system so ably chaired by Phil Boulten SC and Sarah Pritchard SC. I particularly acknowledge the contribution of Gaby Bashir SC on that committee and now in providing such excellent leadership as President of the NSW Bar Association.

 Further examples to note, the work of Sophia Beckett now a judge of this Court, and Rebecca McMahon in the development of the Bugmy Bar Book. The excellent leadership of Magistrate Sue Duncombe in the Youth Koori Court. The work of our State Coroner, Teresa O’Sullivan, in working towards a restorative model in the coronial jurisdiction and Jonathon Hunyor of PIAC in leading the NSW Legal Assistance Forum Closing the Gap Working Group and having such a clear sighted understanding of what it means to support Aboriginal community controlled organisations.

 Finally and significantly, the extraordinary efforts of now Justice Dina Yehia SC in establishing the Walama List in the District Court and the critical support of the Chief Judge and the Walama Working Group amongst, its members the Powerhouse, that is, Teela Reid and, of course, Judge Hunt in his current leadership role. Like many a lawyer before me, I have been inspired by Justice Yehia’s work and her determination, her intellect and her compassion and I am now extremely grateful to have the opportunity to be one of the judges presiding in the Walama List.

The Aboriginal Legal Service of today - there are critical new partnerships forming as part of its work under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Under the leadership of its formidable and fiercely intelligent CEO, Carly Warner, the Service is partnering with NSW DCJ as the lead Aboriginal Control Organisation in an ambitious program of work identifying key levers to reduce the level of over representation in the justice system and the unacceptable level of domestic and family violence. It has been an honour over the last two years to play a part in this work and to work alongside the transforming Aboriginal outcomes team in DCJ, led by Brendan Thomas and Edwina Crawford as well as other leaders from a coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations.

I make special mention of Catherine Trindall from the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and Debbie Lee from the First Nation’s Disability Network. This is tough work, sometimes only made possible by special connections that form, I am grateful for them and I hope that they continue.

 I am regularly accused of being an optimist but I hope I am right in my sense that this a time of promise. What I can see is that there is a genuine partnership emerging between government and Aboriginal leadership, there is more to come and more to be done and a long, long way to go but it has been a privilege to be part of a process in which the struggle for power, at least, as I see it has become a negotiation.

 I leave the ALS knowing this work is in the safe and extremely capable hands of Keisha Hopgood and Dominic Moore with whom it has been such a pleasure to work and excited to see excellent solicitors stepping into senior and critical roles.

 I come on the Bench, as has been mentioned, as the longest standing solicitor at the Aboriginal Legal Service and the first to be appointed directly to the District Court and that is a true honour. For the ALS, I will be grateful for many things. Perhaps most of all, allowing me to pursue a path and a goal not strictly in my job description that of justice reinvestment. The work has allowed me to work closely with Aboriginal leaders both on the ground in community and across the government and non-government sectors including Alistair Ferguson from Bourke, the founder of Maranguka, Professor Tom Calma, Mick Gooda and Jack Beetson, my co-chair at Just Reinvest as well as countless community members in Bourke, Moree and Mount Druitt who have guided this important work. It is as a result of their leadership that Justice Reinvestment is now being funded at the State and Federal level and expanded across the country. We learn a lot as lawyers every day in and out of the courts but it is through this work that I have come to any level of a real understanding of the issues faced by First Nations people and the meaning of community led solutions.

 On the day of our launch at Government House, it was clear that solutions would be found in listening to and elevating the voices of young people. In front of a daunting crowd of government ministers and legal luminaries, the youth ambassadors performed a Rap for the first time in public. The Governor-General, Marie Bashir, was so impressed she gave them a huge hug and requested an encore. One of those performing was Kobie Duncan, now inspirational Kamilaroi rapper performing last year at the Moree Block Party in front of 1,000 people surrounded with young children looking up to him on the stage and dancing with their parents. I cannot overstate my respect and admiration for the young leaders I have been lucky enough to work with, their strength, wisdom and resilience.

 Nowhere more evident in my mind than in the story of Isaiah Sines, who started as a youth ambassador with Just Reinvest while he was still in custody and is now employed as a full time youth engagement worker ably engaging with young people no mainstream services have been able to reach.

 A huge debt of thanks is owed to the support provided over many years by the philanthropic sector, in particular, Dusseldorp Forum and the Paul Ramsay Foundation and to Minister Brad Hazzard, who I also thank for being here and for championing the Bourke initiative and ensuring critical cross-sector support.

 I leave Just Reinvest in the capable hands of an exceptional group of people including its CEO, Geoffrey Winters, Daniel Daylight, Judy Duncan and Julie Williams, Ashlee Wone and Nicole Mekler. But I think Geoffrey and Jack, you already have the sense that I will never really leave.

 My family and friends, first, Matt, Harry and Mim, our little unit has always run at a certain pace, often always, frenetic. It is unlikely this appointment will slow things down. But we have never shied away from throwing something new into the mix, dad usually manages that once every few weeks or so and your excitement and joy at this news was something I will always treasure.

 Mim, you in particular, knowing all that you have on in your HSC year, I mean, all of all that you take on in your young life and I am coming to realise that, as with your dad, I will have little influence in trying to slow you down.

 Harry, I cannot pretend I like having you away studying in Melbourne but I am so proud of your achievement and most of all your insightfulness and your kindness.

 And Matt, it has been a wild and wonderful ride so far. When I told Matt the news of my appointment, the way he talked seemed to indicate a belief that he would have some role in the judicial decision making process. Chief Judge, I can assure you that will not be the case. Matt, I could not be here today without your love and support.

 And then the big family. I am one of ten children as you have heard and here today are five of my brothers and sisters. Over the years, people have marvelled at and even doubted my claim that, yes, we all get on and so much more than that. With all the wonderful nieces and nephews, the branches of our family and the deep bond between us have been a source of strength, a safety net, a hive of ideas and inspiration. The array of talents, the warmth, the fun, the Christmas singing, all of it, it is precious. If I can single out just the nearest in age, my brother John, who since my most loved Dad passed away when I was 11 and John was 13, has been both brother and best friend. My friends - my legal friends have mostly had a mention, each brave and brilliant in their own way. The dearest of my non-legal friends here today online or in person, thank you. I am grateful for your creativity, your humour, your cooking, your charades, your depth, your intellect and your wisdom about all manner of things that trouble and interest us. I know that you have made me a better lawyer and will, no doubt, make me a better judge. You are like family and you know for me that is saying something.

 It is no surprise I function every day on the basis that I am blessed. My one great sadness is that Mum is not here for this one. She would never miss a celebration so I have to believe that somewhere she is stopping strangers to tell them her daughter is a judge. She would be so happy that my very dear stepfather, Raymond, could be here today to share in this occasion. Thank you all for being here. Thank you, Chief Judge.