

SUPREME COURT OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
STATE SQUARE, DARWIN

CEREMONIAL SITTING TO WELCOME
THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE JENNY MAY BLOKLAND

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

FRIDAY 9 APRIL 2010 AT 9.38 AM IN COURTROOM 1

PRESIDING JUDGES:

THE HON CHIEF JUSTICE B R MARTIN
THE HON JUSTICE D MILDREN RFD
THE HON JUSTICE S SOUTHWOOD
THE HON JUSTICE J KELLY
THE HON ACTING JUSTICE T OLSSON AO MBE RFD ED

IN ATTENDANCE:

THE HON AUSTIN ASCHE AC QC
THE HON JOHN GALLOP AM RFD QC
THE HON JOHN NADER RFD QC
THE HON DAVID ANGEL QC

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C1/jp/ng
Blokland J

SHERIFF'S OFFICER: Silence. All stand, please, and remain standing.

All persons having any business before this honourable Supreme Court of the Northern Territory now draw nigh, give your attendance and you shall be heard.

God save the Queen.

Please be seated.

THE ASSOCIATE: The Court's welcome to her Honour, Justice Jenny Blokland.

MARTIN CJ: Your Honour, the Administrator, Mrs Tessa Pauling, Madam Attorney, Judges, former judges, ladies and gentlemen, today is a special sitting of the Full Court of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory for the presentation of the commission of her Honour, Justice Blokland, and to welcome her Honour to the Court.

I have apologies from a number of people, but I will mention only one, one of our sitting judges, Riley J, has the pleasure of camping in our far west corners of the continent.

BLOKLAND J: Chief Justice, I have the honour of announcing that I have received from his Honour, the Administrator, a commission appointing me as a Judge of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory.

MARTIN CJ: Your Honour, I invite you to take your Affirmation of Office in the presence of his Honour, the Administrator.

THE ADMINISTRATOR: If it pleases the Court.

BLOKLAND J: I, Jenny May Blokland, do solemnly and sincerely promise, affirm and declare that I will bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors according to law, that I will well and truly serve her in the office of Judge of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory of Australia and that I will do right to all manner of people according to law without fear or favour, affection or ill will.

THE ADMINISTRATOR: I invite you to subscribe the Affirmation.

Your Honour, congratulations. I invite you to take your seat.

MARTIN CJ: Please take your seat, Justice Blokland.

Master, would you please read the commission.

THE MASTER:

To the Honourable Jenny May Blokland.

Know ye that reposing full trust and confidence in your loyalty, learning, integrity and ability, I, Thomas Ian Pauling, Officer of the Order of Australia, Administrator of the Northern Territory of Australia, acting with the advice of the Executive Council of the Northern Territory of Australia in pursuance of section 32(1) of the Supreme Court Act 1979 do, by my commission, appoint you, Jenny May Blokland, learned in the law for the Northern Territory, to be a Judge of the Supreme Court in the Northern Territory of Australia from and including the ninth day of April in the year of our Lord, 2010 to have, hold, exercise and enjoy the said office of Judge of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory of Australia under and subject to the provisions of the Supreme Court Act 1979, as amended from time to time, during good behaviour with all rights, powers, privileges, advantages and jurisdiction thereto belonging to or appertaining.

Given under the seal of the Administrator.

MARTIN CJ: Master, please place the Commission and the Affirmation of Office with the records of the Court.

MARTIN CJ: Madam Attorney, do you move?

MS LAWRIE MLA: May it please the Court. It gives me great professional and personal pleasure to rise on behalf of this Government to welcome the appointment of your Honour, Blokland J, to this honourable Court.

Almost twenty years ago now, another female Chief Magistrate, Sally Thomas J, was promoted to this Bench and earned the great respect of the Territory's legal fraternity. I have no doubt your Honour will do the same.

It has been a long journey from Ardrossan in South Australia, where your Honour was born, to the present. Your Honour was educated at Modbury High School in Adelaide and subsequently completed a Bachelor of Laws degree at the University of Adelaide. Your Honour undertook articles of clerkship at the then Northern Territory Department of Law between 1980 and 1981. It was there that the legal of your Honour's legal acumen was first recognised.

Your Honour left shortly after completion of your articles and took up a position with the North Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, where you practised in the areas of criminal law and family law. Your Honour then moved to the Australian Legal Aid Office where you also practised in criminal law and family law.

In 1987, your Honour sought to further your education at the University of Adelaide and undertook a masters degree in law and course work with a minor thesis in evidence. Your Honour also worked as a research officer and part-time tutor during that time. In 1990, your Honour returned to the Northern Territory and took up a position as a lecturer at the Northern Territory University, where you taught in the areas of criminal law, evidence and public international law, and also held an appointment as a Judicial Registrar of the Industrial Relations Court of Australia. Your Honour was appointed as Dean of the Law Faculty in 1996.

In 1998, your Honour took up a position as general counsel for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Your Honour remained there until 2000 and, during that time, appeared in six reported cases. Your Honour then practised as a barrister at James Muirhead Chambers.

After some months at the private Bar, your Honour decided to seek different challenges and, following the election of the present government in 2001, your Honour was appointed as Director of Policy with the Department of Justice. Your Honour was subsequently appointed as a Magistrate in 2002 and then as Chief Magistrate in 2006.

During the course of your Honour's legal career, you have served on numerous boards, including as a member of the Legal Practitioner Complaints Committee, the Legal Aid Commission and the Criminal Code Review Committee and as President of the Northern Territory Criminal Lawyers Association between 1991 and 1994.

Your Honour has also had published a number of articles focusing on criminal law and the position of indigenous and underprivileged people in the justice system, including feminist amicus brief in the stolen generation's litigation, published in the Aboriginal Law Bulletin in 1997 and, *Where Two Worlds Collide*, published in the Alternative Law Journal in 2006.

Your Honour brings to this Bench a great interest and commitment to the principles of therapeutic jurisprudence and restorative justice. Your Honour has been a champion of the community courts and the work done in bush courts, and the scope of your many judicial decisions has traversed all areas of the law.

Your mother, Joan, who is here today, has been a role model and an inspiration to you. Your mother, a kind and generous woman, passed on to you a strong work ethic and a love of learning and education. The people of the Northern Territory, in turn, have benefited and will continue to benefit from the encouragement, belief and support your mother gives you. Although your father, Frank, is no longer with us, he was also an important influence in your life and it is maybe because of the time he spent in the Territory in the 1950s that led you to make the Territory your home.

The people of the Northern Territory may trust that your Honour will discharge your judicial duties in accordance with your oath and with the utmost intellectual integrity. I wish your Honour, your Honour's partner, Jamie, and your Honour's children, Anthony and Helena, all the best in this next exciting chapter of your lives.

May it please the Court.

MARTIN CJ: Madam President of the Bar Association, do you move?

MS WEBB QC: May it please the Court. On behalf of the members of the Northern Territory Bar Association, I am pleased to congratulate your Honour, Justice Blokland, on your appointment to the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory and to wish you a warm welcome.

At the Bar, first reactions to a judicial appointment are instructive. Upon the announcement of your Honour's appointment the reaction of the members of the Bar Association was positive and almost effusive, especially among senior members. Your Honour's appointment to the Bench is genuinely welcomed and supported by the Northern Territory Bar. It is an appointment based on merit, together with your Honour's long experience in the law and the wider Northern Territory community, with all its complexities, over the last 30 years.

In the early 1980s, your Honour was articled to that then well-known duo, Geoff Clarke and Bob Hook, in the Department of Law. You worked with the first Solicitor-General of the Northern Territory, Ian Barker QC. The building you worked in was the Wells Building, now demolished and over which the Legislative Assembly now stands. But your Honour was young, restless and wanting to make a real contribution to justice beyond the important legal issues that confronted the new Territory, with self-government only four or so years old.

Your Honour moved on to work as a solicitor advocate at the North Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, joining a day after Colin McDonald QC, in October 1981. To your role in Aboriginal legal aid your Honour brought passion, empathy and enthusiasm. Those who worked with you at NAALAS remember you as an excellent and a lively colleague and a good friend. Some are here today to welcome your appointment.

Those were the early days in the advancement of Aboriginal people in the Australian justice system. Your Honour acquired the name of '*The Voir Dire Kid*' as a result of your feisty advocacy in the criminal jurisdiction. The office you worked in was the original Aboriginal Legal Aid office in Bennett Street, now demolished. Your Honour's residence at the time was 4 Hinkler Street, Fannie Bay, now a development site, but in the 1980s a hub and social centre for those involved in advancing justice for the marginalised.

Your Honour was and continues to be a lover of music, a composer of songs and an avid guitar player, galvanising your colleagues socially and artistically in the otherwise serious and challenging role of advocating justice for the Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

You were the third democratically appointed president of the Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory. Your Honour was an active and principled president and had a prominent public advocacy role in relation to matters of criminal justice. It was during your involvement with the Criminal Lawyers Association at the Annual Bali Conference that your Honour displayed your versatility as a barrel girl to the then Attorney-General, the Honourable Daryl Manzie. The experience is one your Honour shares with the Honourable Virginia Bell J of the High Court of Australia, who appeared as a barrel girl in a popular 1980s television program.

Since your early days in legal aid, your Honour's career has been diverse and you have continued your pioneering role. You were an academic and then dean at the new Law Faculty of the Northern Territory University. Your Honour was a member of the Northern Territory Bar and was general counsel for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Appointed a Magistrate in 2002, your Honour became Chief Magistrate of the Northern Territory in 2006. In this role, your Honour has enjoyed a deserved reputation for scholarship, politeness and concern for all, particularly the marginalised and relegated. Indeed, the Northern Territory News has recognised your Honour for several years as amongst the 120 most powerful in the Northern Territory. Although I note your Honour's rating has waned recently, attributable, according to the Northern Territory News, to your pleasant nature, bringing calm and reasonableness to the courtroom and your failure to be strident and opinionated. Whether or not your elevation to the Supreme Court will raise your standing in the most powerful list, we trust it will not alter those most admirable characteristics your Honour displays in court.

Looking back, your Honour's career has mirrored so much of Darwin's contemporary history and development. Whilst buildings you have worked and lived in have been demolished and earmarked for redevelopment, your Honour has maintained your values, passion and commitment for justice and truth while, at the same time, moving forward with change.

The Bar Association applauds your appointment and its members look forward to advancing the interests of justice in your Honour's Court. No longer a chief, but your Honour may borrow from Gilbert and Sullivan and say: 'For now, I am a judge, and a good judge, too.'

May it please the Court.

MARTIN CJ: Mr President of the Northern Territory Law Society, do you move?

MR STOREY: Your Honours, normally a president of the Law Society will only make submissions at one or two of ceremonial sittings such as this. In the six months or so I have been president, I have made submissions at the retirement of Thomas J, the swearing in of Kelly J, the retirement of Angel J and now the swearing in of Blokland J. While it is always with regret that we farewell a member of the Bench, and with joy that we welcome a new member of the Bench, your Honours, I must admit, it gets very difficult. The order of proceedings are generally similar. The Honourable Madam Attorney provides a well-researched and well-prepared submission identifying the career highlights of the judge in question. The president of the Bar then expands upon significant achievements and personal characteristics with some personal additions, obviously due to the familiarity of the Bar with the incoming or outgoing Judge. And then we get to the President of Law Society. What do I say?

As I say, it gets difficult. I had thought, your Honours, about making some quip about the fact that as your Honour, Blokland J, taught me evidence, if ever my knowledge of that area in the law was found wanting in front of your Honour, I could beg forgiveness. And then I thought, well, in fact, because your Honour did teach me evidence, any want of knowledge on my part in that area is only attributable to myself. So I resiled from that and I thought and, on reflection, your Honour, thinking about the time I have known your Honour and the work you have done, I identified three characteristics that, to me, describe your Honour.

The first, your Honour, is a legal intellectualism. Legal skill and academic ability and, as usual, Madam Attorney has outlined the highlights of that and expanded upon by the President of the Bar Association but, certainly, in my dealings with your Honour, both as your student and as your colleague, I would endorse that absolutely. Your Honour has a high level of legal skill and legal intellectualism.

The second attribute, your Honour, is that I identified is a superb administrative ability and, again, that has been outlined by the submissions already made in your Honour's time, in my knowledge, as Dean of Law at the Northern Territory University, as Director of Policy at the Department of Justice and, most recently, of course, as Chief Magistrate.

But the third and perhaps most significant attribute, your Honour, is humanism. I thought about that term and I looked up some definitions, and there are a number of definitions of that term and I will not go through them all here. The relevant definition I found is as follows: 'A perspective that attaches importance to human dignity, concerns and capability, particularly rationality.' The doctrine that people's duty is to promote human welfare.

While there are many attributes that can be said to make for an excellent judicial officer, these three: intellectualism, administrative ability and humanism, make me confident in predicting that your Honour's time on the Bench will ensure the continuation and growth of this Court's reputation as a capable and honourable Court.

May it please the Court.

MARTIN CJ: Justice Blokland.

BLOKLAND J: Thank you, Chief Justice.

Your Honour, The Administrator, Chief Justice, Judges, former Chief Justice and former judges of this honourable Court, Madam Attorney-General, Ms Webb QC, Mr Storey, members of the legal profession, former colleagues from the Magistrates Court, family and friends, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you, Madam Attorney, Ms Webb QC and Mr Storey for your kind and generous remarks. I do sincerely appreciate the time and care you have taken in preparing these welcome speeches. Please accept my heartfelt thanks. I note that you do have some very well-placed sources.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Chief Justice and Judges of the Court for welcoming me to the Court. I thank all of you who are present today for your attendance as a sign of goodwill towards the work of the Court and to my participation as the newest member.

My gratitude to you all is expressed in the knowledge that most people do try to avoid being in Court. This is the case for some lawyers as well, voluntary attendance is almost unheard of. So, coupled with the fact of your very busy lives, it

is truly touching that you have all made time to attend this non-mandatory court sitting today.

If I can quote from my learned sister, Kelly J. You will understand, as a long-time female practitioner, it gives great pleasure to be able to say that. But quoting from her Honour's welcome speech last year, and reflected in Thomas J's farewell sittings about what she said about traditions, is that it says something special about the court system and legal profession, that we stop and pause and reflect on occasions such as this, even in the instance on the occasion of the commencement of the most junior member of the Court. Having watched many of these sittings in the past and now participating fairly centrally, I respectfully agree with all of that and just add that it is also reminiscent of that famous legal tradition of walking over hot coals.

I am mindful of the significant duties and responsibilities I will be discharging as a Judge of this honourable Court. I trust the community and the profession understand I have committed myself to doing my best in accordance with the affirmation I have taken.

The notion of justice is not always clear-cut. Justice has many components, often competing components and competing elements within a single case. I am looking forward to the challenge of, hopefully, resolving difficult cases with the assistance of the profession and I am grateful for the opportunity to do so. I am looking forward to working with juries and I look forward to leaving the final decision on matters of guilt or not guilty in serious cases to members of the community who constitute the jury from time to time.

I take this opportunity to thank all of the legal practitioners from all of the diverse parts of the profession, both the private barristers and solicitors and those in the public and community sectors. As a Magistrate, and previously as a practitioner, I have had a great deal to do with the Aboriginal legal services in the Northern Territory, the Legal Aid Commission and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, both the Crown side and also the summary prosecution side. I thank all of the lawyers from those services, acknowledging that a number are posted in remote or regional parts of the Territory where the need is very great. I also acknowledge the contribution of police prosecutors in both the main centres and also remote areas where the work of the summary court that I have now left could barely be done without them.

I thank both the Director of the Legal Aid Commission, Ms Cox QC, and the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Coates, for many years of professional engagement, friendship and support, maintained through a respect for each other's independence, although the "cocky Blokie" send-up skits are going to need some serious revamping now.

I thank Mr McDonald QC for returning from Indonesia, as I understand it, for today; and I especially acknowledge how generous he was with his knowledge and care when we were first at NAALAS all those years ago. He did like to fire me up by saying before Court not to worry about the opponent, it is the Magistrate or Judge

you have got to watch out for. So how true. It was never a dull day working with Mr McDonald.

I would also like to thank the former DPP, Mr Wild QC, who I know is not able to attend today, but gave me an opportunity to re-enter full-time practice as his general counsel a number of years ago.

I sincerely appreciate the work of the members of the Bar, and thank you again, Madam President, and the private practitioners and advocates. Often in specialist areas of the law - areas that I have not been so familiar with and I have been the beneficiary of your very high-quality work - and I trust I will have that assistance in the future.

I am grateful for my time, albeit it short, at James Muirhead Chambers, especially working with the then Messrs Southwood, Waters and Tippet QC's and, for a time, Mr Lawrence. And I do remember that Merran Short remarked at his Honour Southwood J's welcome: how much he freely gave off his knowledge to all practitioners at that time at the Bar, and I was very much a beneficiary of that, both from his Honour and the other barristers at that time. I really hope the profession never loses that ethic of assisting each other, never allows that to be diminished.

I would like to thank Barbara Bradshaw the CE of the Law Society for numerous consultations over the years when I have not been as close to the profession, for obvious reasons, being Magistrate and Chief Magistrate. I am also grateful for being involved over the years and being kept in the loop by the Women Lawyers Association and the Criminal Lawyers Association and acknowledging the roles there, particularly former Thomas J, Ms Gearin, Ms McNamara and Ms Morgan and the criminal lawyers acknowledging the previous presidents and their various committees, Mr McDonald, Ms Cox, Mr Tippet QC, Mr Johnson and Mr Lawrence.

I also like to acknowledge those lawyers that were in family law, child protection, domestic violence and community legal services who take on so much of the difficult and necessary work that was often unacknowledged, I regret to say, around the court that I have just left. I did not really have the opportunity to acknowledge that.

At the Australian Legal Aid Office and Ms Terrill was one of the directors I worked for there. I was very grateful for her to give us a grounding in family law. We all had to do some and I think it stood us in good stead. For all those other areas, I think, even Mr Tony Young, now of counsel, who I worked with then, we all had to do some of that work.

Having been admitted to practice in the court led by former Chief Justice Forster, I do feel very happy that two members from that court, former Justice Gallop and former Justice Nader, have travelled to Darwin to see me take the hot-coals test today and I really do thank them for that.

I would just like to say a few things about that court and previous courts, not to privilege that court necessarily, but I think there is no doubt that the court you are admitted to somehow does influence you during your life as a legal practitioner.

Apart from anything else, Chief Justice Forster gave us, Mr Richard Wallace, who was an associate when I was doing my articles here and then a colleague at the Magistrates Court - I know he is away at the moment - and also gave us Mr Spazzapan, who was an associate in the year after, and thank you for the card about a chick crossing the road - I think I get that Mr Spazzapan. I note that "Justice for all" was the message.

I do thank former Chief Justice Asche for his attendance today. I have been privileged to be able to keep up with his Honour, although that is quite difficult to do, as you would know, in his post-judicial life through the university, the Criminal Lawyers Association, and, recently, through the Law Reform Committee.

I appreciate also the kindness and good wishes sent to me by a former chief justice who identified himself only as before.

Justice Gallop was sitting in the court when Peer Schroeter and I were admitted, and you may know Mr Schroeter from Alice Springs. I was fortunate, although occasionally terrified, to appear before his Honour as a young practitioner when I was prosecuting, actually, for the Department of Law in Alice Springs. His Honour also gave us John Stirk, who was his associate that same year. But I do thank his Honour for his patience and encouragement towards me and I do not think one forgets that when you are a young practitioner.

Former Justice Nader's contribution to the jurisprudence of the court, particularly under the then new Criminal Code, is well-known and I am grateful to have still been able to keep in touch with his Honour and Ms Sandy Nader every so often. I understand his Honour now spends some of his time winding up judges in the New South Wales courts the way we used to think we wound him up in the Northern Territory.

Law is a lifetime of learning, indeed. The work of the late Justice Muirhead was also influential on, if I can, my generation, a number of generations of lawyers. His Honour's commitment to improving the position of Aboriginal people in the legal system inspired many of us. I am also appreciative of the help given to me by Mrs Margaret Muirhead and Janet Muirhead when I was a young 20/21-year-old first in Darwin and I think Bill Muirhead, who, I understand, is in attendance today. Justice Muirhead, after all, gave us Ms Rischbieth, who was his associate in those early days.

Justice Toohey was also a most patient Judge with us young practitioners, as we were then. His Honour was, primarily, the Aboriginal Land Commissioner in exciting times in the Northern Territory's legal development. He was once described as 'the one who got away' given his subsequent High Court appointment. I am grateful for the good wishes he sent me for today as well.

Recently retired Judge, the Honourable David Angel QC, has left us, not only a huge body of legal work in the record of the court, but an artistic legacy much admired, and I really do like seeing those portraits of former chief justices. It is tough to be referred to from time to time as his replacement. We all know his Honour is

irreplaceable, but he leaves a judicial legacy and I thank him for his attendance today and I do wish him the best for the future.

I am grateful also to have had warm professional associations, in one way or another, with all members of the current Bench of the court. I do thank our Chief Justice for all the valuable discussions and advice we have had about courts and the administration of justice as relevant to my previous role. His Honour Mildren J also, in a former life, was one of the first barristers I had the pleasure of briefing. His Honour has influenced me considerably in my approach to the law ever since and he seems to be around on these occasions that are special to me and I thank him for that.

Like many of you, I am sure, have benefitted from the knowledge and skill of the current members of this honourable court, not only as its Judges but, of course, as Magistrates, we were always very mindful, *stare decisis* (precedent), the little appeal angel on your shoulder, but also in their previous lives, admired as advocates and, in some instances, teachers as well.

I do thank all the current Magistrates and Judicial Registrars from whom I learned so much. I thank them for their cooperation over the many matters that need to be considered to ensure the smooth administration of justice in the court that I have just left. Sorry to all the Magistrates that I left in the week that I said no one else could take leave. There have been a few difficulties, I know, with covering all bases in Darwin, given leave and circuits this week, and I do thank those who, I understand, have been able to make it today.

I do thank Ms Sue Oliver SM for her friendship and collegiality over many years. As you may know, we have tended to tag-team our way through our professional lives. Coroner, Mr Cavanagh, especially this week, for taking on, at very short notice, the Gapuwiyak circuit. Mr Neill and Ms McNamara, who have been up from Alice Springs helping out. I believe Mr Greg Smith was going to try to make it from Katherine. I am not sure if that worked out. I am told it did and there is Ms McMaster with some shameless, obvious manipulation of the Katherine lists that enabled them to be here today.

Special thanks also to the Magistrates of Alice Springs, generally, and to Mr Birch, the managing Magistrate, even though he does now refer to me as the traitor. I do thank all the previous Magistrates - I am not sure if Mr McGregor was able to be here, but there are many that I have appeared before in years gone by or worked with. Master Luppino is here today. Also, of course, Justice Thomas, now many lives ago, Magistrate and Chief Magistrate, and I do not need to tell you that we all see her as such a trailblazer for many of us women lawyers in the Northern Territory.

Your Honour, the Administrator, was a Magistrate when I first knew you and, since then, you, too, in different ways, have been the one to get away, but I have been grateful for your encouragement, your Honour, and your friendship in many different settings over the years, and that of Mrs Tessa Pauling's as well.

I thank former Chief Magistrates, especially Ian Gray, who is now, of course, in Victoria, and Mr Hugh Bradley who I worked with until very recently - indeed, a couple of days ago - again.

A positive side of working in the courts, whether as a practitioner, a court officer or, in my case, more recently, a judicial officer, is the openness of courts as institutions in Australia. Although, in my former role, I came to understand some friends in the media had issues with access to some of the court materials, I want to make the point, there are few institutions that are open as courts and I do thank the media, in reference to my time as Chief Magistrate, for getting the message of the court out to the community, and that is particularly with sentencing.

I do thank the academics that I worked with at the university. Many have, unfortunately, left the Territory. I am happy once again to be in touch with Ms Brenda Monahan and Ms Sue Phillip, and also, of course, with Ms Oliver. I had the great benefit of teaching, as Mr Storey has mentioned, many of you who are practitioners now. We also had the benefit of Mrs Denise Southwood who kept us organised for many years at the law school. And that has been a unique experience and I thank you all, those of you that I have had some little part in teaching. I used to think 'oh, they made an objection, just like I told them they could', but I have always felt that was really satisfying to see the achievements of previous students and what fine professionals you have become. I can even remember some of the penetrating questions asked, and the likes of Ms Truman, who even used to ask them of lecturers when she was at high school before she even started studying law.

The position of chief magistrate, I will not dwell on it, but because it is a unique position, there are a lot of people I need to thank for allowing the court to operate so well from which I have just left. The position did involve engagement with other branches of government and the community sector to allow the smooth administration of justice in what was a challenging environment and it's a challenging environment.

In that regard, I do thank you, Madam Attorney, and your predecessors in office and your staff with assisting for all of those issues over resources and programs. In a similar way, I do thank the Chief Executive, Mr Greg Shanahan, and the then deputy CEO, Ms Morris, and congratulations there, too. And also the policy lawyers for many discussions and advice on programs and possible improvements.

Speaking of programs; once again, of course, the court was independent, but if we wanted our orders to really be carried out well, it did involve reliance on a lot of other people. I do thank the court clinicians with whom I have worked very closely on the therapeutic programs, for all their hard work during the time that I was a Magistrate and Chief Magistrate. Similarly, many of the community corrections officers, the facilitators of programs - such as the Indigenous Family Violence Program - and all the drug and alcohol rehabilitation people.

Also acknowledging the valuable work of the Witness Assistance Service and also all the staff and the Office of the Court Support Services, for all the support that I had over the last few years, especially Mr Chris Cox, who did promise me that he would bring baby Chanel - I am not sure if he was able to do that - and also the

Deputy Director of Courts, Ms Sue Ahmat, all the registrars and court officers, and all the registries of the Magistrates Court throughout the Territory.

I thank Ms Malika Okeil for her advice in the Community Liaison position. I am grateful also for the support from Ms Evans and other staff of the library. I acknowledge the contribution also of Mr Ray Morrison, the Community Court Coordinator and all of those who support and nourish that program in the Northern Territory.

I am grateful also to the Aboriginal Interpreter Service for their assistance in many cases thus far and, I hope, in the future. Especially dear to me have been the various Yolngu Matha interpreters of Northeast Arnhem Land where I have undertaken much of my circuit work, and am specially grateful to the Yolngu community for all those experiences and friendship; and grateful also to all the indigenous communities where it has been a privilege to sit as a Magistrate and work as a legal practitioner. Part of the walking-over-hot-coals ceremony in the Northern Territory is to explain your connection with the Territory. Most non-indigenous citizens, of course, have another-place story.

Some of you may know my partner and love of my life for over a quarter of a century, Jamie Gallacher. Jamie was born in Alice Springs during a time when his parents were teaching at Areyonga and other parts of Central Australia. He did some of his schooling in Papunya. The early teaching work of Jim and June took them all over the Territory, through much of the Top End as well, and this has brought a lifetime of enduring friendships, shared with our family and with many Aboriginal families also in the Northern Territory.

So that small part, a piece of personal history, has formed a really great backdrop for the story of our lives and those of our children, Anthony and Helena, both born in Darwin, and I thank Jamie for his many years of love and support. I know he has been a good friend to many of you in the legal profession as well. I am very grateful for being in a loving relationship and enjoy a rich family life. I thank Anthony and Helena for their love and making me feel so proud of them. I am, of course, very happy Helena is able to be here today; Anthony is not.

For those of you who are in a relationship with a lawyer or judicial officer, I have found hearing the words 'you're not in court now' to be most effective line of argument. So just use those at your will. Thanks also to my sisters-in-law, Helena and Nicki, for your support today.

The other Territory connection that probably a lot of you do not know is that of my father's, who worked in the Territory in the 50s in mining and stock work after jumping ship in Fremantle - yes, descendent of a boatperson - from the liberty ships that provided work and travel to former Dutch resistance members. His stories of the Northern Territory always inspired and it seemed such a natural thing to do when an opportunity came up to work in the Northern Territory. I am grateful my mother, Joan, has travelled to be present today. She continues to love and inspire and is particularly generous with her encyclopaedic knowledge of literature and music that I am always grateful for. I also acknowledge the support of my brother, Peter, who cannot be here today. Joan was a legal secretary - noting Justice Angel does not

like a personal assistant - she was a legal secretary, actually called herself a stenographer, as it was in those days, and I learnt from a very early age how not to treat staff if you want to get something done and I, in turn, thank my secretary, Ms Sally Glass, for her hard work, professionalism, friendship these last few years and, hopefully, ongoing. I also thank Ms Margaret Babington, secretary to his Honour, the Chief Justice, for organising much of this occasion when she has so much else to do. Also Ms Ros Chenoweth, Marianne, aka Mickie Warren, currently in Court Support Services, for organising, once again, much of what needed to be done today.

Recently, I heard one of the Territory's brightest and best, Dave Farquhar, say that he was proud to have some friends who were not lawyers, and I am with him on that. And I thank those of my friends whose friendships have continued despite this legal life. Thanks for making it clear that you do not always want to talk about law, but you are still willing to put up with it when it seems necessary. Thanks for the music, the meals and the fun.

I am not sure who was able to make it today. Times and RSVP-ing is not the strong point of most of my friends, but if you managed to make it, especially Louise, and thanks for all your songs and music and managing the court choir in the last court; Ursula, Annie, Ros, Chips, Costo, Helen, Murray, Dwynn and especially Cas, who I think has made a flying visit from Melbourne, I really do appreciate it. I hope we have the chance to catch up, but I am listed in a couple of cases this afternoon.

Finally, I would also like to adopt what her Honour, Kelly J, adopted from her Honour, Thomas J, and that is, , 'I hope, most of all, that I will be a wise and good Judge for the community of the Northern Territory.' And that is my goal.

Thank you, Chief Justice.

MARTIN CJ: Thank you, Justice Blokland.

Ladies and gentlemen, at the conclusion of the ceremony, the Judges would be delighted if you would join us for refreshments in the foyer, and Justice Blokland requests that the Magistrates and the legal practitioners, please join her at the front of the building, I think there might be some cameras in action.

Are there any motions from the Bar?

Thank you. Would you please adjourn the Court.

SHERIFF'S OFFICER: Silence. All stand.

This honourable Court stands adjourned.

God save the Queen.

ADJOURNED 10.22 AM INDEFINITELY