

5

10

15

20

MR T.P. SULLIVAN QC: May it please the Court. It is a privilege and a pleasure  
25 to speak today on behalf of the Bar Association of Queensland on the occasion of  
your Honour's valedictory ceremony. It is an occasion to say an official and very  
public farewell and pay tribute to your Honour's decades of service. Both as a  
Barrister and as a Judge of this Court, you have been the model of industry, intellect  
and respectful good humour. Chief Justice Holmes, I extend particular welcome to  
30 your husband, Arthur, and to your children, Rosemary, Martin and Ellen, and other  
members of your family who join us here today. Arthur has shown remarkable  
equanimity to seem to enjoy so many of these occasions. We hope that he enjoys  
basking in a little of your reflected glory this morning.

35 Today we celebrate a remarkable judicial career spanning 22 years in the Supreme  
Court, the Court of Appeal and as Chief Justice, with the anniversary of your  
Honour's appointment falling this Wednesday. The precursor to your Honour's time  
at the Bench was 16 years as a member of the Queensland Bar. At the Bar, your  
Honour had a broad and successful practice in criminal law, personal injuries,  
40 commercial and administrative law, the latter of which you undertook a lot of the  
work as pro bono work. In your administrative law practice, you carried out many  
matters before the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal, which you then joined as a part-  
time member in 1994, a role which you continued until your appointment as Deputy  
President of the Queensland Community Corrections Board in 1997.

45

In 1998 you took a role as Counsel Assisting the Forde Commission of Inquiry into  
Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions. That inquiry required a delicate

balance of maintaining fairness whilst causing no further harm to people who had already been devastated by their dreadful childhood experiences. Your Honour's deep respect for people, coupled with your customary humility and empathy, equipped you well to carry out this difficult task. Following the conclusion of the inquiry, you spent three months as an Acting District Court Judge and, in the same year, took silk.

In 2000, your Honour was appointed the Supreme Court. We hope it is not seen to take anything away from your Honour's fine career at the Bar to make the observation that it was on this Court that your Honour truly flourished. You quickly became known as a Judge possessed with the highest judicial qualities, one it could be relied upon to have read and understood the material, to ask the incisive questions without ever causing embarrassment to the questioned, one who was impartial and balanced, with a true appreciation of the need for the Court to be seen to deliver a fair opportunity for litigants to advance their cases. Your Honour served on this Court until your appointment to the Court of Appeal in 2006 and, ultimately, your appointment as Chief Justice in September of 2015. When your Honour took up the position of Chief Justice in the midst of considerable public attention surrounding the Court, you stated your desire to make the Court itself "entirely unnewsworthy". Throughout your tenure, you have achieved that goal, but in doing so, it has not been unnoteworthy. Your dry wit and the generosity of your spirit have been the hallmarks of your time as Chief Justice.

Your Honour's leadership has always been of a quiet style. On numerous occasions, I have spoken of the outstanding job you have done through the COVID period. I have observed how your Honour brought people together from the various government departments, the State Courts, the Bar Association, the Law Society, the officers of the Department of the Public Prosecutor and the Public Defender, and of Legal Aid. On a weekly basis and, later, on a monthly basis, your Honour sought and achieved broad consensus on difficult issues as they arose. The products of this process will, in many respects, be entirely invisible to the greater community, and yet they have provided invaluable benefits to that very community in terms of ensuring that both the criminal and civil state Courts have been able to continue to deliver throughout the pandemic period prompt, efficient and fair outcomes for litigants.

In touching on this matter, I do not suggest that your leadership during COVID defined your period as Chief Justice; rather, I do so merely to indicate that it illustrates how you have conducted yourself throughout your term: always without any note of the vainglorious. However, as much as the attention may pain your Honour, it is appropriate to note that you have been a beacon for many lawyers in this state. You are this state's first female Chief Justice. Well before that position, you had been a leader in the promotion of women in the profession, including as a founding member of the Women's Legal Service. Perhaps one of the defining features of your Honour's Court is the importance placed on the principle of judicial independence, the safeguard which ensures Judges are impartial and independent in their judgments. The maintenance of the Court's neutrality in the face of external

pressure is worthy of reinforcing so that its Judges may serve fearlessly and deliver fair judgments.

5 Underpinning that focus has been your Honour's desire for fairness, reasonableness and compassion. Whilst you will no longer be a member of this Court, your upholding of these principles will have a lasting benefit. It was those qualities and your eminent service to the judiciary, notably to criminal, administrative and mental health law, and to the community of Queensland, for which you were deservedly recognised as a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2020. So where might one  
10 find your Honour in retirement? Will you be tending your garden with Arthur or emerging from a mount of well-read books? Either way, multiple cups of tea will be close at hand. I am told if those attempts are unsuccessful, one might find you indulging in your eclectic music taste. The edgier, the better. Assuredly, wherever you may be found, you will continue to involve yourself in good causes, causes  
15 which in the future might find themselves assisted by a selfless leader and a fearless advocate. The Bar Association of Queensland and its members thank you sincerely for your immense service to the court and the community. We wish you and your family all the best in the future. May it please the court.

REVISED