



**ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT, MR G A THOMPSON QC,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE VALEDICTORY CEREMONY FOR  
THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE DUNCAN MCMEEKIN  
ON FRIDAY 9 MARCH 2018  
AT THE ROCKHAMPTON SUPREME COURT**

MR THOMPSON: May it please the Court

Your Honour the Chief Justice, Justice McMeekin and your Honour's family, your Honour the President the Court of Appeal, Justices of the Supreme Court, both here and virtual, the Chief Judge of the District Court, Judges of the District Court, Chief Magistrate, retired members of the judiciary, current members of the judiciary, distinguished guests and members of the profession, ladies and gentlemen.

As the Chief Justice has said, we gather to acknowledge the enormous contribution made by Justice McMeekin to the law, the Queensland public and specifically as the 12<sup>th</sup> Central Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland. Your Honour obtained degrees in economics and law with honours in 1977. Before that you were employed by the public curator and with the firm of Elliot Stubbs. I think it was then Elliot Stubbs and Benutto, from recollection, but perhaps - - -

JUSTICE McMEEKIN: Elliot & Co.

MR THOMPSON: Elliot & Co.

JUSTICE McMEEKIN: The names are right.

MR THOMPSON: Your Honour was called to the Bar in 1977 and was appointed Senior Counsel in 1998. I can personally attest that that year was an excellent vintage for Senior Counsel. I believe, from recollection that your Honour gave the Mr Junior speech, which was suggested by some to be controversial, but others were entirely supportive of the comments which your Honour then made.

As a Barrister you had a very busy practice, appearing in a diverse array of cases in this Court and before the Court of Appeal. Your practice in Brisbane for five years leading up to your appointment saw you involved in very high-level commercial and civil litigation.

You made a significant contribution to the Bar Association of Queensland, for which I personally thank you, and you have been involved in contributions here in central Queensland in a number of roles important to the community. I have experienced also your Honour's continuing contribution to the Bar Association and to the education program which the Bar Association seeks to advance in respect of its members in the area of advocacy training

Your Honour was appointed a Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 2007 and shortly after that, as the 12<sup>th</sup> Central Judge of the Court in January 2008. A review of electronic data

services provided by AustLII discloses that your Honour has heard and determined hundreds of trials and significant applications in your period in judicial office. A survey of the Court of Appeal judgments reveals that your Honour was rarely overruled, and further that your Honour very often sat on the Court of Appeal and delivered the leading judgment with other Justices concurring in your Honour's views.

Many of the cases were intellectually and emotionally very challenging and, as Mr Keyes has mentioned, an article this morning in *The Bulletin* recounts a number of those cases, which I will not go into in further detail.

As a Judge, your reputation is one of courtesy, intelligence, intellectual rigour, a boundless capacity for hard work, a sharp wit and a great sense of humour. Your Honour has been exemplary in performing your role as a judicial officer in every respect. Reasons in at least one pivotal case led to an important amendment to Statute Law.

Additionally you have contributed to the development of jurisprudence by numerous extrajudicial writings. Importantly for the Bar, as I have said, you have contributed throughout your judicial career in the teaching of advocacy to junior members of the profession.

As a younger man your Honour enjoyed a substantial reputation as an athlete, by reputation a particularly gifted sprinter, and by reference to Justice Fraser's speech on your Honour's appointment, also a swimmer, although not for Australia, but nationally for PNG. Well, this occasion celebrates the finish of an exceptional marathon undertaken for the people of Queensland and specifically for the people of this region of Queensland.

Your Honour has the respect and admiration of the Barristers of this State. The Bar Association recognises the tremendous personal sacrifice that comes with accepting and undertaking judicial office, which is all the more so in sitting in a region area. Your Honour's unstinting commitment to that task has been an inspiration to those on the Bench no doubt and also to those who will follow.

I am not aware of what your Honour proposes to do in your retirement, but this occasion should not pass without mention of a story acquainted to me by Michael Stewart of Queen's Counsel who wanted to remind your Honour of some pitfalls to be avoided in the selection of tenants if your Honour should become a landlord in retirement. Mr Stewart assured me that your Honour would appreciate that advice.

Samuel Johnson responded to a gentleman's suggestion of retirement by the words, "Never think of that." The proposed retiree responded, "But I should then do no ill." Johnson replied, "Nor no good either, sir."

It is reported that your Honour intends to go hiking. I hope from the Barristers of Queensland's point of view that your Honour will continue after retirement your close association with the Bar Association of Queensland and that we can continue to call on your Honour and your Honour's experience in relation to educational roles for Barristers. The Bar Association and its members extends to your Honour and your Honour's family the very best wishes for the future.

May it please the Court.