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## SPEECH

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**ADDRESS AT THE WELCOME TO  
HIS HONOUR ASSOCIATE JUSTICE JULIAN HETYEY,  
ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF  
THE SUPREME COURT OF VICTORIA  
IN THE BANCO COURT OF THE SUPREME COURT ON  
THURSDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 9:15AM**

**BY WENDY HARRIS QC,  
PRESIDENT OF THE VICTORIAN BAR**

### **Opening, appearance and acknowledgement**

May it please the Court.

I appear on behalf of the Victorian Bar to congratulate your Honour on your appointment to this Court.

I also acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we meet, the Peoples of the Kulin Nation, and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Your Honour's appointment as an Associate Judge of this Court has been greeted with much admiration by your colleagues and friends.

### **Early life and career**

As my colleague, President-Elect Tania Wolff of the Law Institute of Victoria, will outline in greater detail, your Honour is the descendant of Hungarian refugees, whose grandparents fled to Australia after World War II.

Your Honour was born in East Melbourne. After spending your primary school years in Adelaide, your Honour returned with your family to Melbourne, attending secondary school at Loyola College in Watsonia.

Having achieved dux of the school in 1995, your Honour was accepted into the University of Melbourne to undertake a Bachelor of Arts/Law in 1996.

Your Honour was awarded a DOXA Scholarship, which aims to support academically inclined university students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, including by



matching them with sponsor organisations who offer 8 weeks of paid practical work experience per year.

Your Honour was paired with Arnold Bloch Leibler, where you obviously made a good impression as you went on to secure articles, following your graduation from the University of Melbourne, commencing in 2000.

Your Honour was admitted to practise in April 2002, remaining at Arnold Bloch Leibler, as a solicitor in the commercial litigation department until 2005, except for a year as Associate to the Honourable Justice Raymond Finkelstein (as he then was) at the Federal Court of Australia.

In 2005, your Honour took up a position as Legal Advisor to the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet, which turned out to be the start of a permanent move away from private practice.

Following two years at DPC, in 2007 your Honour was appointed as Deputy District Registrar in the Victorian Registry of the Federal Court of Australia. You worked there for the next 7 years, with concurrent appointment as a Deputy Registrar of the Australian Competition Tribunal from November 2011.

In these roles, your Honour honed your courtcraft and mediation skills, and further developed your expert understanding of commercial law.

Your Honour is described as hard working, pragmatic and persistent, particularly in the face of adversity. It was no surprise when you were appointed as a Judicial Registrar of the Supreme Court of Victoria in late 2014.

### **New Commercial Court**

The Commercial Court of this Court commenced on 1 September 2014. This was more than a mere 'rebranding' exercise of the previous Commercial and Equity division. Rather, it changed the way in which the Supreme Court managed commercial matters. The underlying objectives of the new and invigorated Commercial Court were to enhance flexibility in the allocation of judicial resources and to meet the expectation of the legal profession for active case management and fixed trials.

Your Honour, as the first Judicial Registrar appointed in the Commercial Court, was at the heart of this organisational and cultural change.



It was your Honour's role to recruit people and put processes in place to best support the judiciary, the practitioners and the staff.

As the new division grew and matured, your Honour's role expanded with you hearing more complex legal matters and being recognised as a natural leader across the organisation.

Your Honour is praised for your fine judicial temperament and sound decision-making.

Your abilities as a Judicial Registrar – both in and out of court – are widely lauded; your Honour is deft at steering mediations in a fair and equitable manner towards a compromise outcome, and you are kind and caring yet authoritative in the court room.

Your Honour is especially accomplished in interlocutory matters, which are the bread and butter of an Associate Justice's work.

Indeed, your Honour's elevation to an Associate Judge has been described as a natural progression.

You Honour has been a mentor to many, including Associates and staff in your registry team. You are described as very supportive and generous with your time; despite laying waste to many a piece of work with green pen (as red pen is apparently "too aggressive") with trails of hand-written mark-ups creating spider webs across the page. Everyone we spoke to has enthused about how lucky they were to work with your Honour, and many remarked on how your thanks for their assistance as they departed the office on a Friday night, made their week.

Your Honour's friend and colleague of 13 years, former Judicial Registrar of this court, Daniel Caporale, who first worked with you in the Federal Court, took some time out before starting his new role as CEO of the County Court to describe your Honour as 'a wise head on young shoulders', adding (perhaps superfluously) 'and I mean that in a nice way'.

He says that your Honour is wise beyond your years in your understanding of the law and the administration of justice, as well as in the manner in which you deal with people—calm, polite and never flustered—and in the way you think things through, never making a rash decision, but invariably making the correct one.

He went on to offer the highest praise of your Honour — that the decisions you have made throughout your working life together have been those of a man who is devoted to his job, in the sense that your Honour is motivated by wanting the Court to thrive.



That, by all accounts, is your Honour's guiding light. May it always shine brightly.

### **Personal life**

Now, before we become too reverential, it is beholden on me, in a manner traditional in these speeches, to uncover and expose an eccentricity.

To this end, I must report that your Honour is obsessed with a Central Bearded Dragon called "Lulu", and a Knob-tailed Gecko called "Yoshi", and that the daily updates on those cold-blooded creatures are the only thing one of your former colleagues will not miss about working with you!

As peccadillos go, you have chosen well. Kindness to animals, however scaly, is unimpeachable.

Your Honour is, I am happy to tell, no less devoted to your human family. You have been married to Anna for nearly 18 years. Anna is here in Court with your two children, Leilani and Atticus.

Your Honour has a great love of literature, and also a singular persistence with books. You are determined to finish something you've started, even if it is complete rubbish.

Your Honour thrives on going to the gym and hiking in nature; these are the means by which you are energised despite your busy life and demanding job.

And speaking of hiking ... When you got married, it was your Honour's job to organise your honeymoon. Given that Anna had taken on the job of organising the wedding, that seems only fair.

Your Honour settled on a camping/driving trip in remote Tasmania, with the highlight to be staying overnight near the top of Cradle Mountain. Unfortunately, your Honour had brought along a rather ancient map that directed you both up (shall we say) a somewhat unbeaten track. It was a treacherous path, that veered close to the edge of steep declines and was composed almost entirely of tripping hazards. About halfway up Cradle Mountain, Anna decided she had had enough. Standing still amongst that vast landscape of sub-alpine moors, grand dolerite stacks and endless skies, Anna strongly expressed her views about your choice of honeymoon, for a good couple of minutes.



Your Honour listened carefully, and did not interrupt, remaining very calm and quiet. After some time, your Honour's measured response was that tackling this trek was an appropriate metaphor for the ups and downs that marriage would bring, and for the important lessons that would be learned in the process.

It was only later, tucked up in your overnight cabin, that you revealed to your new bride, that during that moment, a Brown Snake had slithered towards the track, over the top of Anna's boots and disappeared back into the bush.

Your ability to think clearly under pressure is something that will no doubt serve you very well in your new role.

On behalf of the Victorian Bar, I wish your Honour a long, rewarding, and distinguished appointment as a Judge of this court.

May it please the Court.