

## **Ceremonial Sitting of the Court of Appeal Speech by Justice**

**Sampath B Abayakoon -23-03-2021**

The President and my brother and sister judges of the Court of Appeal, Judges of the High Court, District Court and the Magistrate Court, Mr. Attorney, President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka, members of the bar, Ladies and Gentleman.

I would like to sincerely thank both of you Mr. Attorney and Mr. President for the kind sentiments expressed today, in ceremonially welcoming me as a Judge of the Court of Appeal of Sri Lanka.

After taking oaths as an Attorney-at-Law in October 1985, I commenced my judicial journey on 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1992, and had the privilege of serving in most parts of the country as a Magistrate, District Judge and as a High Court Judge for over a period of 28 years, before being elevated as a Judge of the Court of Appeal.

During this period, I have always performed my duties to the best of my ability knowing very well the burden and the expectations of society of a judicial officer. I have dispensed justice to all who appeared before me seeking justice, without fear or favor and without ill will towards any.

Firstly as a lawyer and more importantly as a Judge, I realize the value of giving a fair hearing to parties before deciding on a matter, which is of fundamental tenet and of vital importance, and also the necessity of delivering the judgments without undue delay, a practice I have always strived to follow.

At this juncture, I would like to mention with appreciation the cooperation extended to me by the members of the Bar, both official and unofficial, and the dedicated staff of various Courts I served throughout these years when fulfilling my duties, without which, I would not be in a position to look back at my judicial career with satisfaction.

Mr. Attorney, Mr. President,

Let me also make use of this opportunity to thank my parents, my father, Mr. K.B.S.Abayakoon, J.P.U.M., Attorney-at-Law of the Gampola Bar and my mother Mrs. Chandra Uduwerella, both of whom are unable to be present here today due to their age and the current health precautions, for bringing me up and guiding me though life's journey with all the love and affection. And also, to remember

the parents of my wife late Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Paranagama for their kindness, love and affection.

My wife Damayanthi, you always stood by me during my happiness and sorrow. I know the hardships you had to undergo as a wife of a judicial officer and the mother of our children, thank you very much for the loving care.

To my daughters Thilini and Imani, thank you for understanding my consistent absence from home due to work commitments. To my sisters, brother, all the in-laws, and other relatives, thank you very much for the encouragements and the help extended throughout these years.

To my Law College batch mates and all the other friends, who always wished for my success, I sincerely thank you for standing by me and continuing to do so. I would also like to proudly remember my alma mater St. Sylvester's College Kandy for giving me so much in life.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not mention my Senior late Mr. A.H.M.Jameel, J.P.U.M., Attorney-at-Law of the Kandy Bar, who I consider my second father and with whom I had the privilege of learning the crafts of the profession which helped me to be what I am today. Sir, I know for sure that you are looking at me from the heaven above with pride. I will always hold a deep sense of gratitude in my heart for you for extending that gentle hand of guidance during my formative years at the bar.

Mr. Attorney, Mr. President,

Let me conclude with the assurance that I would do my utmost to uphold the dignity and the standards of the high judicial office I hold by dispensing justice fairly equally and expeditiously to all, and to the best of my ability.

Thank you.

