

**ADDRESS BY FRAZER BARTON, PRESIDENT OF NEW ZEALAND LAW SOCIETY TE KĀHUI TURE  
O AOTEAROA AT THE SWEARING IN OF JUSTICE KAREN GRAU  
AS A HIGH COURT JUDGE  
8 February 2024, Manukau District Court**

**E ngā Mana,**

**O te Te Pono,**

**O te Rangimarie.**

**Tēnā koutou katoa.**

**Justice Grau.**

**Kei taku Rangatira.**

**Tēnei te mihi nui**

**ki a koe.**

**Ka huri ki a koutou.**

**Rau rangatira ma,**

**E Ngā Roia,**

**E ngā kaitiaki o ngā ture o Aotearoa**

**Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou,**

**Tēnā Tātou katoa.**

May it please the court.

Your Honour, it is a privilege to address you on this auspicious occasion and to offer my congratulations on behalf of the whole profession on your appointment to the High Court bench.

We have already heard of the breadth of your career and the formidable scale of your many achievements, which inarguably make Your Honour well-qualified for your new role ahead. Today it is my pleasure to speak to some of the characteristics that I am confident will make Your Honour a fine judge of the High Court. Though I cannot hope to cover all your laudable qualities in the time allocated, I shall touch upon those that have been most spoken of by your peers.

Your Honour is well-regarded for your intelligence, skill and competence. A former colleague at Luke Cunningham Clere describes Your Honour as "clever, quick and hard-working" - a sentiment that has been echoed by many an acquaintance within the profession. You are admired for your ability to 'see things as they are' and you use your everyday life experience to bring a measured, well-rounded perspective to any issue you are confronted with.

Your Honour's skill in whittling away extraneous facts to reveal the real issues at the heart of a matter have made you a formidable Crown appeal advocate, and this skillset will undoubtedly be an asset to the High Court bench.

Your Honour does not shy away from a challenge and is able to bring a certain 'grit' to your role when needed. A longtime friend, and courtroom opponent, has described Your Honour as a fierce adversary in court, who could always be counted on to put up a "damn good fight". They acknowledge that your appointment as a Judge of the Manukau District Court was no easy undertaking, recognising this as among the most challenging of courts for a new judge to begin a judicial life.

While Your Honour's competence and intellect is undeniable, it is perhaps your humility and grounded nature that is to be most celebrated. It is said that Your Honour is sharp of mind yet refreshingly human, and it is your empathy and ability to connect with others that will make you an exemplary High Court judge. You are admired by your colleagues for your ability to truly connect with victims, with one such colleague recalling a trial after which the whole whanau involved embraced you upon its conclusion. This empathy and humanity were

also pivotal in your role as Counsel to assist the victims of the terror attacks at the Mosques in Christchurch, where you quickly established a rapport with, and earned the respect of, the dozens of families and victims involved, as well as with counsel on the case and the presiding judge.

These traits of compassion and humility have also been evident in the mentorship you have provided younger members of the profession, which we have already heard has been an important feature of Your Honour's career. You not only acted as a mentor to those younger colleagues you worked with, but also shared your wisdom as a teacher at various advocacy and litigation courses. These included the Law Society Litigation Skills course, the Bar Association Mastering Appellate Advocacy Workshop, and a week-long litigation skills course run by the Pacific Islands Law Officers' Network. Those fortunate enough to benefit from your teaching describe you as always smiling and fun to be around, with it being clear that passing on your wealth of knowledge to upcoming members of the profession is something Your Honour takes great joy and fulfilment in doing.

Finally, you are known for the zest, colour and life you bring to a profession that is often regarded as restrained and austere. Your colleagues speak fondly of your hearty, audible laugh and wicked sense of humour, with one describing you as being “absolutely hilarious”. Your Honour also knows there is more to life than the letter of the law, being a lover of film, literature, food, cooking and wine – a true Renaissance woman some might say!

Your Honour, Justice Grau, on behalf of the legal profession I thank you for your service thus far, and I warmly congratulate you on this prestigious appointment. You have already made an immense contribution to the profession, those within it, and those that engage with it, and we have no doubt that this will continue as you take on this new responsibility. We look forward to following your journey ahead and wish you all the very best.