



**Date: 9 July 2015**

**Contact: E. Patricia Ebanks**

**Tel: (345) 938-2209**

---

## Governor Swears in Two Court of Appeal Judges

Two Court of Appeal judges were sworn in by Acting Governor Franz Manderson on Wednesday (8 July): Justices Sir Richard Field and the Hon. Dennis Morrison. Both new appointees, who began hearing cases this week, are non-resident judges, serving as and when required.

Welcoming the two new judges, Chief Justice Anthony Smellie said: "It is with great pleasure and anticipation for all the experience and learning that they will bring to our Court of Appeal, that I welcome Justices Field and Morrison to the jurisdiction. Given their very varied and diverse experiences in the spheres of academia, practice and judging, we are assured that they will enhance the capacity of the Court of Appeal to deal with the many complex and challenging cases even while it sees to the proper development of the law. I hope that they (and whenever possible their wives and extended families) will enjoy their times spent in Cayman".

HE the Governor Helen Kilpatrick had announced the appointments, made on the recommendation of the Judicial and Legal Services Commission, in January.

Sir Richard brings to his new role nearly 25 years at the Bar in London, 12 years as a High Court Judge in the Queen's Bench Division, and eight years as a law professor. Sharing a similar background, Justice Morrison currently serves and will continue as a Judge of Appeal in the Jamaican Court of Appeal, a position he has held since 2008, while earlier this year retiring from the Belizean Court of Appeal after 11 years' service. He practised at the Bar in Jamaica for more than 25 years, prior to which he taught full-time at the Norman Manley Law School.

For Sir Richard, an academic career spanning nearly a decade as a full-time professor of law at three Commonwealth universities at the very start his legal career, brought its benefits; within ten years of being called to the Bar in 1977 he was appointed Queen's Counsel. Highlights of his career include a high profile case involving the 1985 collapse of International Tin Council, formed by individual nation states, and which raised some important questions of law going all the way to the House of Lords.

Since his appointment in January 2002 to the High Court, he has added to this wealth of experience, trying cases involving serious crime (mostly murders including a number of high profile cases, one involving an infamous murder by a Dutch engineer which attracted teams of media from all over the world) and complex civil matters. He also sat in the Court of Appeal, Criminal Division. When not hearing appeals -- many involving murders -- he served as judge-in-charge of the Commercial Court in London.

That specialist Commercial Court afforded “considerable experience in hearing difficult and complex commercial cases,” Sir Richard said, as he presided over appeals against the decisions of commercial arbitrators and district and county court judges.

This balancing of commercial and criminal work prior to his retirement from the England & Wales Bench last year, he said, has contributed to “quite a good fit” for an appointment to Cayman Islands Court of Appeal. And Sir Richard does bring a bit of familiarity with the local legal nuances, having appeared here a number of occasions when he was QC representing the liquidator of a bank in litigation involving local auditors.

Sir Richard is looking forward to learning in his new environment in Cayman: “No doubt I shall have things to learn, but I am looking forward to doing so” and contributing to the vibrancy of the law. “I have a strong interest in the development of the law,” he said, adding: “I know, too, that Cayman’s status as a major international legal centre gives rise to many interesting and complex commercial disputes.”

Justice Morrison, having taken a similar legal and judicial route to the Bench in Cayman, also brings some special insights. Practising at the busy Dunn Cox Jamaican law firm, many years as head of the Litigation Department, he was responsible for conducting a wide range of litigation, including financial and general practice. His practice also included arbitration matters, including industrial relations, supported by qualification as a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

Those more than 25 advocacy years have enabled him as a judge hearing criminal and civil appeals from Jamaica’s Supreme Court and Resident Magistrates’ Courts, he said, “to take a step back to see both sides,” and to apply the law in the quest for a “just result.” In that pursuit he has always been mindful, he said, of how the law impacts the lives of people who come before him. For example, he said, he is only too aware of how adjournments of trial hearings can add to the distress of those who appear before him.

Equally important, perhaps, is a quality that Justice Morrison brings to the Bench and which is hard to miss when you meet and speak with him – a sense of humility.

“I was brought up in a realistic way, and what I mean by that is that neither of my parents encouraged us to think that we were more important than we were,” he reflected. “You are rated in life by your own efforts, not by status; what is important is what you are able to deliver.”

As a result, he says, he considers that his relationships with his peer judges and with the people who appear before him have equal importance. “I try to relate to everyone the same way, with courtesy and with a willingness to understand their perspectives.”

That emphasis on equality became evident when asked about highlights of cases: “Every case has its own importance,” he said, but added that he particularly valued his more than ten years in the multi-cultural Belizean setting as a British enclave in the middle of Spanish influences. At home in his native Jamaica, the intense legal and judicial environment has sharpened his skills and broadened his perspectives.

Now he is looking forward to sitting in Cayman and a different set of experiences, particularly in light of his strong interest in public and administrative law: “It is good to always be trying to learn and understand people and how their legal systems operate – that tells you much about them.”

Like Sir Richard, Justice Morrison brought to his practice as an advocate and his role as a judge the mediating influence of an academic perspective. He acquired this valuable academic experience as he immersed himself into the role of full-time professor at the Norman Manley Law School, a period in which teaching and research became his main focus.

As a professor at Norman Manley, too, he sought to mentor his students in the same way that he has benefitted from some great influencers. Among those he counts Justice Elliott Mottley, who is presiding over the current session of Cayman’s Court of Appeal.

“We sat together on the Belizean Court of Appeal, and I have a great deal of regard for him, both as a judge and as a person,” Justice Morrison said.

Now he is looking forward to a continuing broadening of his personal and professional development. Like Sir Richard, he is relishing the anticipation of the concentration of financial services matters heard by the Cayman Court of Appeal.

On a more personal note, beyond interests in comparative law, Justice Morrison is keen on learning about cultures, particularly distinctive music and histories. He revealed his own personal multi-cultural background, having a Panamanian father, and said that he looks forward to adding exploration of the continent of China, for example, to his cross-cultural experiences and understandings gained in Latin America and Africa.

Sir Richard is equally ardent about expanding travel and further exploring the richness of multiculturalism. In addition to sitting in Cayman’s Court of Appeal, Sir Richard now serves as Visiting Professor at Hong Kong University. With Hong Kong as his base, recent travel exploits have included visits to China, Sri Lanka, Burma, and Japan, adding to a repertoire that includes Mexico and Jamaica, among the usual other travel regimens.

Personal interests for Sir Richard include cricket, rugby and football, sporting activities in which he was once active. Nowadays, cricket occasionally benefits from his skill as an umpire, but he is mostly a spectator, he says. He is keen on opera, theatre and films.

With such a rich interesting life, who were his greatest influencers? To begin, he was privileged to pupillage in 1977 under Alexander Irvine (now Lord Irvine of Lairg, QC). But, like Justice Morrison, he traces his launch on the path to success to his parents. Perhaps the greatest influence was exerted by his mother, he says: “I had a mother who was determined I should get a good education.”

Sir Richard attended Bristol University and the London School of Economics. Justice Morrison is a graduate of the University of the West Indies, earning qualifications from the Faculty of Arts (Mona), the Faculty of Law (Cave Hill), and the Norman Manley Law School.

For both men, family life remains central. Remarrying after the passing of his first wife, Lynne, in 1997, Sir Richard and his current wife Marion share seven children and five grandchildren. Justice Morrison and his wife Janet have four adult children, one of whom, Simon, was named the 2004 Rhodes Scholar taking him to Oxford University. So far, the couple have two grandchildren.



Acting Governor Franz Manderson, third left, administered the oaths of office formally appointing two new judges to the Cayman Islands Court of Appeal, Justices Sir Richard Field and Dennis Morrison (centre). Attending the ceremony, from left, were Justice Elliott Mottley and Lady Marion Field. To the far right are Court of Appeal Registrar Audrey Bodden and Chief Justice Anthony Smellie.



Sir Richard Field, newly appointed Cayman Islands Court of Appeal judge, takes the oath of office.





Justice of Appeal Dennis Morrison

Ends

