

A TRIBUTE AND THANKSGIVING FOR THE LIFE OF LEE ACRES FREEMAN.

GOOD AFTERNOON EVERYONE.

I THANK JUSTICE QUIN FOR BRINGING THESE WORDS ON MY BEHALF AND ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE JUDICIARY OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS, AS OUR MODEST EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION FOR THE LIFE OF LEE ACRES FREEMAN.

I EXTEND TO LEE'S FAMILY IN PARTICULAR MY WARMEST CONDOLENCES AND THE REGRET OF BOTH JACKIE AND I, AT NOT BEING ABLE TO ATTEND IN PERSON THIS AFTERNOON BECAUSE OF AN UNAVOIDABLE PRIOR COMMITMENT.

IT IS SAID THAT THE TRUE MEASURE OF A MAN IS THE WAY HE DEALS WITH ADVERSITY.

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER LEE FOR THE UNFAILING COURAGE, GRACE AND OPTIMISM WITH WHICH HE CONFRONTED HIS ILLNESS.

I FIRST LEARNT OF HIS ILLNESS WHEN HE CAME TO TELL ME IN CHAMBERS THAT HE HAD TO GO OVERSEAS FOR TREATMENT .BUT THAT VISIT WAS NOT MEANT IN ANYWAY SIMPLY TO INVOKE SYMPATHY OR CONCERN; IT WAS FAR MORE POIGNANT AND MEANINGFUL THAN THAT.

IT WAS THE KIND OF VISIT THAT AS A JUDGE ONE DREDS AND CHERISHES ALL AT ONCE: A DEAR,BRIGHT,YOUNG AND ASPIRING COLLEAGUE AT THE BAR, BRINGING THE MOST DEVASTATINGLY BAD PERSONAL NEWS BUT WITH ONLY A DEEP SENSE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPECT FOR THE COURT AND

CONCERN FOR THE INCONVENIENCE THAT HIS ABSENCE WILL CAUSE BOTH TO THE COURT AND TO HIS CLIENTS .

WHILE HE WAS AWAY, WE WERE KEPT INFORMED ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF HIS TREATMENT AND IT WAS A CAUSE FOR QUIET CELEBRATION AND THANKSGIVING WHEN LEE WAS ABLE TO RETURN TO PRACTICE BEFORE THE COURTS.

DESPITE THE DAUNTING AND EVER PRESENT THREAT OF HIS ILLNESS , LEE CONTINUED TO BE ALWAYS WELL PREPARED FOR HIS CASES. HE REMAINED ALWAYS COURTEOUS TO THE COURT AND RESPECTFUL OF HIS COLLEAGUES, AND CONTINUED THROUGHOUT TO PRESENT HIS CASES WITH THE SAME KIND OF OPTIMISM AND PERSUASIVENESS THAT HE ALWAYS DID.

LEE WAS A COMPELLING ADVOCATE WHO HAD A REMARKABLE ABILITY TO INSPIRE THE TRUST OF THE JUDGES BEFORE WHOM HE APPEARED. WIN OR LOSE, AND WHATEVER THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CASE, THE JUDGES KNEW THAT WE COULD TAKE LEE FREEMAN AT HIS WORD.

IN HIS DECADE OR MORE AT PRACTICE AT THE CAYMAN BAR, LEE FREEMAN APPEARED IN QUITE A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF CASES AND, BECAUSE OF HIS WELL KNOWN WILLINGNESS TO TAKE ON PRO BONO WORK; HE TOUCHED THE LIVES OF A VERY WIDE CROSS SECTION OF SOCIETY – FROM THE MOTHERS AND CHILDREN WHO NEEDED CARE AND PROTECTION, TO THE MOST SOPHISTICATED PEOPLE OF BANKING AND COMMERCE.

LEE'S NAME APPEARS IN SEVERAL OF THE LEADING JUDGMENTS WHICH ARE REPORTED IN OUR CAYMAN ISLANDS LAW REPORTS. IN THE YEAR 2002 ALONE, A DOZEN SUCH CASES ARE EITHER REPORTED OR NOTED- THE YEAR IN WHICH I HAD THE DIFFICULT TASK OF GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF THE EUROBANK DEBACLE; A TASK WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN QUITE IMPOSSIBLE BUT FOR THE UNRELENTING AND UNCOMPROMISING ENQUIRIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE ABLE DEFENCE TEAM OF WHICH LEE WAS A PART. THE AVOIDANCE OF A TRAGIC MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE IN THAT CASE WAS DUE IN NO SMALL PART TO THEIR SPLENDID WORK.

THESE ARE BUT SOME OF THE MEMORIES WITH WHICH WE ARE BLESSED BECAUSE OF LEE FREEMAN HAVING WALKED AMONG US.

AND THOUGH WE ALL NATURALLY FEEL THAT HE IS GONE FAR TOO SOON, HE WAS CERTAINLY WITH US LONG ENOUGH TO HAVE LEFT A LASTING LEGACY OF RESPECT AND AFFECTION, AND A DEEP SENSE OF GRATITUDE FOR HAVING KNOWN A TRULY FINE HUMAN BEING.

TO MY COLLEAGUES AND I, LEE WAS MORE THAN JUST A GOOD LAWYER. FAR MORE THAN THAT, HE WAS A GOOD AND DECENT MAN.

MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE AND MAY WE ALL WALK THE SAME PATH WITH HIM AGAIN SOME DAY.

CHIEF JUSTICE ANTHONY SMELLIE
THE CAYMAN ISLANDS
4TH SEPTEMBER 2011.