
**ADDRESS OF RICHARD BARTON
PRESIDENT OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS
LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ASSOCIATION
AT THE GRAND COURT OPENING ON
10 JANUARY 2024**

My Lady Chief Justice, Honourable Judges of the Grand Court, Honourable Chief Magistrate, Honourable Magistrates, Honourable Attorney General, Madam Solicitor General, colleagues at the Bar, Special and Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Allow me to open with immense congratulations to our newly appointed Chief Magistrate, Hon. Angelyn Hernandez, as well as Justice Marlene Carter and Justice Jalil Asif KC, on their recent elevation to the Grand Court bench. I also welcome Justice Clare Montgomery KC, and welcome back Justice Sir Anthony Smellie KC, as our newest Court of Appeal judges.

It is with profound gratitude and a deep sense of pride that I humbly accept this invitation from My Lady to offer my support, as President of the Cayman Islands Legal Practitioners Association (“CILPA”), for the motion to open the Grand Court in 2024.

This tradition is used to mark the various achievements by CILPA in the preceding year and to telegraph the way forward as we embark upon new initiatives within the legal fraternity.

As the designated professional supervisory body of firms and sole practitioners, with more than 700 attorneys combined, CILPA continues to play its part in upholding the rule of law and administration of justice in the Cayman Islands.

Now in its sixth year, CILPA has been instrumental in many initiatives that range from the enactment of the Legal Services Act (the “LSA”), the formation of the Cayman Attorneys Regulatory Authority (“CARA”) and the Legal Services Council (“LSC”).

In 2023, the Cayman Islands was removed from Financial Action Task Force's (**FATF**) list of jurisdictions under increased monitoring because of a tremendously collaborative effort between the public and private sector. It is anticipated that the jurisdiction will also be removed from the EU AML list in 2024.

To address certain recommended actions, CILPA ensured that attorneys conducting relevant financial business in the Cayman Islands are supervised for AML purposes by creating CARA as an independent bifurcated arm.

The delisting demonstrates that Cayman Islands successfully addressed all the recommended actions and completed its participation in FATF's 4th-round mutual evaluation process. CILPA is very proud of the role it has played in this process.

As we all know, FATF will commence its 5th round process in 2025, with the evaluation of the jurisdiction expected to begin in 2026. CILPA remains committed to assisting with this process for the benefit of the jurisdiction.

Further to the enactment of the LSA and the formation of the LSC, CILPA continues to support CARA’s efforts to carry out its AML supervisory function. The LSC, chaired by Your Ladyship, is now operational and poised to take on regulation of attorneys practicing Cayman Islands law, both within and outside of this jurisdiction. CILPA is pleased to assist with this transition, as well as the implementation of a formal code of conduct and disciplinary regime for attorneys in the Cayman Islands in 2024.

CILPA’s dedication to the training and development of students and attorneys is well established. We remain fully committed to this process and look forward to improving upon the great work already done. Our partnerships with Truman Bodden Law School and the Legal Advisory Council have helped to navigate global changes, such as the introduction of the Solicitors Qualifying Exam in the United Kingdom, and continue to serve the profession well.

Equally, CILPA's relationship with the Cayman Islands Judicial and Legal Education Institute reflects a shared desire to provide a centralized platform for legal and judicial education in the Cayman Islands. It is our aim to progress this initiative over the next two years where a wide variety of programs can be made available to students, articulated clerks, and attorneys throughout the year. This includes advocacy workshops and the current Judicial Clerkship Programme.

We are also pleased to report the continuation of efforts to create a formal Criminal Defence Bar. Following a meeting with criminal defence practitioners, on 9 November 2023, it was determined that CILPA will negotiate free access to legal research material. CILPA will also assist with more affordable access to professional indemnity insurance.

These initiatives extend beyond the scope of criminal law to include sole practitioners and smaller firms that practice in other areas of dispute resolution such as family law. In this regard, discussions with industry leaders are well underway in the hopes to finalize these arrangements within the first quarter of 2024.

It was also agreed that CILPA will continue to host its very successful lecture series with an emphasis on advocacy training and development. Arrangements are currently in place for CILPA to fund more social and networking initiatives with a desire to host the first "*Bar and Bench*" event to coincide with the next full sitting of the Cayman Islands Court of Appeal.

My Lady, it is always unpleasant to report the loss of our fellow colleagues within the legal fraternity. We acknowledge, with deep regret, the passing of Master Michael Wood KC, Former Acting Judge of the Grand Court and Mr Richard Finlay, former Director of Legal Studies of, then, Cayman Islands Law School and former Managing Partner of Conyers.

We also acknowledge the devastating twin blow, of Mr William Jones, former Partner of Ogier and Ms Liesl Richter, former Partner of Appleby. Mr Jones and Ms Richter were tremendous assets, not only to the legal community but to our Islands overall. Invariably, their joint legacy will continue to inspire us all and generations to follow. We will continue to keep their families in our thoughts and prayers.

Please permit me to thank my current and fellow Council members, Vice President Ms Kendra Foster, Secretary Ms Sophia Scott, Treasurer Mr Justin Hart, Mr Nick Bullmore, and my immediate predecessor and former President Mr Erik Bodden. I am especially grateful to Mr Bodden for his tutelage over the past two years and continued support.

My sincere thanks also to all members of the various subcommittees, including CILPA's CFATF Subcommittee and a special thanks to my former council member Ms Wanda Ebanks, who since the inception of CILPA has dedicated so much over the past six years with unfailing support to CILPA and all its initiatives.

It only remains for me to formally second the Honourable Attorney General's motion to open the Grand Court for the year 2024, and to take this opportunity to wish Your Ladyship, Judges, court staff and fellow members of the legal profession a very happy prosperous New Year.

Richard Barton

President

CILPA