

**THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S REPORT TO THE
OPENING OF THE GRAND COURT,**

11TH JANUARY 2017

The proceedings commenced with Prayers led by Rev. Dr. Derek Davidson of the Elmslie Memorial Church.

Salutations were extended to Her Excellency the Governor, the Hon. Deputy Governor and other Honourable Members of Cabinet; Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly, The Deputy Commissioner of Police and other distinguished guests.

The Chief Justice then invited the Hon. Attorney General, followed by Mr. Alasdair Robertson of the Cayman Islands Law Society, Mr. Abraham Thoppil of the Caymanian Bar Association, and Mr. Colin McKie QC on behalf of the editors of the Cayman Islands Law Reports; to move the motion for the opening of the Court.

The Chief Justice responded in turn to each Mover and then presented the following report:

REPORT

TRANSITIONS

As in previous years, I begin with reflections on the changes or transitions occurring within the Judiciary and staff of the Administration.

THE JUDICIARY

Appointed to succeed Sir John Chadwick whose retirement we marked last year, as Mr. McKie just reminded us, Sir John Goldring presided as president of the Court of Appeal for the first time last year. As Mr. McKie also noted, Sir John Goldring brings with him a wealth of experience as a judge and Justice of Appeal for England and Wales and as appellate judge in the Channel Islands. We were very pleased to welcome the new president to the jurisdiction last year. He joins as their President, a very distinguished panel of Justices and we look forward to lasting and productive relationships.

Justice Nigel Clifford retired as judge of the Financial Services Division at end of last year. While we would have wished to see him continue for at least a few more years, we are grateful for his contributions made as a judge, including some important judgments delivered during his relatively short tenure. We wish for him all the very best for his retirement.

As I announced last year and, indeed, as Mr. Mckie has kindly mentioned, Justice McMillan was appointed as a permanent judge of the court last year in anticipation of Justice Clifford's retirement. We are therefore very pleased to observe that he presides with us at an Opening of the Court for the first time this year.

As Mr. Mckie also mentioned, Justice Andrew Jones has also decided not to seek extension of tenure office on the expiry of his current engagement in March of this year. Justice Jones worked assiduously with me for the establishment of the FSD over the course of some years before it became a reality. He has served as a judge of the FSD since its inception in November 2009. His many erudite judgments delivered especially in the areas of corporate insolvency

and investment funds will serve to guide the conduct of business in those important fields for many years to come. We have agreed, subject to the approval of Her Excellency the Governor, that Justice Jones will continue to handle his current docket of cases, with only a few exceptions, until they are finally concluded. We recognize that this is essential to minimize disruption. Justice Jones regrets not being with us at the Opening this morning due to an ongoing complex trial.

There will no doubt be another occasion to thank him but allow me now to say that we will always be grateful for his service on this Court and wish for him and his wife Felicity, all the very best for the future.

COURT ADMINISTRATOR

As Mr. McKie also observed, we said goodbye to Mr. McCormac last year after four years of exemplary service as Court Administrator.

I am pleased to welcome Mrs. Bothwell to this her first opening of the Court in her role in succession to that post. As a former senior crown

counsel and an attorney of the Grand Court, she would have attended on these occasions in the past but never, I am sure, with the perspectives of the kind gained over the past 9 months as Court Administrator. From all accounts, her earlier experience in and around the courts has served her well in the transition and her prior acquaintances with the judges and staff alike have helped to spark an immediate sense of confidence and trust in her leadership abilities.

Speaking for myself, I am enthused by her keen sense of professionalism and dedication and look forward to working with her on the many initiatives and challenges that lay ahead.

RESIGNATION OF CLERK OF COURT

Regrettably, on the other hand, due to pressing family commitments overseas, Ms. Tabitha Philander, the Clerk of Court has recently given notice of her intention to resign effective next month. We will miss her. She is liked and respected by members of the public, the profession and members of staff alike and has earned for herself a reputation as a knowledgeable Registrar and Clerk of Court. We wish

her all the very best in her future endeavours and there will no doubt be another suitable occasion for the expression of appreciation for her 7 years of service to the Islands.

Until the succession to the post is settled, Mrs. Shiona Allenger will act as Clerk of Court while continuing as registrar of the FSD.

RETIREMENTS

Two officers of the Administration attained their well-earned retirements last year. Mrs. Patsy Bodden after 26 years and Mrs. Jacqueline Scott after 30 years, 16 of which were with the Courts.

Allow me once again to mark these personal milestones and to publicly thank these fine officers for their many years of service.

NEW STAFF

We must also, of course, welcome those eleven (11) new members of staff who joined the Administration in 2016. They are Grand Court Clerks Mr. Charles Clifford Jr., and Ms. Faith Manville; Ms. Prescilian Rivers as acting PA to the Court Administrator and Ms.

Echinique Montoya, a recent university graduate appointed after successful recruitment as Legal Secretary to the Clerk of Court. Ms. Kimberly Dixon joined as an office support assistant and an invaluable member of the legal aid team. Mr. Paul Anglin Jr, after interning with the organization was formally appointed last year as a Court Marshall; Ms. Tanya Meyerhoff as Case Manager, in the Public Law & Family Services Unit and another recent university graduate Ms. Marcia McDermott, has been appointed as an Executive Officer in the Civil Registry and she now joins the Family Services Unit team.

We are also pleased to welcome Ms. Bridget Myers who serves as personal assistant to judges who serve exclusively on the FSD; Ms. Joanne Cox who serves as personal assistant to Justice Mangatal and Mr. Juan Terc, appointed last year as an IT Technician after interning with the IT department for quite some time.

INTERNS

Our internship programme is now well established having employed 53 interns since it started in 2013. Last year alone, the Administration welcomed 13 interns from different backgrounds including the Cayman Islands Further Education Centre, “Passport2Success”, and university students as well as other individuals who simply sought work experience while awaiting other employment opportunities. It is testimony to the success of the programme that some of these individuals were successfully able to gain fulltime employment with the courts.

THE COURT BUILDING

In turning to this perennial subject of concern, it surely can no longer be necessary to explain or justify the need.

The consequences of the lack of court rooms and office space for the Administration of Justice are always apparent and cannot be ignored.

We must do all we possibly can to avoid the situation, so lamentably common-place in less developed countries, where people, all of them

innocent until proven guilty and many of them ultimately acquitted of wrong-doing, languish in prison for unacceptably long periods of time before disposal of their cases. As I will come later to confirm, thanks to the stalwart efforts of all concerned, we are mercifully not yet in that situation. But we will find ourselves there inevitably and not very long from now, unless the new building becomes a reality.

While the need for a new building has long been recognized and accepted by Government, it still is not yet a reality. It would be remiss of me therefore not to mention at least some of the most pressing and current concerns. This year I stress the difficulties being faced by the Summary Courts in particular. These Courts are increasingly hampered by the lack of certainty about available court rooms. All criminal cases first enter the system through the Summary Courts where an average of 10,000 criminal and traffic charges are filed each year. Simply to keep abreast of the case load, several sittings must be scheduled each day. This has become almost logistically impossible because, in deference to cases set before the Grand Court and Court Of Appeal, the Summary Courts are

frequently prevented from using court rooms to which they have become accustomed. As a consequence last year, lists had to be combined at short notice or several magistrates had to share one court room, staggering the times of the sittings. Whenever this occurred, few if any trials could be started and completed and there were many adjournments.

In addition to the threat it poses to the right to a timely trial, needless to say, this is also a disservice to all court users, including the very many members of the public who must attend to these cases.

It is with such concerns always firmly in mind that I now report on developments.

At last year's Opening I reported on the engagement of PWC to develop the business case for the new building. This did happen, with PWC receiving instructions to design and project for the foreseeable future; the starting point being the already apparent need for at least 10 court rooms and ancillary offices and operational spaces.

Three alternative design options were developed by PWC but each of them presented immediate concerns about feasibility and affordability.

As a result, it will be proposed to Cabinet that PWC are instructed to “go back to the drawing board” so to speak, to develop a fourth and possibly a fifth more affordable option.

It would be inappropriate for me to go into any more details about these proposals at this time. Needless to say, I very much hope to have real news of progress at next year’s opening.

LEGAL AID

As Mr. Attorney mentioned, at the end of October 2016 the new Legal Aid Law came into effect. In keeping with section 7 of the Constitution, it effectively widens the categories of cases for which a grant of legal aid can be obtained and makes provision for the appointment of duty counsel to ensure that the entitlement to representation is observed from the outset of criminal proceedings. Section 14 of the Law also requires the presiding magistrate to inform

an accused person of his or her rights to legal advice and representation, in appropriate cases.

These are all positive and far-sighted improvements. Experience before the Courts has shown that the Administration of Justice, in all but the simplest and least consequential of cases, will be both more effective and less costly, when accused persons are represented. As you will hear later in my report on the Summary Courts Criminal Division, a significant cause of delay has been the lack of representation for accused persons. Now that the categories of offences for which legal aid can be obtained have been widened, we expect to see a real improvement here.

On the administrative side, the Court Administrator has been working with the Personnel Department to develop the job description for the Director of Legal Aid and the post will soon be advertised. Along with the statutory responsibilities, the Director will also be required to take forward the longstanding proposal for a Legal Aid Clinic. This will require collaboration with the staff of the Law School and the

profession for the establishment of a clinic at which advice and certain levels of representation can be provided to the public.

CASE DISPOSAL

Criminal Case Load

It is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the judges, magistrates, the lawyers (both Crown and private), the support staff of the Administration and the RCIPS, that despite all the challenges, we have not yet arrived at the kind of “*gridlock*” that a recent newspaper editorial describes. While a more accurate and thoughtful piece might usefully have discussed some of the challenges being faced, it is simply untrue to suggest that there is “*gridlock within our Courts.*”

Notwithstanding the lack of court rooms on which I just reported, and the other practical challenges facing the Summary Courts, last year they managed to dispose, nonetheless than in years before, of 1,639 criminal and some 8,860 traffic cases in Grand Cayman and 277 such cases in Cayman Brac. They also dealt with 144 cases involving

youth offenders and the Coroner, almost exclusively in the person of Magistrate Nervik, disposed of 53 inquests.

Also worthy of note here because of the special challenges such cases present, the informal Mental Health Court, disposed of 47 criminal cases.

The Drug Rehabilitation Court enrolled 44 new applicants and graduated 13 rehabilitated offenders. I will have a bit more to say about these diversionary programs later in this report.

At the same time, more than 500 civil, family and maintenance cases were heard in the Summary Courts.

Last year I reported on the work of the “backlog court”, set up by the chief magistrate and her colleagues to ensure timely trials for unrepresented defendants in particular. The results for 2014 and 2015 were reported as overwhelmingly positive. Last year, however, the overall number of criminal trials and the lack of space of which I have already spoken, made it impossible to list only unrepresented trials in a given court room. Trials involving defence counsel had, as usual, to be given some priority. This is of course, in recognition of

their commitments to their many other cases which require that they themselves must stick to very strict trial schedules before all the Courts, from week to week. But an immediate consequence of this is that the current Summary Court criminal diary has listings ranging up to May 2017 for unrepresented defendants. This is at the outer limits of the recognized international norms for the disposal of Summary Court criminal cases. It is therefore intended that after the first quarter of 2017, the “backlog” court dedicated to the disposal of cases involving unrepresented defendants, will resume its work in earnest.

Grand Court Criminal Case Disposal

Of course, the Grand Court too continues to suffer from lack of court rooms for trial of criminal cases and the result is that we continue to carry over a significant number of indictments at the end of each year. But that too is no manifestation of “gridlock”. In 2016, 121 indictments were filed but 132 were disposed of, a significant increase over the 72 disposed in 2015. At the same time on the criminal side, 76 appeals were heard from the Summary Courts.

Of the 132 indictments resolved, many involved lengthy and complex cases each running over a number of weeks. These included allegations of fraud, murder and robbery. There has also been a marked and troubling increase of very sensitive child sex abuse cases, gun crimes, death by dangerous or careless driving and credit card scams. All in all, as the Attorney also earlier recognized, a relentless workload of cases on a scale no less demanding than those facing the courts in much larger jurisdictions.

But the fact that we continue to cope is no reason for complacency and there is a constant quest for ways in which to improve efficiency and effectiveness. For instance, under Justice Quin's watchful eye, and as the Attorney also mentioned, his personal assistant Ms. Livingston and Mrs. Yasmin Ebanks the Listing Officer, have developed for the Criminal Division, a rolling weekly electronic diary which is sent to all attorneys at the Public and Private Criminal Bars, the Prisons and Probation Departments. This is done on a weekly basis and more frequently if required when updates are made to the diary.

A notable consequence of the “bird’s eye view” provided by the rolling diary, is that the lawyers have been ready and available when trials had to be brought forward at short notice due to others going short, as actually happened on three occasions during 2016.

It must be emphasized that the case management of criminal cases presents its own kind of challenges and the introduction of more regular CMCs and PDHs has saved considerable court time and costs.

At these hearings, the judges get to grips with issues such as disclosure, the early admission of guilty pleas, the giving of “*Goodyear directions*” which could lead to guilty pleas, the need for expert evidence, the determination of whether trials will be by judge alone or by judge and jury, the settling of accurate time estimates for trials, the directions as to whether expert evidence is required, and so on. These regular hearings have proven to be effective and are very favourably regarded by prosecution and defence counsel alike.

It is by initiatives of the kinds I have just described taking place in both the Grand and Summary Courts, that we manage to stay on top of the ever increasing number of cases coming before the courts. And

while I am loathe to be seen as singing our own praises, it is important, when there is errant and careless criticism, that the public understands the true nature of the challenges being faced every day in the quest to administer justice in the timely manner that the Constitution demands and that the public deserves.

Allow me therefore to join the movers of the Motion to say publicly how grateful I am for the very high standard of professionalism that is manifested every day by both the Bench and Bar in this jurisdiction and by all those persons, including the staff of the judicial administration, who provide their indispensable support.

On top of the criminal cases which are nowadays so often the subject of criticism in the media, there is also of course the work of the Grand Court in its other Divisions, all of which continued apace last year.

In the FSD there were 225 new filings, the third largest number since inception in 2009.

In the General Civil Division there were 250 new filings, only slightly less than the average for past years but this was offset by 171 estate filings, up somewhat from the numbers in recent years.

In the Family Division, the number of divorce filings at 245 remained on par with previous years. These cases are notoriously time consuming and demanding of judicial attention, although their resolution is so often within the gift of the parties to attain by agreement. Where young children are involved, the responsibility placed on the judge becomes even more urgent and burdensome. Yet a judicially imposed solution is often resisted because one side or the other is reluctant to accept it and this results in these cases often coming back before the courts over the course of several years, especially while the children are not yet of age.

And so they require constant judicial case management and attention. It is therefore in this division that the need for mediation is most apparent and I reported last year that all the judges and magistrates would become trained and certified to mediate in family and civil cases. This was achieved at a workshop convened last February by the Faculty of the London School of Mediation who came to Cayman to deliver the course.

The result is that the Judiciary will now offer to mediate in cases coming before the courts, especially family cases where that is appropriate, and the parties agree to submit to mediation. Some cases have already been successfully mediated and attendance at Mediation Information and Assessment Meetings (MIAMS) at which the process and benefits are explained, is now mandated by Rules of Court for all matrimonial disputes brought before the courts.

COURT STATISTICS

In addition to the foregoing accounts, anyone wishing to gain a better understanding of the volume of work coming before the courts can refer to the Statistics. The Statistics in general, including on case disposal before the Court of Appeal and the Privy Council (from Cayman) will, as usual, be posted on the web-site later today as an annex to this Report.

JUSTICE REFORMS, JUDICIAL OUTREACH AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Consistent with our mission, we continue to seek ways to improve the practices and procedures, to inform ourselves about best practices in other jurisdictions and to inform the profession and the public about such matters. With these objectives in mind, the work of the various committees continued apace last year.

The Grand Court Rules Committee on which I serve as chair along with the Attorney General, Mr. Colin Mckie QC and Mr. Hector Robinson, passed rules and practice directions last year dealing with matters as diverse as coroners' inquests, the jurisdiction to make interim awards of costs, the limited admission of attorneys from overseas to practice in the Islands, the confidentiality of trust proceedings, mediation rules already mentioned and the extent of publication of pleadings and supporting documents filed before the courts.

The Criminal Justice Reform Committee continued its work to adopt the Sentencing Guidelines of the UK in a form which can be issued

by the Chief Justice for local practice. You may recall that I reported last year on the adoption of guidelines for burglary and robbery offences and those have been well-received by the criminal courts and practitioners. Justice Quin who chairs this committee informs me of their intention to provide the draft guidelines for serious driving offences by mid-2017 and later this year, those dealing with offences of dishonesty involving breaches of trust, an area of perennial concern for the financial services industry and the jurisdiction as a whole.

The Insolvency Rules Committee met last year under the chairmanship of Justice Jones. They reviewed for the purposes of consolidation and update, the Companies Winding up Rules and the Insolvency Practitioners' Regulations. A review was also undertaken of the Foreign Bankruptcy (International Co-Operation) Rules 2008.

I announced at last year's Opening the formation of the Judicial Education Committee (the "JEC") to be chaired by Justice Mangatal. Its primary purpose is to formalize the framework for the ongoing training and education of the judges and magistrates. With a view to

getting the work of this committee started, Justice Mangatal attended a very useful workshop in March entitled “The International Business of Judging”. This was presented by the Judicial College, the body responsible for the continuing training and education of the judiciary for England and Wales.

The JEC has also assumed primary responsibility for two other areas of activity. These are the annual Grand Court Distinguished Guest Lecture Series and the organization of a judicial clerkship programme of training for articulated clerks.

In relation to the guest lecture series now in its 7th year, the JEC organized last year’s lecture which was delivered by Justice Richard Snowden of the Chancery Division of the English High Court. This was on the interesting and highly relevant topic of Cross-Border Insolvencies. As in the past years, the lecture is available on the Judicial web-site.

The JEC is in the process of organizing the 2017 Guest Lecture and we are pleased to announce that this lecture will be given by no less an eminent jurist than the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales.

Lord Thomas and his wife arrive in Cayman on 28th February and his public lecture will be delivered here in Grand Court One on the 2nd March at 4pm. I urge as many of you as possible to attend. If needs be, additional seating will be available in Court 2 where the Lecture will be streamed by video-link. I take this opportunity to thank the profession for its promised support for the events to mark this important and historic visit.

In relation to the Judicial Clerkship Programme, a sub-committee of the JEC has met with the Caymanian Bar Association with whom the details of the programme are to be jointly developed for approval by the Legal Advisory Council – the body having the remit under the Law for the regulation of legal education for the Islands.

Justice Mangatal also reports that the JEC is actively exploring and examining opportunities for the further professional development of the judges and magistrates both here and abroad.

THE FAMILY DIVISION

Allow me also to share some observations from Justice Williams as the judge responsible for case management on the Family Division of the Grand Court.

As I mentioned earlier, this is a very demanding area of work for both the Grand Court as well as the Summary Courts. Remarkably for a population of our size, we see an average of some 250 divorce petitions each year in the Grand Court and some 200 family related applications in the Summary Courts. A significant number of these cases involve parents and children from overseas and when one party or the other leaves the jurisdiction, the difficult question – who should have the primary custody and care of the child? – will arise. Sometimes this question arises after the child has been whisked away from the jurisdiction by one parent against the wishes of the other and sometimes this happens even in contravention of an order of the court. In such cases, the parties are seldom amenable to the “*Solomonic intervention*” of biblical account. In such cases, the

judges must have resort to the modern day Hague Convention against child abduction, to which the U.K. subscribes on behalf of Cayman. It is good then that there is a network of Hague Convention judges who are willing to work with each other for the resolution of these troubling cases. I was succeeded to membership of the Convention Network by Justice Williams in June 2013 and it is encouraging to note that we have been receiving favourable responses from fellow judges in the USA and Mexico who have been willing to make orders for return of children on the basis of our Judgments or Orders. The first such example of co-operation came from the UK Judiciary some years ago, for the enforcement of an order for access to a father after mother and son had resettled in the UK from Cayman. Ongoing judicial contact among the judges of the Hague Network is therefore obviously important and Justice Williams, who recently addressed a regional conference on the subject in Guyana, will continue to ensure that we remain in active engagement with the judges of this important body.

As one will readily gather, the case management of family cases presents their own kinds of challenges. It is therefore worth reporting that the target for getting these cases before a judge for first appointment within 6 weeks from date of filing is generally being met. More regular compliance with the practice directions for consent orders has also enabled a number of uncontested divorce proceedings to be concluded within one month of the petition being issued.

As I mentioned earlier, the introduction of the Mediation Rules has already resulted in some successful mediations and this form of dispute resolution will continue to be encouraged for all the lasting benefits it is proven to bring.

Finally in this area, I am pleased to report that due especially to the efforts of family practitioners Sheridan Brooks and David McGrath, the Family Bar Association was established in 2016 and it is understood that most of the family practitioners are now members. This body will be recognized by the extension of an invitation to membership on a Family Law Court Committee to be chaired by Justice Williams and whose mission will be to advise on the

development of rules for the ongoing improvement of the practice in the Family Division.

International Co-Operation

Finally under this heading, you may recall my mentioning last year the invitations to the Grand Court received separately from the Chief Justice of Singapore and from the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, to participate in associations of the world's leading financial and commercial courts. You will wish to know that those initiatives are underway and Justice Nicholas Segal attended as our representative at meetings in Singapore and London.

THE DIVERSIONARY COURTS

These important initiatives within the Summary Courts are always worthy of mention on this occasion. As you heard from the Attorney, there is soon to be a working group established by the Ministry to advise on the legislation that would give the Mental Health Court its formal existence.

We encourage the Minister to move forward with this important initiative. As I mentioned earlier, last year alone we had 47 cases coming before the court involving defendants with mental health issues. The Summary Court currently deals with defendants who have mental health disorders through an informal program that seeks to provide an alternative to “standard” case resolution, taking into account their special needs. Individualized support and treatment plans for each defendant are created and implemented (patterned on the DRC model) with the invaluable assistance of mental health professionals and probation officers, utilizing bail conditions to ensure compliance and to ensure that public safety is not compromised.

Despite the lack of resources and treatment options available in the Islands, there have been successes. At the most recent session of the Mental Health Court, one of the participants with a lengthy criminal history, celebrated 25 months of sobriety and crime-free behavior, achieved with strict bail conditions and the support of the mental health team.

As we report from year to year, an indispensable aspect of the solution will be the provision of a facility at which these persons, and many others not involved with the law, can receive treatment. It is indeed hoped that the national mental health policy recently announced by Government will make provision for this initiative.

THE DRUG REHABILITATION COURT (DRC)

Although it is accepted that the DRC programme is an established success, all participating agencies have agreed that it is necessary to have an evaluation of its effectiveness. And so last year, the courts reached out to the National Drug Council for assistance in this area and Mrs. Dacres, the director of the Council and Dr. K.G. Douglas who has experience in this area, I am told, have agreed to assist. The objective is to equip the Judicial Administration with the tools to develop and provide the information necessary for ongoing evaluations.

The Chief Magistrate has also been in discussions with the partner agencies about widening the DRC programme to include youth

offenders for establishing a Juvenile Drugs Court. The mandate of the DRC under the Law does not allow for the intake of youth offenders and so legislative change will be needed.

NON-VIOLENCE REVIEW COURT

Further, on the diversionary programmes, I make mention of the Non-Violence Review Courts aimed at preventing domestic violence.

The cases for these courts are considered on the second Wednesday morning of each month. The participants, male and female, derive mainly from one of two groups of cases. They have either pled guilty and await sentencing; or they denied the charges but, at the prosecution's urging, indicated a willingness to attend a diversionary program. Successful compliance with the program usually results in no conviction being recorded against those from the first group or the charge being left on file or no evidence being offered against those from the second group, so that the issue of a guilty plea is avoided.

All participants attend the Men's Non-Violence Programme, the Anger Management Programme or one of the programmes dedicated

to strengthening domestic partnerships. These Programs are all run by the Department of Community Rehabilitation and the officers provide monthly reports to the Summary Courts on the status and compliance of each individual.

The indications are that these courts continue to work well, due largely to the input of the Department Of Community Rehabilitation. Legislation will nonetheless be required, as in the case of the Mental Health Court, to place these courts on the same formal footing as the Drug Rehabilitation Court.

DRIVING WHILST INTOXICATED (DWI) COURTS

Finally, on the diversionary programs, we note the continued absence of a DWI court. But this initiative is not forgotten and there continues to be a regime whereby persons convicted of DWI are referred to a drunk driving programme run by the Counseling Center.

Research on the subject shows that these courts exist and deliver successful programs in other jurisdictions, under-pinned by

Government funding and formal legislation. The same will be required for the initiative to be taken forward here.

That concludes the report on the diversionary programs. For a further report on the work of the Summary Courts, the public will have access to that prepared by the Chief Magistrate which, as usual, will be published along with my Report on the Judicial website.

APPOINTMENT OF QUEEN'S COUNSEL

On a different theme, I am pleased to announce that Her Excellency the Governor has agreed, after consultation with the Secretary of State, to the appointment of six members of the profession as Queen's Counsel. The details will soon be announced but it is appropriate for me now to indicate that the appointees come from both the public and private bars.

CLOSING REMARKS

In concluding my remarks for this year, we join with Mr Attorney in welcoming Mr. Byrne to his demanding and important office of Commissioner of the RCIPS. Through the Deputy Commissioner Mr.

Ennis who represents the Commissioner, we also send our appreciation to the men and women of the force for their vitally important work of law enforcement, with a special word of thanks to those who turned out so resplendently on parade this morning. The importance of this customary and symbolic expression of support for the Administration of Justice may not be allowed to pass unnoticed.

We join with the movers in marking the passing of Ian Lambert and Bruce Putterill, two very distinguished members of the Cayman Bar.

Our condolences go out to their families and friends.

On behalf of the judges, magistrates and staff of the Judicial Administration, all the kind words of encouragement expressed are truly appreciated; as are the words of welcome extended to those acting judges and magistrates without whose support we simply would not be able to administer justice in anything like the timely manner we now manage. In this regard, allow me especially to note with appreciation, the arrival of Justice Linda Dobbs, who although appointed for some time, served her first stint on the Grand Court in November-December of last year.

On behalf of all of us here at the Courts we wish for you and your families all the best for the New Year.

I thank the movers once more for all their insightful and informative comments. I am pleased to accede to their motion for the opening of the business of the Courts for the year 2017 and extend our customary invitation to all to join us in the foyer for refreshments before returning to your busy schedules.

Hon. Anthony Smellie
Chief Justice