

IN THE COUNTY COURT AT CENTRAL LONDON

Sitting in the Lady Chief Justice's Court (Court 4)

Royal Courts of Justice
Strand
London
WC2A 2LL

Thursday, 21st March 2024

Before

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS
(Sir Geoffrey Vos)

THE CIVIL PRESIDERS FOR LONDON
(Mr Justice Bennathan)

THE DESIGNATED CIVIL JUDGE FOR THE
COUNTY COURT AT CENTRAL LONDON
(HHJ Dight CBE)

On the occasion of the

VALEDICTORY

for

HIS HONOUR JUDGE JAN LUBA KC

Representing the Bar

MS LIZ DAVIS KC (Housing Law Practitioners Association)
MR NICHOLAS GRUNDY KC (Social Housing Law Association)

Representing the Law Society

MR GILES PEAKER

VALEDICTORY

1
2
3 SIR GEOFFREY VOS: It is wonderful to see such a large gathering to celebrate His Honour
4 Judge Jan Luba KC's retirement from the bench.

5 I am always doubtful about whether one should really say you are "celebrating"
6 someone's retirement – sounds as if we are pleased to see him go! I am sure though
7 that Jan will not take the use of that word in the wrong way.

8 It is a delight to see his wife Adriana and his daughters, Alicia and Isabella, in court
9 today alongside Adriana's sister Mirella and other family members. You are all
10 welcome to the Royal Courts of Justice.

11 With me here on the Bench we have the Presiding Judge on the South Eastern Circuit,
12 Mr Justice Joel Bennathan, and the Designated Civil Judge at the Central London
13 County Court, Judge Marc Dight CBE, and of course the retiring judge himself.

14 Jan has been a judge since April 2000 when he became a Recorder, and in 2002, he
15 became a Deputy Judge of the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT). Up to 2015, he
16 sat as a Recorder in the EAT, something that is not commonplace. In December
17 2015, he became a Circuit Judge before being made Acting Designated Civil Judge
18 for Outer London in 2018, and a Senior Circuit Judge and full DCJ (Designated Civil
19 Judge), in August 2019. With that, of course, he became a Section 9(1) Deputy High
20 Court Judge as well.

21 But Jan being Jan, he never actually used his authorisation to come and sit in these
22 grand surroundings, thinking that it was more important to deliver timely justice to
23 those that needed his extraordinary expertise in the County Courts.

24 Well, that is the career path. Now let me come briefly to the man.

25 Jan is, and always has been a meticulous lawyer and a dedicated man. After he was
26 called to the Bar by Middle Temple in July 1980, he worked at a law centre in
27 Stockwell and Clapham and then with the London Citizens Advice Bureau as a
28 specialist welfare rights advisor. Then he worked as legal officer at the Child Poverty
29 Action Group. He co-founded the National Housing Law Service which later became
30 the legal department of Shelter.

31 Jan served on the Lord Chancellor's Legal Aid Advisory Committee and on the
32 Housing Cases Panel in Lord Woolf's *Access to Justice* Inquiry. He served as a
33 trainer at the Judicial Studies Board, as we then called it, contributing sessions on
34 *Poverty and the Law* to the induction courses for new civil judges. He also chaired
35 the Free Representation Unit (FRU) and later, the Legal Action Group.

1 It was not until 1992 that he returned to private practice, joining Garden Court
2 Chambers and specialising in housing and homelessness, taking Silk only eight years
3 later in 2000.

4 Jan has been a prolific writer, publishing with his co-authors the first edition of
5 *Defending Possession Proceedings* in 1987. That work is now in its ninth edition. I
6 was amused when it came out because I had come to the Bar a bit before Jan, I will
7 not tell you how big a bit, and had been doing numerous possession actions - but
8 mostly for landlords - in the late seventies and early eighties, and at that time I had
9 considered writing a book called *Gaining Possession*. I had actually sent a synopsis
10 to Sweet and Maxwell before deciding I did not have time to write it. Two sides of
11 the same coin. His Honour Judge Neil Butter, then the Senior Judge at Central
12 London County Court, told all newly-minted Recorders and Assistant Recorders,
13 ‘*Before you start County Court sitting there is one book you must buy and have with*
14 *you at all times*’, Jan’s book on defending possession proceedings, and that is true by
15 the way.

16 Lord Neuberger tells me that as an advocate, Jan Luba’s submissions in housing
17 appeals managed to be persuasive and authoritative in content as well as elegant and
18 seamless in delivery. He seemed surprised! Indeed, he was so seamless that he never
19 appeared to need to draw breath, I think, which made it very difficult for
20 Lord Neuberger to question him, even though Lord Neuberger’s reputation as an
21 inveterate judicial interrogator is certainly legendary.

22 Jan lectured regularly at Housing Law conferences and again, according to
23 Lord Neuberger, despite the dry content of his subject matter he managed to make
24 his lectures amusing and engaging, of course all the while being impressive in their
25 legal analysis.

26 I knew Jan at the Bar, and when I was Chair of the Bar Council, and he was Chair of
27 the Bar Council Civil Legal Aid Committee. Our paths have crossed more recently
28 when he was instrumental in managing possession cases during Covid.

29 As the DCJ for Outer London, Jan has been the best of DCJs. He supports his district
30 and deputy district judges in his 13 County Court centres through thick and thin, and
31 his leadership skills have been hugely impressive. We are incredibly grateful to him.

32
33 None of us has any idea what Jan is going to do in retirement, so we look forward to
34 hearing what he has to say in a few minutes, later this afternoon. All I can say is that
35 I want to wish him and Adriana a fantastic and fulfilling retirement. I want to thank

1 him for the work he has done for the judiciary, and say that his huge housing expertise
2 will be missed by the judiciary at all levels. His contribution to housing law has been
3 immense.

4
5 MR JUSTICE BENNATHAN: Ms Davies, it was only really in January last year - when I
6 became Presiding Judge on the South Eastern Circuit, responsible for the London
7 Civil Courts - that I got to know Jan who has performed an astonishing role as the
8 Designated Civil Judge for the 13 London County Courts for which he and I are
9 responsible. Over the last 15 months, Jan and I have, by train, tube and bus toured
10 all of our Courts, frequently, Ms Davies, going to huge lengths so the paper-free
11 Master of the Rolls will never discover that teetering mounds of old paper files to be
12 found at the courts along our route!!

13 I tried to share my gratitude to Jan, Ms Davies, by buying him lunch, which is not I
14 fear a great act of generosity. Most of the expensive West End sites have long since
15 been sold off, but the Tesco meal deal in Bexley was both nutritious and I fear
16 fabulous value. When *The Guardian* newspaper - with apologies to one or two of
17 those here tonight - very recently exposed various senior judges as being members
18 of the all-male Garrick club, Jan said to me, 'Well, we belong to a club.' I had to say
19 to Jan that having a Greggs loyalty card just doesn't cut it.

20 Jan is also, of course, an expert lawyer in his day job in all our courts. The standard
21 work on housing cases which My Lord, the Master of the Rolls, has referred to
22 already is Luba on *Defending Possession Proceedings*. It will be carping on my part,
23 Ms Davis, to suggest that the backlog would have been greatly helped if he had
24 instead written *How to lose a possession case quickly*.

25 In all sincerity, Jan has a phenomenal knowledge of the staff, judges, buildings and
26 endless problems of all our County Courts. He is meticulous in looking after his
27 judges and his staff. It is a tribute to Jan that, with his departure, we are replacing
28 his role with two new Designated Civil Judges. The new appointees will find that
29 even filling one of Jan's shoes is a tough task. I can completely sincerely say that
30 one of the reasons our County Courts have not fallen over under all the stresses and
31 strains they have faced is the industry, energy and sheer bloody-minded
32 determination of His Honour Judge Jan Luba. So through you Ms Davies, I say to
33 Jan - guide, cheap date, mentor, hero of the London Civil Justice system - Thank You
34 and Farewell, but do not be a stranger.

1 JUDGE DIGHT: Ms Davies, the appointment to Jan Luba QC (as he then was) to the ranks
2 of Central London County Court considerably enhanced its judicial fire power. It
3 was a real coup for us. He was the biggest star in the housing law world, and we were
4 all very pleased and honoured that he was to join us. You have already heard
5 something - and I know you will hear more - about Jan's eminence in the field, but I
6 just wanted to mention that I have been sent a copy of the glowing acknowledgement
7 to his contribution which was published in the February issue of the *Legal Action*
8 magazine. Titled '*Four Decades of Sharing Encyclopaedia Knowledge*' it was
9 penned I think by his co-author who sits at the back of the court today (Nic Madge).
10 I commend it to you, especially for the picture of a bushy-haired Jan taken forty years
11 ago. My clerk's reaction, when he saw it was, '*Amazing, he looks like a popstar*',
12 before adding, '*Judge, was that the style back then?*'

13 In his own determined and focused way, Jan set about revolutionising the system
14 which we use in Central London for managing and determining all the appeals under
15 the housing legislation made by applicants for housing across the boroughs in the
16 whole of greater London; the volume is tremendous. It was a very impressive
17 demonstration of Jan's drive and energy and his relentless approach to systemic
18 reform, to say nothing of his use of a laminator. He bought all of the Circuit Judges
19 (CJs) in Central London into line, in their determination of Housing Act appeals, with
20 his emails which brooked no disagreements. These were addressed to his, 'Dear
21 colleagues', a change from what I understood his mode of address to be when he was
22 Vice-Chair of the Housing Law Practitioners' Association, and when, I am told, he
23 used to start his emails with the salutation, 'Dear Comrades'.

24 Having been at Central London for only a short period of time, Jan was, as has already
25 been mentioned, promoted as a Senior Circuit Judge to the role of Designated Civil
26 Judge for the outer London County Courts. I am DCJ only for Central London and
27 Mayor's Court. If London is a donut, Jan got the fluffy stuff, and I got the hole in
28 the middle. It was at this point in time that I learnt how I should be doing my job as
29 DCJ, as Jan demonstrated in his usual indefatigable way. He re-organised and re-
30 managed everything. I will miss the daily emails, which I would open when I get to
31 my desk in the morning - Jan having worked some time well before me in the
32 morning - which tended to begin, 'Marc, a hard copy of this email will follow with
33 the file to which it relates. You will see that...', and then he then sets out a problem
34 for me to resolve. The email will be followed soon afterwards by Jan's dedicated
35 clerk Selwyn, more of him later, bearing the files which have been put back into strict

1 chronological order by Jan in the wee hours of the night. The other version of the
2 early-morning email is something along the lines of, 'Marc, I am sure you will have
3 noticed...', and I probably realised I had not noticed.

4 But it is not only in Central London where he made a difference. As has been already
5 said by Joel, he has made a significant impact on the lives of the judges for whom he
6 is their leadership judge. That has been made plain in some comments which I have
7 received recently from the District Judges (DJs) of the other London Courts. The
8 London Association of District Judges has said:

9 'On behalf of the officers and members of the LADJ, we wish to extend our sincerest
10 gratitude and appreciation for your work as DCJ for London. Your appointment to the post
11 was met with universal approval among the District Bench. Those of us who knew you from
12 practice appreciated your encyclopaedic knowledge of housing law, your humanity and good
13 humour. In practising on the Bench your famous housing law case book was for me and
14 many others an invaluable and comforting resource. As DCJ you have been a scorch and
15 unconditional supporter of the District Bench, approachable, empathetic, kind, fully
16 cognitive and understanding of the enormous pressures and workloads that comprise a
17 relentless diet of the County Court Judge. Heaped on top of that, there has been the reform
18 program which has presented additional challenges, foreseen and unforeseen. Throughout it
19 all, we have appreciated your presence at every LADJ meeting during your tender. Your
20 prioritization of this, not forgetting your attendance at monthly HMCTS DJ meetings, is
21 testament to your commitment to the role as Leadership Judge. Approval of your
22 appointment is matched in magnitude by our sorrow at your departure. We thank you, and
23 wish you the happiest of retirements.'

24 And there have been similar comments from others.

25 I personally have never seen a judge who works so hard, takes so much on willingly
26 and often unbidden, and is so determined to make a difference to the litigant in front
27 of him and those yet to come. The volume of work he has ploughed through in
28 Central London is tremendous. I do not know where he finds the time. He is a truly
29 outward-facing public servant whose commitment and hard work deserves
30 recognition. But it is not only the public about whom cares, but all the staff who
31 support us who in their turn have written to me expressing their views.

32 One person, whose name I am not going to release, said:

33 'The staff find Judge Luba extremely hard working; he produces masses of work for all.
34 They find him to have an encyclopaedic knowledge on all topics. He pays close attention to
35 detail and is happy to help with the staff Christmas party but has questionable dance moves'.

36 Despite, or perhaps reflecting, the old adage that no man is a hero to his valet, I have
37 received some comments from Jan's current, dedicated and I would suggest devoted
38 clerk who, with his eyes wide open said,

1 'Dear Judge Luba' this is a letter to you, using your infamous words, 'I will now give a short
2 judgment, I consider it a privilege to have worked with you. Having worked with you and
3 witnessing what went on behind the scenes in the past five and a half years, I can vouch for
4 your professionalism, your commitment and your dedication to civil justice and the legal
5 profession. Direct action, these are words that struck with me that epitomise the way you
6 work, and your mind set, continuous improvement, mentoring and training. I have learnt a
7 lot from working with you, thank you. P.S. your judgments were never short'.

8 Jan, you have been an inspiration to us all, we will all miss you and we wish you and
9 Adriana a long, healthy and happy retirement.

10
11 MS DAVIES: My Lord the Master of the Rolls, My Lords and My Ladies, Your Honour
12 and in particular Your Honour Judge Luba KC, it is my privilege and great honour
13 to give this address at His Honour Judge Luba's valedictory, and it is an equal
14 privilege and honour to be instructed to do by the Housing Law Practitioners'
15 Association (HLP), of whom we have already heard mention. Members of HLP
16 have had the double benefit of knowing His Honour, both as a colleague and, more
17 recently, as a judge. We know His Honour's attention to detail and to procedural
18 rigour. His Honour requires and appreciates the highest standards in advocacy,
19 preparation, precision and above all pagination.
20 We know that when we appear before His Honour, if there are any errors in the
21 bundle then His Honour will spot them. As he did when I was appearing before him,
22 and to my shame I had failed to notice that a Defence contained in a trial bundle was
23 a double-sided document, but inevitably it had been photocopied only on the
24 odd-numbered pages. His Honour gently pointed it out. All I could do was apologise
25 and move on as quickly as I could. It will not surprise anyone in this courtroom to
26 learn that it was His Honour then, at conclusion of the hearing, who took steps to
27 track down the original document, ensure that it was correctly photocopied on both
28 sides, and sent it to the parties, even though it was my responsibility to have done so.
29 My Lord, the knowledge that one might appear before His Honour means that we all
30 up our game, we check our bundles, we prepare the best advocacy we can, and that
31 makes us better lawyers. We appreciate His Honour's deep knowledge of the law,
32 of the law in general but particularly of Housing Law of which he knows every detail,
33 and there are a lot of details in Housing Law. As counsel, His Honour appeared in
34 important cases, pushing the boundaries of the law as expert counsel do, but as
35 happens to expert counsel, this led to many reported judgments containing the words,
36 '*Mr Luba, elegant as his submissions were, My Lord, is wrong.*'

1 As a judge, the scrutiny is rather different, it takes place when his decisions are
2 appealed, and a quick search of his name reveals that as a judge he is frequently right.
3 As a flavour, the Court of Appeal has said about him, *'The judge, whose expertise in*
4 *Housing Law is well known ... I can find no fault with Judge Luba's assessment.'* In
5 the High Court, although the appellate judge would himself have come to a different
6 decision, he said *'I have concluded that His Honour Judge Luba QC was not wrong*
7 *in the conclusion which he came to.'* "Not wrong" is something we really all aspire
8 too. Those reported cases also convey something of His Honour's high standards.
9 One Court of Appeal judgment reads, *'The judge dismissed the appeal despite*
10 *describing parts of the review decision as leaving one scratching one's head, a*
11 *muddle and confusing.'* And another judgment said, *'Judge Luba commented*
12 *unfavourably on this notice to quit. Indeed, he described it as written in gibberish'*.
13 The third characteristic that everyone who has professional contact with His Honour
14 appreciates, but members of HLPAs appreciate most of all, is that he did not abandon
15 his commitment to disseminating his knowledge and experience of housing law once
16 he was appointed to the Bench. He continued writing the monthly *Recent*
17 *Developments in Housing Law* column for *Legal Action* magazine with another then
18 Circuit Judge, His Honour Judge Nic Madge, who is here at the back of court today.
19 He continued his prolific output of housing law books, *Defending Possession*
20 *Proceedings, Housing Allocation and Homelessness, and Housing Conditions*. He
21 attended and spoke at HLPAs conferences, cascading his knowledge of housing law
22 and ensuring that subsequent generations of lawyers can benefit from it and therefore
23 that their clients benefit from it, matters to His Honour.

24 My Lord, it is already clear that the Bench, and particularly judges and practitioners
25 at the London County Courts, will be poorer without his presence. I can also submit
26 on behalf of HLPAs that the world of housing lawyers will be deeply diminished. We
27 are very grateful to him for his commitment to our area of expertise, and we wish
28 him a long and very happy retirement which is immensely well deserved. Thank
29 you, My Lord.

30
31 MR GRUNDY: My Lord the Master of the Rolls, My Ladies, My Lords, Your Honours,
32 most significantly Your Honour Judge Luba KC, or "Jan" if I may be so bold. The
33 first email that Jan sent me was when we were opponents for the first time and it
34 started, 'Nick, if I may be so bold...', which was very nice because he was a KC, and

1 I was really somebody who was really just a bit uppity. It put us on the same footing,
2 and it was very generous of him.

3 Jan has been giant of Residential Landlord & Tenant Law and Housing Law for over
4 30 years. A search on Westlaw, using his name as a search term, brings up 154
5 reported cases between 1993 - *R v Hounslow and Pilling* - one which I had to rely
6 on recently, and *Hotak v Loudon Borough of Southwark* in 2015. That is seven
7 reported cases every year over a period of 22 years. His earliest reported case may
8 in fact be in 1992, *R v Doncaster Borough Council ex party Bolton*, in which he
9 represented a miner's widow in respect of a coal concession she received from the
10 Coal Board and whether or not that was to be accounted for calculation of her income
11 in relation to her benefits. 1992 or 1892, I wonder?

12 That was the first year that Jan had gone back into private practice, and he was
13 already doing such significant cases. However, the volume alone does not do credit
14 to Jan's excellence. He was involved in titanic legal struggles that have created our
15 current legal landscape in so far as Housing Law and Residential Landlord and
16 Tenant Law is concerned.

17 The Article 8 struggle: eventually in 2010 in *Pinnock v Manchester City Council*, the
18 Supreme Court accepted Jan's argument that rights under the European Convention
19 of Human Rights Article 8 cut across domestic landlord and tenant law. But that
20 struggle had started in 2002 with *Sheffield City Council v Smart*, through 2004
21 *Harrow London Borough Council v Qazi*, *Kay v Lambeth* in 2006 and *Doherty v*
22 *Birmingham City Council* in 2008. Jan was lead counsel in all of those cases. So,
23 Jan is responsible for the proposition that an individual can raise Article 8 rights as a
24 defence to a claim for possession, even where the landlord has an unimpeachable
25 domestic law claim for possession. A victory for compassion. But it took a massive
26 effort. In *Qazi* for example, their Lordships, by a majority, held that an eviction of a
27 person with no legal or equitable right to remain was not an interference with respect
28 to their home.

29 Disability rights, another struggle. In *Akerman-Livingstone v Aster Communities*
30 *Ltd*, Jan successfully persuaded the Supreme Court that disability discrimination
31 could be relied on as a defence to a possession claim, and that the threshold of
32 proportionality was lower than that for Article 8 defences; another victory for
33 compassion.

34 I was Jan's opponent in a number of cases. His knowledge and level of preparation
35 was always impressive. He set the standard to which I aspire. He was a straight and

1 charming opponent. His delivery and submissions were always an absolute pleasure
2 to listen to, as has been stated already. Since he was appointed to the bench I have
3 missed sparring with him. No other opponent required me to focus quite as hard as
4 Jan did. He was for me the Mohammed Ali of the Bar. He floats like a butterfly and
5 stings like a bee. It even scans, 'Jan Luba, Jan Luba KC, floats like a butterfly, stings
6 like a bee.' As will be clear from the cases I have referred to, Jan's career as a
7 barrister was largely on behalf of the disadvantaged in society, in particular, in
8 relation to their right to - and the quality of their - housing. This is consistent with
9 my Mohammad Ali comparison. In 1968, the boxer said, *'In your struggle for
10 freedom, justice and equality I am with you, I came to Louisville because I could not
11 remain silent while my own people, many I grew up with, many I went to school with,
12 many of my blood relatives were being beaten, stomped and kicked in the streets,
13 simply because they want freedom and justice and equality in housing'*. So I wish
14 Jan, a hero of mine, a contented retirement, while I find it hard to think of the world
15 of social housing law without him in it. He will be sorely missed. Thank you.

16
17 MR PEAKER: My Lords, My Ladies, Your Honours, it is my privilege to be asked to speak
18 on behalf of the Law Society. When I first began in a housing law practice 19 years
19 ago, it was an area of law largely defined by His Honour. The foundational
20 judgments of the field nearly all featured arguments by Jan Luba QC (as was), the
21 key text books were co-authored by him, and his addresses to the HLPAs conference
22 each year set the frame for each year to come. Indeed, there can be very few housing
23 solicitors practising today whose first day was not marked by being handed a
24 well-thumbed copy of *Defending Possession Proceedings* and being told to read it.
25 Very early on, when I was still a paralegal, I had the good fortune of being sent to sit
26 behind His Honour advocating for our client in the Court of Appeal. Then some
27 10 years later, now as a partner, and acting for an intervener, I listened in the Supreme
28 Court as His Honour, in one of his last appearances before being appointed full time
29 to the Bench, argued for one of the appellants. Each was a masterclass in advocacy
30 and command of the law, deployed in the interests of his clients.
31 When he took his place on the Bench, he continued to shape housing law. Indeed,
32 he introduced a whole new category of judgment, the, 'it is a County Court judgment
33 but an apex Jan Luba KC judgment'. From a solicitor's viewpoint, knowing that
34 your case was to be listed before, or case managed by, His Honour was both a
35 pleasure and mildly terrifying. A pleasure, because you could be wholly confident

1 that the judge would be entirely on top of the relevant law, and mildly terrifying for
2 exactly the same reason, because “what if you were not?”. And then there were the
3 directions orders with the narrative drive and unexpected plot twists.

4 His Honour expected high standards from those acting for the parties before him
5 because of his keen sense that this was what our clients deserved and should receive.
6 It was a continuation of his practice at the Bar; those whom he represented never had
7 less than the best.

8 His commitment to the field of housing law extended to the education and
9 encouragement of new entrants. The *Recent Developments* monthly column - as has
10 already been mentioned - in *Legal Action* remains vital for all housing solicitors and
11 was kept up over many, many years as a remarkable feat for disseminating
12 knowledge. The co-authored practice texts were, and are, absolutely central to what
13 housing solicitors do. Having been a junior co-author with His Honour on *Housing*
14 *Conditions, Tenant’s Rights*, an experience which was both a pleasure and mildly
15 terrifying, I know that his twin goals were: (1) is it precisely right? and (2) will
16 people understand how to use it?

17 And if I might be permitted a personal thank you, His Honour’s support and
18 encouragement of my own efforts at spreading knowledge of housing law were very
19 much appreciated and wholly in character. His Honour’s retirement is very well
20 deserved, but his legacy is a whole field of law. As long as there are housing law
21 practitioners there will be a Jan shaped presence in the law and our clients, and the
22 law, are very much better for that.

23
24 JUDGE LUBA: This evening is not an occasion for me to reflect on my wonderful 35 years
25 as an advocate at the Bar. I am delighted to say that others have arranged for there
26 to be other opportunities for me to share my thoughts about those many years.
27 Suffice this evening to say that, at the end of my career as an advocate, I was blessed
28 to be able to appear regularly in the Court of Appeal and in the Supreme Court before
29 the most exceptional judicial minds of our generation. In the Court of Appeal, as
30 Master of the Rolls, I had the huge privilege to appear before your predecessors,
31 amongst whom was Lord Dyson, who I am delighted to see is here this evening. The
32 then Presidents of the Supreme Court before whom I argued cases were the first three.
33 In turn, Lord Phillips, Lord Neuberger and Lady Hale. Again, I am honoured that
34 Lady Hale is here with us this evening. I cannot thank those judges enough for the

1 stimulating and challenging environment that they offered advocates like me in their
2 courts.

3 But, of course, most of my cases back then related to Housing. A good housing case,
4 as you all know, requires a good, specialist, housing opponent. In that respect my
5 thanks go to my regular sparring partner Andrew Arden KC, who also joins us here
6 today.

7 The time then came to move across to the Judiciary. Lord Neuberger kindly agreed
8 to act as referee for my application for the only salaried judicial post that I ever really
9 wanted: full time Civil Circuit Judge. His magic worked.

10 As with most other newly appointed judges, I depended hugely on my clerk. I have
11 had three wonderful clerks. in turn, Sabrina Porter, Nitin Rathod and, most recently,
12 Selwyn Carrasco, who stands behind me today and of whom you have heard already
13 tonight. I am delighted that all three have been able to join us this evening. I thank
14 each of them for supporting me. I am the first to acknowledge that I am, at times, a
15 rather demanding task master. They were perhaps quite unique amongst judicial
16 clerks, in that the calls they took from the barrister chambers were not, *'Will my*
17 *counsel need their robes?'* but rather, *'Will my counsel need their armour?'*.

18 I joined a great judicial team at Central London, and I am grateful to them all - many
19 of them here this evening - for their support and encouragement throughout my time
20 at that County Court. Likewise, I am indebted to the many staff of the court who,
21 against all odds, keep it running. I thank so many of them for attending this event
22 tonight. It is my privilege to be able to host an informal event for all staff tomorrow.
23 Over the last four years, I have had the privilege of serving as Leadership Judge to a
24 wonderful group of some 50 District Judges across 13 London County Court Centres.
25 I am honoured that so many of them have attended this evening. I thank them for all
26 the help and support they gave me. The County Courts are, as you have heard, the
27 beating heart of our civil justice system. A Parliamentary Inquiry into their work is
28 underway, and I am delighted that Sir Bob Neill MP, who leads that enquiry, is here
29 with us today.

30 And now it is time to thank present company, on the Bench and at the Bar. Liz
31 Davies, Nicholas Grundy and Giles Peaker, have all spoken of me warmly and
32 generously and I thank them for that. Marc Dight has served as my Leadership Judge
33 since my appointment. I recognise that I am far from the easiest person to manage.
34 We have heard something of that. His style of leadership and management could not

1 be more different from my own. That I not only survived but thrived under his
2 stewardship shows that his style is one that works.

3 Since becoming a DCJ for London, I have also had a leadership judge myself, in a
4 succession of London Civil Presiders. I cannot name each of them tonight. Many are
5 here. I thank you all. In particular, I thank my final leader, Joel Bennathan, for his
6 words tonight. Sir Geoffrey Vos, the Master of Roles is my ultimate boss as a Civil
7 Judge. His leadership and work ethic have been a fabulous inspiration. I could not
8 be more honoured than by his agreement to preside this evening. My many thanks
9 for that, and for so much more.

10 I bring my 'Thank You' round to an end by paying tribute to my own family, in
11 particular my wife, Adriana, and my daughters Alicia and Isabella. It will come as
12 no surprise if I reveal that Adriana is the person without the support of whom none
13 of what has been said about my work would have been possible. All my family and
14 friends know that, and now you do too! Although she would much rather I had not
15 shared that with you.

16 Tonight marks the lifting of a great burden and the bringing of much relief, and that
17 is not a reference to how *I* feel. I have never seen so many court staff, so many
18 members of the Bar ,and so many members of the Bench looking so happy and
19 relaxed as they now realise that this troublemaker is, at last, moving on. I know I
20 have a reputation for being strict on advocates, but in actuality I could not have been
21 more accommodating. For example, in my own courtroom, I have moved the panic
22 button from my own bench to theirs!

23 And what of my own future? Many have asked, '*How will you adjust? What are*
24 *your plans?*' The answer is to be found in my discovery recently of a rather catchy
25 phrase - 'work/life balance'. I wish I had known about it earlier. I feel that I have
26 done the *work*, so now I am going to lead the *life*. I hear tell that 'life' offers
27 opportunities galore - fun, exercise, relaxation, adventure, and not only weekends
28 without work but weekdays too!! I genuinely cannot wait to try it. And, of course
29 this is precisely the right court, is it not, in which to find that I now face Life? I
30 cannot wait to begin my sentence! I will enter that next chapter with many great
31 memories, but none greater than that of this evening's event. Thank you, very much,
32 for being part of it.

33 SIR GEOFFREY VOS: Well, that concludes this evening's proceedings. Many thanks to
34 you all for coming.

35 **End of valedictory.**

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