

LUNCH GATHERING WITH PATRICK CHAN PJ

The Honourable Mr. Justice Chan, Permanent Judge of the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region kindly invited some young HKU graduates who joined the Bar for a lunch gathering on 27th June 2006.

This luncheon was very much looked forward to as a great opportunity for young barristers to meet informally with one of the top court judges in Hong Kong. Indeed, within the hour of gathering, Mr. Justice Chan shared with us his views on young barristers.

Life at the Bar

Livelihood is the subject of concern of all the pupils and young barristers. Mr. Justice Chan gave us much insight into starting a career at the Bar.

He acknowledged that the competitive practice environment could be a rude awakening for many pupils and young barristers. For instance, new entrants to the profession have been outnumbering the vacancies in barrister's chambers. Securing tenancy in a set of chambers has become inevitably much more difficult nowadays than in the past.

However, this phenomenon did not stop Mr. Justice Chan from encouraging those who are keen at taking up the challenge. According to him, what remains unchanged is the commitment to excellence and the utmost satisfaction one could gain from being a barrister.

Mr. Justice Chan also encouraged barristers to be positive by enriching their experience during the early stage of their career. He recommended the service as a Judge's Marshall as part of the pupil's training. As such, a pupil would be able to learn first-hand about the 'behind the scene' operation of the court system. More importantly, this often gives the pupil the opportunity to interact with many of the bright legal brains in our courts.

Barristers commencing practice, though perhaps in the civil area, were encouraged not to shut themselves out from services like the duty lawyer service. Appearing in court as a duty lawyer is a way of improving their advocacy skills.

Time flew while we tried hard to split our attention between the nice food served and the most stimulating conversation with our host. It remains for me to thank Mr. Justice Chan once again for his time and generosity on behalf of all those attended the lunch, i.e. Elaine Liu, Jenkin Suen, Abigail Wong, Tim Wong, Phoebe Man, Helen Au, Jolie Chao, Anthony Chan, Alfred Cheng and myself.

WILSON HUI