

roles of Parliament and the courts.

I had the great privilege of clerking for Robert Chambers the following year. He was tremendously fun to work for and he genuinely valued my input, as I am sure was the case for all his clerks. I distinctly recall the very first time that he summoned me to his chambers (or Chambers's chambers, as we clerks had rather unimaginatively labelled it). In addition to assigning me my first task, the details of which now elude me, he discussed two additional matters, both of which I remember quite clearly. First, he emphasised at some length that I should never hesitate to disagree with him. This was no small thing for a wet-behind-the-ears law graduate to be told by a judge. Second, he discussed how I should address him. He suggested three options: "Sir", "Judge", or "Rob". While he made it quite clear that he was comfortable with any of the three options, particularly the third, I never felt able to stray past option one for the period that I was his clerk.

Justice Chambers was always very good at staying in touch. And his involvement with the University of Auckland and the Law School was such that, after I began life as an academic, we would run into each other on a fairly regular basis. Each time, he would greet me in his characteristically exuberant manner. He would then usually admonish me gently for not addressing him as "Rob" — even many years after clerking, I typically stuck with option two.

That said, over the years, I did come to see him more as a friend and highly distinguished mentor. He and wife Deborah were among the guests at my wedding. However, Justice Chambers was not on the list of speakers, despite the fact that, as is widely known, he was much sought after as an after-dinner speaker. None of this mattered, because he delivered a brief impromptu speech that was characteristically witty, charming and funny. The precise content is a little hazy now, but my wife and I do remember the part where he noted that I was responsible for all his decisions (although presumably only those around 2001) that had been overturned by the appellate courts.

It was only in April this year that he and Deborah hosted a dinner for his all his clerks along with their spouses and partners. I feel fortunate that I had the opportunity to catch up with him, and to say just how much I had enjoyed working for him. I, like each of his clerks, left at the end of the evening with a personal note penned in his distinct cursive script — a token to remember what had been a special occasion, and one that has only become more special in retrospect.

ELIZABETH CHAN

I had the privilege of clerking for Justice Chambers⁵ for 15 months at the Supreme Court of New Zealand. He was a wonderful Judge, teacher and mentor. My first day working for Justice Chambers at the Court commenced on the first of February 2012. Along with my fellow new clerks, I found myself in the lift with Justice Chambers, who fondly described us as “all the new boys and girls”. He always had fun, even when performing serious tasks. It was this high-spiritedness and fun-loving nature that made his Honour a fantastic choice to chair the AULR Symposium in 2011, when I was an Editor-in-Chief.

Justice Chambers was disarmingly open and friendly with his clerks. He encouraged me to call him “Rob”, although I could not bring myself to stop calling him “Judge” instead. He had a brilliant and sharp mind, no doubt honed through his daily consumption of the *Dominion Post* cryptic crossword. Justice Chambers taught me the importance of structure and discipline. He wrote prolifically, and produced a reasoned (and well-referenced) memorandum for every legal issue to which he turned his mind. He even produced a task-list for me — the “Bizzie Lizzie” — in which each of my tasks for Justice Chambers was recorded along with the date the task was given to me and the date its completion was required.⁶ His eye for precision and style in legal prose was unparalleled, a legacy to which his support of the *New Zealand Law Style Guide* is a testament.⁷ Justice Chambers was an excellent mentor, directing me on specific and in-depth research, with clear instructions that guided and aided my legal education. He was passionate about legal history, sending me on many a foray to the library in search of legislative histories. His fascination for legal processes and procedures was well-known, with a keen interest in the comparative internal processes and practices of various final appellate courts across the world.

I was incredibly fortunate to have had the pleasure of clerking for Justice Chambers. He was generous with his feedback, praise and good-humour, and both gentle and constructive with his criticism. Even when faced with disagreement, he took a great interest in and had respect for my perspective. He was always open to challenges, to new ideas, and we had many a spirited debate, arguing over which case might be granted leave and why. He honoured me in taking the time to preside over my admission ceremony, where he referred to my parents directly in his speech. His clerks (all thirteen of us, dating back to Justice Chambers’s appointment to the High Court in 1999) were known as his “ducklings”. Meeting this group

5 Although Justice Chambers’s name is now styled Justice Sir Robert Chambers, I had always referred to him as Justice Chambers, and do so in this tribute.

6 A footnote after the title “Bizzie Lizzie” read: “Successor to Fifework, Littlework and Wickwork” referring to the clerks that preceded me: Colin Fife, James Little and Anthony Wicks. With characteristic precision, Justice Chambers even footnoted that “day completed” meant 5 pm on the due date.

7 Geoff McLay, Christopher Murray and Jonathan Orpin *New Zealand Law Style Guide* (2nd ed, Thomson Reuters, Wellington 2011). Sir Robert Chambers wrote the preface to both the first and second editions.

of previous clerks earlier this year, we were entertained by many stories of Justice Chambers's fun-loving nature over the years, including the challenge he put to his peers to include interesting and unexpected words in their judgments.

My clerkship for Justice Chambers was a significant and poignant time in my life. The opportunity to work so closely with a great jurist is one I will cherish. I will always remember Justice Chambers for the kind, sincere, and brilliant man that he was.

Public Lecture: Lord Phillips “The Supreme Court of United Kingdom”



Left to right: Justice Sir Robert Chambers KNZM QC; Rt Hon Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers KG PC; Hon Justice Helen Winkelmann, Chief Judge of the High Court of New Zealand; Dr Andrew Stockley (Dean). March 2013.



*Rt Hon Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers KG PC speaking at the public lecture.
March 2013.*