

SJ's address at Ceremony for the Admission of the New Senior Counsel (English only)

The following is the address by the Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, at the Ceremony for the Admission of the New Senior Counsel today (May 29):

Chief Justice, members of the Judiciary, Chairman of the Bar, President of the Law Society, fellow members of the legal profession, ladies and gentlemen,

As Secretary for Justice, I am in the most privileged position to offer my congratulations to those members of our profession that are "taking silk" today, and I warmly congratulate the four newly minted Senior Counsel for their achievements as they reach another significant milestone of their career.

The post-nominal letters now behind your name is a recognition of your depth of expertise and the eminence you have achieved in your particular field of law. It is also a mark of recognition of your distinction in the art of advocacy in Court and importantly, your relentless dedication to the rule of law with impartiality, professionalism and integrity. Henceforth, as silks, the title bestows upon you, more than before, the duty to continue to uphold and practise these values by example and leadership, and to come forth without hesitation to defend the judiciary from attempts to interfere with the proper discharge of their duties.

This tradition of admitting members to the inner Bar in Hong Kong is indeed, most significant. It provides clients with comfort that their advocate has demonstrated a high standard of consistent competence, knowledge and excellence that is expected of a senior member of the profession. Leading counsel is expected to play a crucial role in upholding and promoting the rule of law in Hong Kong. Further, it also provides inspiration for younger members of the profession to pursue excellence, thereby nurturing and developing the future generation.

Congratulations must be extended to your families, friends and colleagues for their support, confidence and trust in you. By today's ceremony the legal profession is expressing just that too.

Traditionally, it is now time for me to say a few words about each of the new members. Before I do so, however, let us not forget that last year we did not hold a Senior Counsel Admission Ceremony due to the pandemic, and I would like to take this chance to give my belated congratulations to Mr Jonathan Chang SC, the sole appointee last year. Since taking silk, Jonathan has been extremely busy, with a search on the Judiciary's judgments website showing that he has appeared in around 30 judgments just in the past year,

acting both for and against the Government. I have no doubt his practices as a silk will continue to prosper and the Department of Justice would prefer to work with him, than against, as he is without a doubt a formidable opponent!

Mr Philip Chau Ka-chun

Turning now to Mr Philip Chau. Philip is a seasoned specialist criminal trial lawyer, and his services have been engaged by the Department of Justice with him being a counsel on fiat since 1997, prosecuting cases at all levels of courts. Colleagues at the Department have described him as being a no-nonsense prosecutor, meticulous in his craft, and having no patience, justifiably, for opponents who have not prepared their cases fully or properly.

Philip is also keenly engaged in educating the next generation of lawyers and advocates, being a part-time lecturer in criminal procedure and trial advocacy at the University of Hong Kong and City University. I have it on good authority that his students are always impressed by his punctuality, having never been late for any of his classes, and being equally punctual in ending them.

Mr Law Man-chung

The second new silk, MC, was without a doubt one of the most sought after "Senior Junior Counsel" with extensive experience in working with top silks across a range of subject matters, and is no stranger to being involved in high-profile and landmark cases. One such case involved MC appearing as a junior in the first ever discrimination case reaching the Court of Final Appeal, where the question at issue was whether the Court had the power to order an unwilling defendant to apologise for unlawful conduct under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance. This case in some way helped lay the foundation for the eventual enactment of the Apology Ordinance in 2017, Hong Kong being the first jurisdiction in Asia to do so.

I have, in my previous life in private practice, also had the opportunity to observe MC's diligent preparation of the case up close on one side of the Bar table when he was a junior to Barrie Barlow SC in the case of TNB Fuel Service v China National Coal Group, a seminal case that confirmed that state-owned enterprises cannot plead crown immunity generally.

Mr Norman Nip Sum-ping

Next we have Norman. Norman is an experienced advocate in the areas of securities, regulatory, banking, commercial, company and insurance litigation. He is also a keen contributing editor of the Hong Kong Civil Procedure since 2009 and of the Hong Kong Securities and Futures Ordinance, Commentary and Annotations since 2015; and in the past few years showing an interest in having a taste of life in the Judiciary, having been appointed "Temporary Deputy Registrar" of the High Court and "Deputy District Judge". I have been told that Norman has a penchant for a particular noodle chain famous for their signature spring rolls and having lunch there on a regular

basis, sparking the curiosity of his chamber-mates (and now also myself) in exploring how good the food there really is.

Having been recognized as a "Future Leader" by Who's Who Legal last year as being an expert in securities and financial litigation, I dare say that by taking silk, Norman has demonstrated that he is already a leader in the profession.

Ms Vinci Lam Wing-sai

Saving the best for last, we now turn to Vinci. Vinci as a lawyer is 'born and bred' by the Department of Justice, having trained with us as a solicitor and spending her whole career (so far) in the Prosecutions Division of the Department. Her conscientiousness and skill had been recognised in her early days at the Department, with the then Director of Public Prosecutions Mr Grenville Cross assigning her to be his assistant between 2004 and 2008.

Outside of the courtroom, Vinci is able to de-stress through tennis and swimming, even winning three medals for the Department in the Corporate Games.

Vinci's skills as a criminal advocate is not in doubt, and I am sure that your Lordships and Ladyships would be very familiar with Vinci's work, both oral and written. Despite her well-proven qualities and abundant advocacy experience, Vinci, admitted initially as a solicitor, was not eligible for appointment as a silk under the current regime. For her to gain the ticket to today's recognition, Vinci, as one of the Deputy Directors of Public Prosecutions, had to put aside her heavy duties and spend her leave for three months so as to complete her pupillage at the Bar with Mr Stewart Wong, SC. Today's honour is indeed hard-earned and well-deserved for Vinci, and the Department is immensely proud of her.

My Lords and Ladies, it has been my honour to have the privilege to welcome the four new silks. May I just conclude by wishing them the very best in their new role in the pursuit of rule of law and justice for all, and every continued success as they reach new heights in the profession.