

My Lords, my Ladies, members of Faculty, solicitors and guests.

I am grateful to the Lord Justice Clerk, the Dean of Faculty and the President of the Law Society for their kind words, which mean more to me than I can say. Parliament House has been at the centre of my working life for the last 47 years. As a lawyer I have had two great privileges. The first was to be admitted to the Faculty of Advocates. Through that I had the good fortune to make my living by doing what I loved and to make many close and lasting friendships, through the camaraderie of the Bar, that have enriched my life. The second privilege was to be appointed to the Bench. For over 20 years I have enjoyed the most stimulating and fulfilling intellectual exercise, learning all the time from my esteemed colleagues and from the gifted pleaders who have appeared in my court. To have been Lord President has been an honour. I have tried throughout my time in office to live up to my responsibilities in a fitting way; to enhance the reputation of the court and to make the work of my colleagues congenial and fulfilling.

I thank my colleagues for their support and encouragement. In particular, I thank the Lord Justice Clerk for being such a wonderful colleague. He has assisted me selflessly at every stage, and has always been willing to give me the benefit of his wisdom. I also thank the members of my private office. They are the finest team that any Lord President could wish for. They have made every working day a pleasure. Forgive me if I mention particularly my inner team – my secretary Liz Scott, my private secretary Paul Gilmour, my law clerk, Lesley Johnston and my legal secretary Roddy Flinn. I am so grateful to them for their kindness.

I thank the members of the profession for their assistance, as officers of the court, in the cases with which I have had to deal. The quality of decision

making in the appellate courts is only as good as the quality of those who present the arguments. Thanks to the profession, this is a court to be proud of. Lastly, I thank the wonderful staff in this building, who are prepared to go to any lengths to help us in our work. Their efforts are what make the working of this building such a success. I leave office with only the happiest memories of my time as a pleader and my time as a judge. My years in the law have given me great happiness. I wish the same for all of you.