

**Lord President valedictory event
26 May 2015**

My Lords, ladies and gentlemen.

As the legal profession looks to the future and goes through an unprecedented period of change, we have benefited enormously from having one of the most distinguished, one of the most pragmatic and certain one of the most reforming individuals to hold the offices of Lord President and Lord Justice General, and previously as Lord Justice Clerk.

Lord President, you've long recognised the challenges that come with the modern digital age and the need for our justice system to adapt to meet those challenges head on.

Under your leadership, the Scottish Civil Courts Review resulted in far reaching proposals for change. The timetable for civil justice reforms which you set out at the beginning of this year will transform our civil courts.

A better use of technology, improved administration systems and greater judicial specialisation will all make our courts more efficient, more accessible for court users and will help improve access to justice.

So whilst you may be retiring this month, you can be assured of an important and lasting legacy – a legacy which will benefit the legal profession and the public for many years to come.

But it's not just the reformist agenda which you brought to the highest judicial office in the land. You have brought good judgement, an openness and willingness to listen and engage – and you've brought the all-important Glaswegian wit and good humour too.

Within months of your appointment in 2012, you were critical in assisting us with our successful bid to host the Commonwealth Law Conference including coming yourself to South Africa to talk with such enthusiasm about your home city of Glasgow.

Whilst I know the conference itself last month brought some unexpected frustrations, it was with immense pride that I witnessed you address lawyers from across the world and speak with such authority and passion about protecting a robust and independent legal profession.

For those who haven't yet read that address, I can only recommend that you do via the judiciary website. On a personal level, your door has always been open to me – you have been generous both with your time and your advice and I know my predecessors as Law Society president – Austin Lafferty and Bruce Beveridge would echo those comments.

Lord President, on behalf of our 11,000 solicitors and the millions of clients they serve, I thank you for all that you have done for us and our justice system.

We wish you a long, happy and healthy retirement.

A L Morris, President, The Law Society of Scotland