

A very good morning Ladies and Gentlemen.
We are present today to remember and pay
tribute to our dear departed colleagues of the
Melaka Bar.

I would first and foremost wish to place on
record my appreciation to the Melaka Bar
Committee for organizing this reference
proceeding. I wish to acknowledge the
presence of Puan Norafiah Binti Saini,
representative of the Attorney General's
Chambers, Ms. Karen Cheah Yee Lynn,
President of Malaysian Bar and Ms. Amber
Foo Qiao Wei, Chairman of Malacca Bar. I
also wish to acknowledge the presence of

Mr. Yap Koon Roy, Datuk, Francis Ho Wee Keong, Mr. Kushwinder Singh, Mr. Bala Gopal, Mr. KL. Chong, Mr. Rodney D'Cruz who have taken the time to attend and speak in honor of the following departed members of the Melaka Bar:

- The late Mr. Teoh Kim Hong
- Allahyarham Dato' Sabaruddin Bin Othman
- The late Mr. Thara Singh Sidhu
- The late Mr. Avatar Singh S/O Ram Singh
- The late Madam Marie Tan Chee Lan
- The late Mr. Hilary D'Cruz

We are gathered here today for an ancient tradition that sets us apart from other professions. The practice and tradition of reference proceedings for deceased judges and members of the Bar serve to remind us that we belong to a unique body like no other. Whether we be at the Bar or on the Bench we all proudly belong to the legal fraternity.

The tradition of reference proceedings and that of a petition to be admitted and enrolled as a member of the Bar as an advocate and solicitor of the High Court are important and these ancient traditions must be kept alive and relevant to the Bar.

I was informed that the last reference proceedings conducted in Melaka was 8 years ago and undoubtedly curtailed by the pandemic. I am happy and thankful to be here to help revive this tradition and hope it continues.

When I preside in petitions of young lawyers who are to be enrolled as advocates and solicitors I would conclude by wishing the newly minted lawyers all the best and to uphold the virtues of professionalism and integrity of the Bar. From the speeches we heard today our dear friends who are no

longer with us had indeed practiced these virtues.

The deeds of our departed friends is also a reminder to everyone present that the enduring qualities of kindness, compassion, generosity and a passion for justice and truth will be cherished by others even after one departs from this life. As the pepatah Melayu saying goes:

*Harimau mati meninggalkan belang,
Manusia mati meninggalkan nama.*

That being said I would associate myself wholeheartedly with the heartwarming sentiments that has been expressed in the speeches this morning.

Although our departed friends came from varied backgrounds one common element ran through them, namely the sheer determination to become lawyers.

Mr. Teoh was a teacher, he then joined the Anti-corruption agency as an investigating officer as well as a prosecutor. Under his own steam and while working as a waiter to

supplement his income he graduated from the Thames Valley University of London. Mr Teoh's perseverance at chasing his dream of becoming a lawyer is heartening and praiseworthy.

I had come to know Mr. Teoh in the late nineties when I was a DPP here. My impression of him was an unassuming and hardworking lawyer. I am glad to note that one of his sons had decided to follow his dad's footsteps and is a lawyer.

Allahyarham Dato Sabarudin Haji Othman began his working career as a trainee teacher. He then became an interpreter at the High Court in Raub Pahang. No doubt it was there that his love for the law began. From the humble beginnings as a court interpreter he rose to become the State Legal Adviser for Melaka and on to be the President of the Industrial Court. His involvement with the law did not end with his retirement from the service. On retirement he set up the legal firm of Tentuan Sabarudin Othaman and Ho and remained a partner till his demise. Like Mr. Teoh he has a son who had followed his father's legal footsteps and

was the Dean of the Law Faculty at University Malaya.

Mr Thara Singh also began his career as a teacher. I truly believe that teachers in those days and even today, maybe because they are disciplinarians, had a certain attraction to read law.

Anyway Mr. Thara Singh joined Lincon's Inn and successfully graduated and was called to the Bar way back in 1964. Mr. Thara Singh partnered in Sault and Company and was one of the most respected lawyers not only

in Melaka but thought out the country, I had the privilege of knowing Mr. Thara Singh through my late father. I will always remember him as a generous and sincere person ready to help when help was needed. I have this memory of Mr. Thara being always well dressed and wearing a bow tie and for his courteous mannerism both in and out of court. Mr. Thara Singh had left a living legacy in the form of his son who is a practicing lawyer.

I also feel privileged to be acquainted with the late Mr. Avatar Singh in the course of my work in Malacca. My impression of him was

that he was a kind man. A gentle giant because of his height. He could be firm in his stand but he was always a “gentleman opponent” and for that I respect him. Mr. Avatar’s sense of fair play would have encouraged his son to be a lawyer and carry on the good name of his father.

Madam Marie Tan Chee Lan was not only a lawyer; she was also devoted wife to our senior lawyer, Mr. A C Vohrah and dedicated mother to her children. She had all these year helps build up the firm Vohrah and Tan Chee Lan. Her devotion to humanity can be seen in her work with the Malacca Cancer

Society of which she was the co-founder as well as other charitable organizations. I am sure the expression, (with modification): “behind every great man is an even greater woman” would apply here in Marie’s case.

As for Mr. Hilary D’Cruz, he was a gentleman steeped in the old school tradition. My memory of him would be him in his well starched long sleeve white shirt and black pants and tie and his confident gait.

I came to know Mr. D’Cruz as a young lawyer. At that time the courts were at Jalan

Kota at the old Dutch building. When our work finished early we young lawyers would gather at the open air canteen if Mr. D' Cruz happen to be there. There Mr. D' Cruz would hold court. He would be advising us as to the do's and don't in court practice and law in his usual witty manner. These conversations with him would be peppered with jokes and anecdotes. Those moments will be etched in my mind forever.

Ladies and gentlemen, while no words will be enough for us to express our feelings and to comfort the family members and friends present today for their loss, I do

acknowledge that today's reference proceedings and the glowing tributes to their loved one will mean a lot to them.

To each of the family members and friends, present today, on behalf of the judiciary, I extend and offer our heartfelt and sincere condolences. Our prayers are always with your loved ones and may the almighty rest their souls in peace.

There is an old saying that lawyers never die. They just lose their appeal. Indeed as long

as we remember them in proceedings such as this, they continue to live in our memory.

With that note, I now make an order that the record of today's proceedings be preserved and kept in the archives of this Court and that a copy be sent to the families of those remembered today. Thank you all for your presence. And to the Melaka Bar, thank you for making this moment happen. I now adjourn this proceeding.