

FULL COURT REFERENCE HELD IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA ON 12th FEBRUARY 2025, ON THE OCCASION OF THE RETIREMENT OF HONOURABLE MRS. JUSTICE SOPHY THOMAS.

Speech by Sri. Ashok M. Cherian, Additional Advocate General

Hon'ble the Chief Justice of the High Court of Kerala, Mr. Justice Nitin Jamdar; The Honourable Mrs. Justice Sophy Thomas; The Hon'ble Judges of the High Court of Kerala; The former Judges of this Hon'ble Court; The President of the Kerala High Court Advocates Association; The Chairman of the Bar Council of Kerala; The President, Kerala High Court Senior Advocates' Association; The President, Federation of Women Lawyers; Law Officers of the State; Deputy Solicitor General in charge, Senior Central Standing Counsel (Taxes) and other Law Officers of the Central Government; Senior Advocates; Esteemed Fellow Members of the Bar; Registrar General, Registrars and Staff of the High Court of Kerala; Friends and family members of Mrs. Justice Sophy Thomas; Staff of the Advocate General's Office; Advocate Clerks; Ladies and Gentlemen; and all other dignitaries joining online.

Let me begin with a gentle reminder that one among the prominent features of this Hon'ble Court's jurisdiction is its diverse range of specialised and challenging work, in which many practitioners spend their whole working lives. Hence, one great challenge before the Bench is to relentlessly expand its expertise and commitment, thus fostering and deepening the reputation of this esteemed institution as whole. Today, we are bidding farewell to a Judge who has epitomised the successful meeting of that challenge. As Justice Sophy Thomas bids farewell to her esteemed position on the bench of the Kerala High Court, we have gathered here to celebrate her extraordinary career, a legacy marked by integrity, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

Born on February 13, 1963, into a family that instilled in her the values of hard work and righteousness, Justice Sophy Thomas embarked on a path that would leave an indelible mark on the Indian judiciary. Her ladyship pursued law at Government Law College, Ernakulam, and later obtained an LL.M degree from M.G University, equipping herself with the knowledge and proficiency that would define her distinguished career.

Her ladyship has practiced as an advocate in the subordinate courts of Thodupuzha for over three years. Thereafter, she entered the judicial service on

February 25, 1991, as a Judicial Magistrate of the Second Class at Mavelikkara. This was the first step in what would become a journey of three decades filled with landmark judgments, compassionate rulings, and a steadfast dedication to uphold the principles of justice.

Over the years, Justice Sophy Thomas has held numerous prestigious positions, each one a testament to her judicial acumen and leadership. From serving as a Munsiff in Perumbavoor and Thrissur to being appointed as a Judicial First Class Magistrate in Vaikom and Vadakara, her ability to dispense justice with fairness and clarity was widely acknowledged.

Her judicial prowess led to her appointment as Sub Judge in Muvattupuzha, Additional Sub Judge in Ernakulam, and later as an Additional District and Sessions Judge in Kozhikode, where she played a crucial role in handling the sensitive Marad riot cases. Her ability to handle complex legal matters with precision and her commitment to impartiality earned her widespread respect.

As a Judge of the Family Court in Ettumanoor, she demonstrated extraordinary ability to balance the letter of the law with the human emotions that often accompany family disputes. Her empathetic approach to family matters ensured that justice was not only delivered but also felt by those involved.

Her tenure as a District and Sessions Judge in Alappuzha and later in Thrissur saw her preside over numerous significant cases, bringing clarity and wisdom to the judicial process. Her rulings reflected a deep understanding of the law, coupled with an unwavering belief in the power of justice to transform lives.

Justice Sophy Thomas made history when she became the first woman to adorn the prestigious post of **Registrar General of the High Court of Kerala** on May 27, 2020. In this administrative role, she played a vital part in ensuring the smooth functioning of the judiciary, enhancing judicial efficiency, and modernizing court processes.

Her ladyship's tenure coincided with the global COVID-19 pandemic, a period that challenged the legal system like never before. However, under her guidance, the Kerala High Court adapted swiftly, pioneering virtual hearings and ensuring that justice remained accessible even in the most trying times. Her leadership during this period was not only commendable but also instrumental in setting a benchmark for judicial administration in the country.

Her ladyship's dedication to the judiciary was rightly recognized when she was sworn in as an **Additional Judge of the Kerala High Court on October 20, 2021**, and later confirmed as a **Permanent Judge on July 31, 2023**. In this capacity,

she continued to uphold the highest standards of judicial integrity, delivering judgments that not only upheld the law but also strengthened public faith in the legal system

Justice Sophy Thomas was successful in producing verdicts which are not only meaningful and clear to the parties to the dispute, but also beneficial to the entire legal arena as it cut through to the key issues raised, eliminating unnecessary background and elucidating well established principles. It is no cakewalk to seek to highlight particular judgments from a rich corpus of work; but it will be unfair to not to mention a few. In a decision which came to the rescue of hapless women in abusive marriages, it was held by her ladyship that if there exists some form of marriage, religious or customary, which has the colour of a legal marriage, then also the woman can seek protection under Section 498A, though later, for some reason, that marriage is found to be invalid in the eye of law. In another case, her ladyship categorically held that the victim of a crime should not be penalized for any procedural irregularities or technical defects committed by the investigating officer of the police. The viewpoints expressed in these cases reflects the broader societal effects of legal decisions beyond the immediate parties involved.

Beyond her legal expertise and impeccable integrity, Justice Sophy Thomas has always been known for her deep sense of empathy and humanity. When she was serving in Perumbavoor Munsif Court, a baby was abandoned in a veranda, outside her office on a rainy day. She came to know that the baby's mother, a mentally challenged woman, was chased away by the police while she was roaming the premises. It was a seven-month-old boy. Without an iota of hesitation, she wrapped the child in a turkey towel and took care of the baby till he was entrusted to a social worker. A daily published the picture of the baby in the towel with the title, Munsiff's motherly love came to the rescue of baby'. Apart from that, her ladyship ensured the well being of the baby by frequently contacting the social worker in charge.

Her commitment to social justice was also evident in her ruling that directed the Kerala government to ensure the proper distribution of sanitizers during the pandemic, reinforcing her belief that law must serve the people in their time of need.

Her ladyship's landmark rulings, especially in cases involving human rights, family disputes, and social justice, have left an indelible mark on the judiciary. She understood that justice is not merely about interpreting laws but about ensuring that the people who seek it find solace and fairness in the judicial process.

While Justice Sophy Thomas has been an outstanding pillar of the judiciary, she is also a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. She is married to **Dr. T. Y. Paulose**, a dedicated doctor serving at **VKM Hospital, Tripunithura**.

Her children have followed in her footsteps of excellence:

n **Dr. Prannoy Paul**, a doctor currently serving at **Medical College Hospital, Kolencherry**.

n **Priyanka Paul**, a judicial officer serving as **Munsiff at Aluva**.

Additionally, her family has expanded with the marriage of her daughter, **Priyanka Paul**, to **Dr. David Joseph**, who serves as a doctor at **Kristu Jayanti Hospital, Perumpilly**.

As Justice Sophy Thomas steps into retirement, we extend our deepest gratitude for her dedicated service and exemplary leadership. While she leaves the judicial corridors of the Kerala High Court, her influence will continue to resonate in the hearts of those she has mentored, inspired, and served.

Let us wish her a retirement filled with **peace, happiness, and the satisfaction of a career well served**. May this new chapter bring her opportunities to explore her passions, spend time with loved ones, and continue to contribute to society in new ways.

Jai Hind

Speech by Sri. Yeshwanth Shenoy, President, Kerala High Court Advocates' Association.

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Nitin Jamdar, Chief Justice, Hon'ble Mrs. Justice Sophy Thomas, Judges of this Hon'ble Court, Former Judges of this Hon'ble Court, Additional Advocate General, Director General of Prosecution, Deputy Solicitor General of India, Chairman of the Bar Council of Kerala, State Attorney, Secretary and the executive committee members of the Kerala High Court Advocates' Association, Coordinator, High Court Mediation Centre, Senior Advocates, the Registrar General, Registrars and Staff of this Court, law officers of the State and Central Government, Family members of Justice Sophy Thomas, Advocates Clerks and my Colleagues at the Bar, my brothers and sisters.

Today, we gather to celebrate the illustrious career of Justice Sophy Thomas and bid her farewell as she steps into a well-deserved retirement. The reason I say it is a well-deserved retirement is because Justice Sophy Thomas served the Judiciary for about 34 years.

Justice Thomas after having graduated in Law from the Govt. Law

College, Ernakulam and completing LLM from M.G University put in a practice of about 3 years as an advocate and practiced in the courts at Thodupuzha. Justice Sophy Thomas entered judicial service in 1991 as the Judicial Magistrate of Second Class, Mavelikkara, that marked the beginning of an exceptional journey. Her tenure saw her serve in various capacities, including Judicial First-Class Magistrate in Mavelikkara, Vaikom, and Vadakara, and Munsiff in Perumbavoor and Thrissur. She subsequently served as Sub Judge in Ernakulam and Muvattupuzha and held the role of Additional District and Sessions Judge for the Special Additional Sessions Court for the trial of Marad cases in Kozhikode. In 2011, Justice Thomas was appointed as the Judge of the Family Court in Ettumanoor, where she brought compassion and wisdom to her judgments. She also served as the Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal and District and Sessions Judge in Alappuzha, and later as the District and Sessions Judge in Thrissur in 2018. She was the first woman Registrar General of the High Court of Kerala from where she was elevated as an additional Judge of this Hon'ble Court in October 2021.

The journey of Justice Sophy Thomas would have been incredible because in those 34 years, she would have experienced the trials and tribulations of the common man who knocked the doors of Justice as a last resort in the various hierarchies of the Judicial Institution.

Even after retirement, a Judge of this Hon'ble Court carries along with them the tag of 'Justice' as a prefix to their name. This is just a reminder to them that even after their retirement they have to maintain values of the Judicial office. Any conduct that raises questions of integrity affect the Judicial institution and the Bar cannot afford to lose the faith of the People from the Judicial Institution. Therefore, even after retirement, the Judges have an obligation to the Bar and to the Judicial Institution itself to maintain the high values of the Judicial Office.

As Justice Sophy Thomas embarks on this new chapter of her life, we extend our heartfelt thanks for her tireless service and dedication. Her legacy will continue to inspire future generations of legal professionals especially the young women advocates. Justice Sophy Thomas should be happy because her own daughter Mrs. Priyanka Paul has chosen to follow her mother on the very same Journey that is coming to an end today.

I, on behalf of Kerala High Court Advocates Association wish you the Best of health, happiness, and fulfillment in your retired life. The gratitude of the Bar will be incomplete if we forget to thank Dr. T. Y. Paulose who had been

with you in this incredible Journey.

Speech by Honourable the Chief Justice Mr.Nitin Jamdar

Sister Justice Sophy Thomas, Esteemed Sister and Brother Judges, Former Judges of this Court, The Addl. Advocate General and the law officers of the State and the Union of India, Chairman, Bar Council of Kerala, President of the Kerala High Court Advocates' Association, President of the Senior Advocates' Association, President of the Kerala Federation of Women Lawyers, Senior Advocates, Members of the Bar, Dr. T.Y. Paulose & other family members of Justice Sophy Thomas, Members of the Advocates' Clerks' Association, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Today we have assembled to bid affectionate farewell to one of our colleagues on the Bench - Justice Sophy Thomas. After more than three decades of service in the District Judiciary and serving as a Judge of this High Court for more than three years, Justice Sophy Thomas will be demitting office on attaining the age of superannuation on 13th February, 2025.

2. Justice Sophy was born on 13th February, 1963, in Ernakulam District, in a family of agriculturists. After completing her Bachelor's degree in Zoology, Justice Sophy went on to obtain her Bachelor's degree in Law from Government Law College, Ernakulam, followed by Master's degree in Law from Mahatma Gandhi University.

3. After more than three years of practice in the District Judiciary, in February, 1991, Justice Sophy joined the Kerala Judicial Service and posted as Judicial Magistrate at Mavelikkara. After the years, she served in the District Judiciary in various capacity and stations.

4. Justice Sophy Thomas became the first woman Registrar General of this High Court on 27th May, 2020, and she continued this role till her elevation to the Bench of this High Court.

5. In the years 2020 & 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the resources and manpower were limited, her management and leadership skills as Registrar General ensured that the functioning of this Court was not hampered.

6. During her tenure as Registrar General, an IT Directorate was established in the High Court to streamline IT infrastructure for development and implementation of the e-court projects, various other Software Applications, and E-services of the High Court and District judiciary. Her contribution has led the way for remarkable

progress in ICT initiatives of the High Court of Kerala.

7. On 20th October 2021, Justice Sophy Thomas was elevated as an Additional Judge of the High Court of Kerala and, on 31st July, 2023, became permanent Judge of this Court.

8. On the Bench, she is known to be a humane Judge. Judgments authored by Justice Sophy reflect her legal acumen and experience of over the thirty years that she has put in. Her judgments in Matrimonial Appeals and Family Court matters show her sensitivity to human emotions.

9. To cite a few, in one of the decisions, Justice Sophy Thomas explained and expounded the role of human emotions and reactions in given circumstances and how one should view the law governing personal relationship.

10. In other decisions regarding Sec.498A of the Indian Penal Code and whether suicide note can be treated as a dying declaration, the law was explained succinctly.

11. In these three decades, Justice Sophy Thomas has discharged her duties and responsibilities as a judge in conformity with the true spirit of the oath administered to her.

12. On the administrative side of the High Court, Justice Sophy Thomas served as a Member of the Committee for Framing High Court Rules, High Court Service Rules, Committee for Sensitization of Family Court Matters, and a Special Committee for safety for women and various other Special Committees.

13. During my association with Justice Sophy Thomas on the administrative side, I found her open to new ideas and was always co-operative. She was always willing to shoulder the responsibilities given to her.

14. Undoubtedly, her achievements and long career was with full support from her family members. Acknowledgment and appreciations are due to Dr. Paulose and all other family members for the strength and support they have given to Justice Sophy in discharging her duties as Judge of this Court.

15. On behalf of my Sister and Brother Judges on the Bench and on my own behalf, I extend our sincere gratitude for Justice Sophy Thomas's unstinted support and cooperation in upholding the rich traditions of this Court.

16. All our best wishes to Justice Sophy for continued good health, happiness and for all her future endeavors.

Thank you.

Reply speech by the Honourable the Mrs. Justice Sophy Thomas,

“I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,

I will tell of, all your wonderful deeds”

Hon’ble Mr.Justice Nitin Jamdar, the Chief Justice of High Court of Kerala, my esteemed Brother and Sister Judges, respected former Judges of this Court, learned Additional Advocate General-Sri.Asok M. Cherian, President of the Kerala High Court Advocates’ Association-Sri.Yeshwanth Shenoy, learned Additional Advocate General-Sri.K.P.Jayachandran, Director General of Prosecutions- Sri.T.A Shaji, Addl. Director General of Prosecutions-Sri.Grashious Kuriakose, learned State Attorney- Sri.N.Manoj Kumar, Chairman Bar Council of Kerala-Sri.T.S. Ajith, other Law Officers of the Centre and the State, President of the Senior Advocates’ Association-Sri.N.Nandakumara Menon, respected Senior Advocates, President of the Kerala Federation of Women Lawyers-Smt.P.K Santhamma, esteemed members of this Bar, Registrar General and other Registrars of this Court, Directors of the Kerala Judicial Academy, Member Secretary KeLSA, Director Mediation Centre, my dear Judicial Officers, staff of this Court, as well as staff of the District Judiciary, my dear young lawyers, Advocate Clerks, friends, family, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, let me thank the Lord Almighty, for helping me to finish this race successfully, after a long run, spanning around 34 years.

I feel honoured and humbled by the kind words of affection and appreciation showered on me by Hon’ble the Chief Justice, learned Advocate General, and learned President of the Kerala High Court Advocates’ Association. My sincere thanks to all of them.

It was really a long journey, which I started on 25.02.1991, as a Judicial Second Class Magistrate at Mavelikkara. At that time, for a 28 year old village girl, this coveted position was not there, even in her distant dreams. I still believe it was not because of my merit, but because of His Providence, I could reach upto here, to occupy this noble seat of justice, in this prestigious institution.

Today, I am standing before you, on the eve of my demitting office, with a deep sense of gratitude, for the knowledge, friendship, and support you all have provided to make me what I am today.

It is time to look back and to remember with gratitude all who moulded me, guided me, and supported me upto this moment. I take this opportunity to reflect on the journey that brought me here and to express my gratitude to everyone who has been part of it.

My father late Sri.Mathew Thomas taught me the lessons of hardwork, and compassion, which is still guiding me. My senior late Adv.Sri.M.M Thomas taught me the basic lessons of Advocacy, which enabled me to be a topper in the judicial test. I am deeply indebted to both of them. Certainly, this would have been a proud moment for them to see me today completing my tenure, successfully, as they wished. I am sure they will be witnessing this function happily, from their heavenly abode. May God Almighty give them eternal bliss.

My sincere thanks to the members of the Collegium, who recommended my name, to be a Judge of this Court. Let me express my gratitude to Mr.Justice S.Manikumar, former Chief Justice of this Court, Mr.Justice C.T Ravikumar, former Judge of the Supreme Court and Mr.Justice K. Vinod Chandran, presently adorning the Bench of the Supreme Court. I can assure them, with hand on my heart, that I have done justice to the oath I have taken.

During my journey, in the District Judiciary, my portfolio Judges guided me with their wisdom and rich experience. May I gratefully remember the names of Justice K.T Thomas, Justice Kurian Joseph and Justice Cyriac Joseph who all later became Judges of the Supreme Court. My sincere thanks to former Judges of this Court Justice Pius.C. Kuriakose, Justice R.Basant, Justice Abdul Rehim, Justice Abraham Mathew and Justice A.V Ramakrishna Pillai, for their brotherly affection and guidance.

Wherever I go I was acknowledged as the first woman Registrar General of the High Court of Kerala. My sincere thanks to Justice S.Manikumar for giving me the opportunity to serve this prestigious High Court, as its Registrar General, first time in history. My special thanks to all the staff in the High Court, especially my staff in the Registry, for helping me to do my duties effectively, wiping out the general apprehension as to whether a woman can be the administrative head of a High Court having 47 Judges and around 2000 staff.

I remember with gratitude my Teachers at St.Little Teresa's Girls High School, a convent school in my village at Vazhakulam known as the 'Pineapple City of India'. The sisters there instilled in me qualities like honesty, austerity, empathy, and integrity, and all the more faith in God Almighty. With their guidance, I could pass out SSLC in flying colours. But when my friends, who secured lesser marks than me, were recruited as Clerks in BSNL, it was a sad moment for me. Since newspaper was a luxury in a farmer's family at that time, I couldn't see the notification to apply for that job. But, now I realise that God was having an amazing plan for me, and he was moulding me like clay in the hands of a potter. Otherwise, by this time, I would have retired as a Senior Clerk in BSNL.

I remember with gratitude my Teachers in Nirmala College, Muvattupuzha, where I did my Pre-Degree, and my Teachers at Newmans College, Thodupuzha, from where I was graduated in Zoology. My sincere thanks to my Zoology Professor Kochuthresia Thomas, who happened to be the wife of my Senior Advocate Sri.M.M.Thomas. When I was elevated as a Judge of this Court, both of them attended my swearing ceremony, and I am gratefully remembering their loving presence on that day.

While I was waiting for my M.Sc admission, quite accidentally and hesitantly, I joined Law College, Ernakulam, from where I was graduated in Law. I remember with gratitude all my Teachers in Government Law College, Ernakulam. Since I started practice at Thodupuzha, I could not pursue my dream of higher studies, though I got admission for LL.M in Govt.Law College itself. Later, through off-campus education extended by MG University, I secured LL.M at the age of 51 that too with first rank. I remember with gratitude all my teachers, and professors who helped me to achieve that dream.

As a first generation lawyer, especially a woman lawyer from a remote village, I was quite apprehensive about practicing as a lawyer. I had no idea where it would take me. But, I was filled with ambition, confidence and hope. I was fortunate to have a good senior, and I was surrounded with incredible colleagues and friends who guided me and supported me, in every step of the way.

While practicing at Thodupuzha, I was fortunate to attend criminal trials conducted by veteran criminal lawyer of Kozhikode Bar, the legendary Kunjirama Menon Sir, who was holding senior engagement with my senior, in complicated murder cases. As a raw junior, I was deputed to write down the depositions, while trial was going on. It really helped me a lot to understand the nuances of criminal jurisprudence.

My entry into the judicial service was after completing three years of practice at Thodupuzha. Soon I realised that it was really a tightrope walk for a lady judicial officer. The multitasking of a lady Judge, without compromising the judicial work is not that easy. Transfers to distant places in every three year was really a nightmare. Caring family and children, shifting schools every now and then, getting suitable transfers to spouse etc. were all difficult part of the game. It was a lifetime journey with trials and tribulations. In spite of all these things, I can say with confidence, that I was second to none, in disposal of cases. I was so particular that no case is delayed due to any laches from my part, and judgments are delivered on time. In this Court also, I have pronounced judgments in all the cases I have heard, and nothing is left out, when I step down. I am deeply indebted to the Bar, and my staff, for

standing by my side to dispose more number of cases, especially critically old criminal appeals pending for more than 20 years.

In fact, major part of my life was spent in court. It was my second home and not just a workplace. I embraced and enjoyed my career as a Judge.

My tenure as a Family Court Judge was quite challenging and fulfilling, where I could realise the ground realities of human life. Understanding human beings and human issues helped me to refine the Judge within me. I realised that the stronger tool for a Judge is their desire to understand human life rather than the legal power. In family disputes, I became more aware that ends of justice shall outweigh the ends of law. My sincere thanks to all the Advocates and staff at Family Court, Ettumanoor, for their hardwork and support, which ranked that court as one among the best Family Courts in Kerala.

After my elevation, during the initial period, I was sitting in Division with brother Justice A.Muhammed Mustaque dealing with family matters, and it was really an extended Family Court for me to do justice in much awaited and prolonged litigations. With the humane and compassionate approach of brother Justice Mustaque, we could resolve very many family disputes, and it was a remarkable period in my life.

I express my sincere thanks to all the brother Judges here, with whom I had shared the Bench. I remember with gratitude Justice A.Muhammed Mustaque, Justice Alexander Thomas, Justice Anil K. Narendran, Justice P.B Sureshkumar, Justice Devan Ramachandran, and Justice N. Nagaresh for their invaluable support and guidance.

I remember with gratitude all the staff, Advocates and Advocate Clerks at Alappuzha and Thrissur where I was Principal District Judge, for their invaluable support, to discharge my duties efficiently and effectively.

Let me express my sincere gratitude to former District Judge Sri.R Gopalakrishna Pillai and his wife late Smt.Rajamma, who were my Godfather and Godmother, caring even my personal affairs, when I joined service at Mavelikkara.

May I thank the Registrar General, Sri.G.Gopakumar, Registrar (District Judiciary), Sri.Nixon M.Joseph, Registrar (Judicial), Sri.Prabhathu Kumar.B, and all other Registrars and staff, for their unwavering support.

Let me thank the Protocol Officer, Sri.R. Ashok and his team, for making my travel plans smooth and comfortable. Let me thank the P.R.O Sri.T.S.Arun and his team, for their care and support extended to me.

Let me thank my Private Secretary Smt.Shanimole M.P, for taking care of all

my official and personal affairs.

My Personal Assistants, Smt.Deepa S.Vijayan, Smt.Soumya K.A, and Smt.Rejitha M.V, my Court Officer Smt.Shyni.P, Listing Officer Sri.Ullas.S, my Research Assistants Ms.Sugandha.P and Smt.Rishla Jabbar made my judicial work more effective and comfortable. My sincere thanks to them.

Let me thank my Escort Attendants Smt.Rani K.K and Smt.Mini A.E, Office Attendants Sri.Jothish.A, Sri.Ajayan K.V, Sri.Justin J. Chalissery and Sri.Ragesh K.R, for their wholehearted support.

My Chauffeur Sri.Jijumon Antony, was discharging his duties extremely well. He was so keen to take me on time to my destination, safely.

I was safe under the strong security provided by my Security Officers, Sri.Biju V.K and Sri.Sathyajith. Let me thank both of them.

Let me thank my Residence Guards Sri.Akhil, Sri.Arun Nath, Sri.Abhishek and Sri.Arunkumar, my Sevaks Smt.Manju and Smt.Gincy, and also my Part Time Sweeper Smt.Smitha, for their sincere love and support.

My mother, Smt.Aelikutty Thomas, was really a constant support for me. She is here to take me back to her world of pure and unconditional love. My sisters-Grace, Roslin and my only brother Tiji were all with me, throughout my life, with their loving presence and encouragement. I am indebted to them for my life.

My husband Dr.T.Y Paulose, my son Dr.Prannoy Paul, my daughter Smt.Priyanka Paul and son-in-law Dr.David Joseph make my family complete and comfortable and I am grateful to them for their love, support and understanding.

The job of a Judge is quite a demanding one. We are doing a divine job of administering justice. A Judge should be aware of the work he has undertaken and its seriousness. For administering justice upholding constitutional values, without fear or favour, a Judge requires strength and fortitude. I used to draw that strength from the God Almighty, the power house of all strength. All these years before going to the Bench, I had a silent prayer for showing me the right path, to do the right things, without hurting anybody, with my words or deeds. That prayer helped me to be confident in the Bench, and I believe that, so far, I was shown the right path, to judge righteously and to decide judiciously, understanding the sentiments of common man. I was sharing this experience, as I would be happy if it could help the upcoming judicial officers to discharge their functions confidently.

My request to the senior judicial officers in the District Judiciary is to treat your fellow officers with care, compassion and equality. You are the right persons to

guide them, to correct them, and to mould them, to make them good Judges. They are doing the same job of administering justice just like you, though in a different level. I am proud to say, while I was the Principal District Judge at Thrissur, we judicial officers used to go together for films and small trips, fostering our unity and fraternity. That really eased the stress and pressure in our workplace, and really helped to increase our productivity. It was a period when there was no happiness or wellness committee.

Nowadays many complaints are heard from the District Judiciary that the junior officers are not behaving properly in the court, in the office, and not respecting even their superior officers. In our days, even one day's seniority was respected by the officers, and they were depending each other, for clearing their doubts, both legal and procedural, as the present day facilities were only in dreams at that time.

A proactive Principal District Judge can take care of every issues within his Judicial District, either personal or professional, if he is ready to lend his ears to hear the grievances, and to extend a helping hand, with an open heart to his colleagues and staff. Where strict action is needed, in spite of all correctional measures, you shall not be hesitant to take appropriate action, otherwise you will be failing in your duty, and your inaction will be treated as your weakness.

We are all here for a limited period. Nothing is permanent, and everything has got an expiry date. Our power, money, beauty, fame or even the life itself is not permanent. So, why should we waste our precious time in our little life, showcasing our ego and pride. Let us try to live our life, without hurting the feelings of others, and without leaving painful memories in their minds.

One word I have to say to the junior lawyers is to be authentic personalities. Be true to yourself, to your client, to the court and be true, even to your opponent. Never give up. Hardwork will never go un-rewarded. Make your way to the top not by backstabbing, but by establishing early in your career, an unshakeable reputation, as a true and straightforward person. I am exhorting you the young lawyers to work hard to take the torch of success.

I take this farewell function as a sweet ending of my career, for a new beginning, to a new world of independence, to pursue my passions. Though it marks the end of my present role in life as a Judge, it is not a goodbye, but a big salute of thank you, for the memories, for the lessons, and friendship that will last forever in my life.

As King David prayed, my only prayer to God is, "do not cast me off, in the time of old age, do not forsake me, when my strength is spent" for you are my rock of refuge, and my fortress.

May God Bless you all.

Thank you. Jai Hind.
