



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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**MEDIA RELEASE
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OUTGOING CCJ PRESIDENT LAUDED AT CEREMONIAL SITTING

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. On Tuesday, 3 June 2025, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) convened a Ceremonial Sitting to pay tribute to the Honourable Mr Justice Adrian Saunders, outgoing CCJ President at the Queen’s Hall in Port of Spain, Trinidad. The Sitting marked the culmination of Justice Saunders’ remarkable judicial career and his distinguished tenure as President of the Court, which will formally conclude on 3 July 2025. The event was well-attended by representatives from across the region including Her Excellency, Dr Carla Barnett, CBE, Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Heads of Judiciaries, Judge Patrick Robinson (recently retired judge of the International Court of Justice), judicial officers, representatives from the Diplomatic Corps, law practitioners, academia, and past and present Court staff.

President Saunders was lauded throughout the Sitting as speakers reflected on his contributions to the development of Caribbean law, his enduring commitment to access to justice, and his transformative leadership of the Court. They also extolled his steadfast advocacy for human rights, judicial reform, and judicial education.

Delivering the first remarks of the day’s proceedings, the Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson, President-Designate of the CCJ, noted that President Saunders is the first graduate of the Caribbean legal education system to serve as President of the Court. He further commended him, stating: ‘Through his work, he has shown unwavering dedication to justice and the rule of law. He has consistently championed judicial reform and education. He is also deeply committed to the legal and intellectual growth of the Caribbean people. It is my honour and privilege to pay tribute to a true gentleman. His time on the Bench continues to shape a legacy that will endure for years to come.’

Professor Tracy Robinson of The University of the West Indies, Faculty of Law, Mona, hailed President Saunders as ‘without question one of the great Caribbean judges of the 21st century and one of our Constitutional Law giants.’ Speaking of his contributions to the region, she further commented ‘It’s not simply what he has said, it’s what he has done and how. His legacy has been forged through work and dialogue with others and an idea that we have much to gain from our “collective wisdom and experience”.’

In her tribute to President Saunders, the Honourable Mme Justice Roxane George, Chief Justice (Ag), Guyana, echoed sentiments shared by the Honourable Justices Winston Anderson and Peter Jamadar of the CCJ, referencing the opening lines of the President's opinion in the landmark case of Quincy McEwan et al v The Attorney General of Guyana. In that judgment, President Saunders wrote: "Difference is as natural as breathing. Infinite varieties exist of everything under the sun. Civilised society has a duty to accommodate suitably, differences among human beings. Only in this manner can we give due respect to everyone's humanity. No one should have his or her dignity trampled upon, or human rights denied, merely on account of a difference." These words, she noted, 'epitomise the overriding objective of the distinguished jurist we celebrate... a jurist who has championed access to justice, human rights and fairness, and has demonstrated an abiding commitment to the highest standards of excellence.'

While many of the presentations addressed President's legal acumen, they also focused on his leadership and love for people. In his presentation, the Honourable Mr Justice Ivor Archie, Chief Justice of Trinidad and Tobago described President as 'more than just a jurist'. He further elaborated that 'he is in every sense of the word a steward of justice, of principle and of people.'

A most moving tribute was delivered by Mr Sheldon Cambridge, Judge's Aide to President Saunders for 20 years. He shared stories of President Saunders throughout their time together, ultimately describing him as a mentor and a friend,

In his response, President Saunders touched on the public's prevailing attitude towards the CCJ. He observed that the true opinion of CARICOM towards the Court is demonstrated not by looking at the number of States that have acceded to the Court's Appellate Jurisdiction, but rather, by Member States' compliance with its decisions. He remarked 'this is an international, not a domestic court. Our only assets to enforce our judgments are the trust and confidence reposed in the Court by the governments and people of the region... Look instead at the timely and full compliance with those judgments, look at the regard they have for the intimations of the Court.'

Additional presentations were made by the full bench of the CCJ, the Hon. Mme Justice Yonette Cummings-Edwards, OR CCH, Chancellor of the Judiciary (Ag), Cooperative Republic of Guyana; the Hon. Mr Justice Ian Winder, Kt, Chief Justice, The Bahamas; and the Hon. Mr Justice Leslie Haynes, Chief Justice, Barbados. Remarks were also brought by Mr Donovan Walker, President, Organisation of Commonwealth Caribbean Bar Associations; the Hon. Mr Justice Reginald Armour, Justice of Appeal (Ag), Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court; and Ms E. Ann Henry, KC Deputy Chairperson, Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission.

The recording of the Ceremonial Sitting is available on the Court's YouTube channel here: [Ceremonial Sitting for the Hon Mr Justice Adrian Saunders](#).

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About the Caribbean Court of Justice:

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) was inaugurated in Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on 16 April 2005 and presently has a Bench of seven judges presided over by CCJ President, the Honourable Mr Justice Adrian Saunders. The CCJ has an Original and an Appellate Jurisdiction and is effectively, therefore, two courts in one. In its Original Jurisdiction, it is an international court with

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exclusive jurisdiction to interpret and apply the rules set out in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC) and to decide disputes arising under it. The RTC established the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). In its Original Jurisdiction, the CCJ is critical to the CSME and all 12 Member States which belong to the CSME (including their citizens, businesses, and governments) can access the Court's Original Jurisdiction to protect their rights under the RTC. In its Appellate Jurisdiction, the CCJ is the final court of appeal for criminal and civil matters for those countries in the Caribbean that alter their national Constitutions to enable the CCJ to perform that role. At present, five states access the Court in its Appellate Jurisdiction, these being Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, and Saint Lucia. However, by signing and ratifying the Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Court of Justice, Member States of the Community have demonstrated a commitment to making the CCJ their final court of appeal. The Court is the realisation of a vision of our ancestors, an expression of independence and a signal of the region's coming of age.

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