

SJ's address at Ceremony for the Admission of the New Senior Counsel
(English only)

Chief Justice, members of the Judiciary, Chairman of the Bar, Former
President of the Law Society, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Administration, may I extend our warmest
congratulations to Mr Paul Lam, Mr Wesley Wong, Mr Simon Tam, Ms Yvonne
Cheng, Dr William Wong, Ms Audrey Campbell-Moffat, Ms Roxanne Ismail
and Mr Mark Strachan upon their much deserved appointment as Senior
Counsel.

This joyful occasion is the 16th Formal Call of Senior Counsel
since the establishment of the Hong Kong SAR. As pointed out by the
Chief Justice just now, it is also a record year since 1997 in terms
of number as we have a total of eight new Silks appointed today.

Mr Paul Lam is an experienced practitioner whose practice covers
a wide range of civil matters. I have the opportunity of working with
Paul on various occasions. His dedication, hard work and in-depth
legal knowledge are most impressive. Apart from being generous with
his time in passing his experience to his numerous pupils, Paul serves
in various boards and tribunals including the Town Planning Appeal
Board Panel, the Inland Revenue Board of Review, the Appeal Board in
respect of Amusement Game Centre and the Registration of Persons
Tribunal.

Mr Wesley Wong is my colleague in the Department of Justice, and
has long been regarded as a high-flyer. He started off as a legal
trainee and is a fine product of cross-fertilisation that takes place
in the Department. Wesley has worked in the Civil Division, the Legal
Policy Division and the Prosecutions Division. In each of these
Divisions, Wesley demonstrates his in-depth knowledge of government
operation as well as superb skills of analysis and good judgment.

Mr Simon Tam is another much respected colleague of mine in the
Department of Justice. Simon is a shining example of how hard work
and determination can bring success. Not only has Simon come up from
the rank of a Court Prosecutor to be a Senior Counsel, he first started
off as a prison officer. Joining the Prosecutions Division of the
Department of Justice in 1981 was certainly a good career move, as

he decided it was better to stay out of prison than inside. That said, Simon from time to time still goes to prison, although only to visit his former colleagues. During his 30 years as a prosecutor, Simon has prosecuted many cases of great importance and has made significant contribution to our criminal jurisprudence.

Ms Yvonne Cheng is a well-known high-power civil practitioner who has established reputation in various areas of law including rating, town planning and revenue. For those who know Yvonne would know that her husband is Mr Eugene Fung SC, who took silk last year. If my information is correct, Yvonne's appointment as a Senior Counsel is record-making in that Yvonne and her husband Eugene is apparently the first married couple of Senior Counsel in the legal history of Hong Kong. In addition to her expertise in law, Yvonne has a keen interest in Facebook games, especially the one called "Words with Friends" which is a game similar to Scrabble. With a bit of insider information, I can disclose a not too well-known secret: Yvonne's command of the English language is so good that she often beats one of our Court of Appeal judges who is also present in this court room right now.

Dr William Wong is an expert in company law as well as commercial law. Apart from acting as counsel in a various high profile cases (including the latest Court of Final Appeal case which receives much attention, namely, SFC v Tiger Asia Management LLC, FACV Nos. 10-13 of 2012, May 10, 2013), William is the co-author of a well-known text called "Company Law: Powers and Accountability". Besides, William has immense knowledge on Chinese commercial law and was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy in 2012 by Peking University.

Ms Audrey Campbell-Moffat is household name in the Criminal Bar. She worked with the Fraud Investigation Group of the Crown Prosecution Service and was a member of the UK Government Fraud Advisory Panel before she started practice in Hong Kong. As a devoted supporter of advocacy training, Audrey is currently the Honourary Treasurer of both the International Advocacy Training Council and the Hong Kong Advocacy Training Council. Audrey's contribution to advocacy training deserves commendation and appreciation, as many pupils and junior barristers have benefited from Audrey's work throughout the years.

Ms Roxanne Ismail is another well-known company law specialist, especially in the field of insolvency. She has served as a member of

the Standing Committee on Company Law Reform since February 2011, and has made much contribution in respect of the massive Companies Ordinance re-write exercise commenced in 2006. Roxanne is also a contributor to Tolley's "Insolvency Law" and "Hong Kong Court Forms in Civil Proceedings - Companies Winding Up". In addition to company matters, Roxanne also practises extensively in other areas including telecommunication appeals, data protection appeals as well as judicial reviews concerning insider dealings and Medical Council matters.

Mr Mark Strachan is another exemplary advocate with a high-power civil practice. With his appointment as a Senior Counsel in Hong Kong today, Mark is now a "double silk" as he was appointed as a Queen's Counsel in 1987 before he started practice in Hong Kong in 2002.

Mark, nothing personal, but do forgive me for saying a few words which would touch on your age. Before doing so, I would make a plea of mitigation on the ground that the inspiration came from my colleague, Mr Kevin Zervos SC, the Director of Public Prosecution, who also happens to be in Court today. I am told that when Kevin took silk in 2003, you referred to Kevin as the "Young Silk" and Kevin would retort by calling you the "Old Silk". Well, now the tables have turned. You are now the "Young Silk" and Kevin has become the "Old Silk". Or should I say, you are the "Youngest Old Silk" or the "Oldest Young Silk" in Hong Kong's legal history. Mark, well done on both counts.

My Lords, I have no doubt that each of the new Silks appointed today will bring to the Inner Bar a wealth of expertise and talent. Besides, with the appointment of Yvonne, Audrey and Roxanne, the total number of female Senior Counsel in Hong Kong has increased from nine to 12. This represents a significant increase, and is in sharp contrast to the latest situation in the UK where, as a recent article published in The Guardian pointed out, there has been a significant fall in the number of female barristers appointed Queen's Counsel. Further, on the eve of Mother's Day, it may be pertinent to note that each of the three female Senior Counsel appointed today are also caring mothers. Life in the Bar is demanding. To have to perform the role of a mother on top of having to discharge the demanding duties of a barrister is definitely not easy. Yvonne, Audrey and Roxanne deserve special acknowledgment for having performed their dual roles in excellent manner.

Taking silk means becoming part of a great and long-standing tradition. The status as Senior Counsel is not and should not be viewed as simply a badge of personal achievement, still less a licence to print money. It carries with it a responsibility to serve our community by upholding the rule of law and by enhancing the strength of our legal profession. For Hong Kong to remain competitive and to remain our home, members of the legal profession including Senior Counsel have an important role to play. The legal landscape and indeed the whole world are changing rapidly. The road ahead is full of challenges. Senior Counsel have to take the lead with strategic vision, sound judgment, balanced rationality and firm commitments.

On this note, may I conclude by paying tribute to families and friends of the new Silks who have given them their loyal support, and may I also wish all the new Silks every success in their future practice and public service.

Thank you.

Ends/Saturday, May 11, 2013