

OPENING OF THE LEGAL YEAR 2025

THE RT. HON. SIR MAURICE KAY-PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL'S SPEECH

Chief Justice, Mr Attorney and Mrs Lejuene I too thank you for your kind and generous words. It was typically perceptive of you Chief Justice to emphasise Sir Colin's intellectual rigour while confining your observations about me to allege generosity of spirit. To have spent some of the last ten years of a long working life in the Court of Appeal has been an immense privilege and I am pleased to have this opportunity to thank my past and present colleagues on the court for all their help and support. As President one of my main functions has been to ensure that the Justices of Appeal appointed to this court are judges of the highest calibre. One always tries to be self-critical about one's professional activities, but I can say with some satisfaction that this Court of Appeal is the envy of most comparable jurisdictions. One of the reasons for this is that with the encouragement of the Chief Justice, we have limited recruitment to recently retired Lord Justices of Appeal from the Court of Appeal of England and Wales. I do not think that the Courts of Appeal in the other overseas territories have remained so prescriptive. I hope that you think that our policy has been and remains successful in maintaining the quality of the court.

For my part, I would like to express my thanks to all the Justices of Appeal who have sat with me in my ten years as President. They have been constantly helpful, industrious, good humoured and wise. I wish them well under their new President, Sir Nigel Davis; I know that I am leaving you all in very good hands.

One of the delights of sitting here is the cordial relationship that we have with the local judiciary. It is truly remarkable that a small jurisdiction can produce such high quality judges. We hold them all, including our Registrar Karl Tonna in the highest esteem. Any functioning court system requires an efficient administration. We have had the great good fortune to be backed up by the Gibraltar Courts Service under the highly skilled leadership of Hazel Cumbo, my colleagues and I owe all of them an immense debt of gratitude. For over ten years I have experienced and enjoyed the talents of the Gibraltar Bar. It includes advocates of conspicuous ability who are at least the equals of leading practitioners anywhere. I thank them for their enormous assistance, courtesy and friendship. I hope you can tell from this catalogue just how

profoundly my colleagues and I appreciate and enjoy our time in Gibraltar. It is a real privilege. It results not just in affection but a depth of attachment and admiration that will not lapse with retirement. So I thank you all for your friendship and hospitality.

The final lesson I have learnt, is that no one should keep the Chief Justice from his samosas for long. So it gives me great pleasure officially to declare this new Legal Year open, thank you very much.

Sir Maurice Kay
Court of Appeal President

26 September 2025