

President's speech 2018

Madam Past-President , committee members and friends, I rise to make this short speech and to thank you for reposing your trust in me.

This is only one day after history has been made; we have a first solicitor Lord Chancellor! I hope that he will understand how we work and not be manipulated by the Sir Humphreys of this world.

Firstly I must pay tribute to Nehal Vasani, our outgoing President and her 'team' who have kept this local law society moving along with both entertaining and informative events over the past couple of years or so.

Without their active participation, undertaken without payment I hasten to add, we would be dead and buried.

Our two West London Law Society Council members continue to make valuable contributions to the profession and on the committee we have a total of four council

members, Nehal Vasani for Westminster and Denise Lester for Childcare law.

We, at West London Law Society support the Personal Support Unit at the - Royal Courts of Justice , the Central Family Court and the Family Court at West London which - provides invaluable support to litigants in person who are unable to afford legal advice and /or ineligible for legal aid.

Well, what can I say? This is the fourth time that I have had the 'ring' round my neck and I still feel like Frodo – except that I will not be traveling to Mordor to destroy it.

The West London Law Society has a proud record of standing up for clients and the profession as a whole, especially the publicly funded part of the profession which is under such pressure today.

To a certain extent I worry about the future. It is difficult to advise any prospective solicitor to enter the profession in a legal aid practice – but if that is the dream of a law

student, we as a local law society must encourage the next generation of solicitors – provided that they go into the profession with eyes wide open.

Going back in time, who would have thought that, at the age of about 18, when I went to Bow Street Magistrate's Court and before I started reading law, that I would qualify and become the President of a local law society on no less than 4 occasions; between 1997 and 2018!

In 1971 my late cousin, Bernard Kissen who was a Council Member, invited me to a Solicitor's Journal event. I arrived, dressed in my only suit and knowing no one except my host. I ended up in a corner with an elderly man and we discussed the future of the legal professions. I told him that I thought that, in my lifetime but not my professional lifetime, I would see solicitors with the same rights of audience as barristers. Don't forget, this was 1971! My cousin walked over, bowed formally and said,

“Master, may I formally introduce Mr Julian Young.” With horror I realised that I had been speaking to then Master of the Rolls, the great Lord Denning. He just looked at my cousin and said, “Don’t worry Mr Kissen, Mr Young and I have been having a fascinating conversation about the future of the legal professions” and then calmly continued his conversation with me.

I was both right and wrong; it was with in my lifetime *and* my professional lifetime that Higher Rights of Audience came into being, with criminal rights which I have exercised since 1999.

Yes, I was the advocate who told a District Judge that my client, a part-time gardener who was then unemployed, was seeking work in other fields.

I also told a District Judge that my client, an Australian in the travel agency business who had been drinking far too

celebrating Australia Day, spent his time ‘fostering’ good relations between his country and ours.

I’m sure that the West London Law Society will go from strength to strength with an imaginative agenda of meetings. We shall soldier on in the face of problems.

A contrary view might be found, whilst we are in, or coming out of, a purported economic recession and with costs in the forefront of the minds of the Treasury, Ministry of Justice Ministers and civil servants, in the thoughts of that inestimable [non-legal] expert Sir Humphrey Appleby, “You can’t put the nation’s interest at risk just because of some silly sentimentality about justice.” I hope that the new Lord Chancellor will force a change of attitude.

Watch words for the future?

“Our liberal and democratic Society cannot afford to sacrifice criminal justice, the rule of law and confidence in

the criminal justice system on the altars of cost, speed and expediency.”

“Justice on the cheap, cheapens justice” as Ian Kelcey said.

Thank you again for your trust in me – and good health for the forthcoming year.

Julian Young