

FAREWELL SPEECH ON 13.04.2017

My esteemed brother and sister colleagues,
Shri Sanjay Jain, Additional Solicitor General,
Shri Kirti Uppal, President, Delhi High Court Bar Association,
Shri J.P. Sengh, Vice-President, Delhi High Court Bar Association,
Shri Amit Sharma, Secretary, Delhi High Court Bar Association,
Shri Rahul Mehra, Senior Standing Counsel, Govt. of NCT of Delhi
Other Standing Counsel of the Central and State Government,
Executive Members of the Delhi High Court Bar Association,
Office-bearers of District Courts Bar Associations,
Senior Advocates,
Members of the Bar,
District & Sessions Judges,
My friends and family,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

At the outset I express my deep sense of gratitude for the kind words said about me.

What you have said truly reflects the measure of love, affection and kindness of the Bar and Bench towards me. I am overwhelmed and I will cherish the same forever.

Having practiced as an advocate for about two decades and then having been on the Bench for about 16 years, it is a long and strong attachment I have developed with the system of administration of justice.

When I started the journey way back in the year 1981 as a young advocate with no legal background, it was completely unplanned.

But God is so kind to me that the exalted office of the Chief Justice of Delhi High Court became the destination to this splendid journey.

It is my great fortune that I could come as Chief Justice to this Court - the most prestigious High Court of the country which has carved out a special position for itself amongst the premier courts not only within India but also internationally.

It is really a matter of great pride for me to achieve the distinction of being the first woman Chief Justice of this prestigious Court.

I am the first in my family to enter the legal profession and when I joined the Bar, except possessing a law degree I knew nothing about the legal profession. In fact, I joined the profession by chance and it was never my choice.

During the early days in my career, on many occasions I had a serious doubt whether I could continue.

I am grateful to my senior Sh.Koka Raghava Rao who supported and encouraged me to continue in the profession. I never even dreamt of, but he strongly believed that one day I would make a distinct mark in the field of law.

I am extremely happy that my revered senior and mentor Shri Raghava Rao is present in this august gathering and is proud to see the rise of his disciple in the career. I shall forever be indebted to him for his true blessings and guidance which enabled me to reach this stage.

I am also very fortunate to have the support of my parents and my siblings who have always encouraged me to continue in the legal profession and extended the fullest support at every stage of my life.

I always believed that the office of a Judge is not a mere matter of status and authority but it is a responsibility to be discharged with great care and compassion.

This has always been in my mind while performing my duty as a Judge and perhaps this is one of the reasons why I have concentrated all through my tenure on quality of justice rendered rather than the quantity.

I also strongly believe that the members of the Bar representing the litigant parties are better informed both with regard to the facts of the case as well as the legal issues.

Therefore, I always made it a point to give a patient hearing to the counsel appearing for the parties and to understand the case before passing any order.

It is my great fortune that during my tenure as Chief Justice we have celebrated the momentous occasion of this Court setting a milestone of half a century in its journey.

I am proud to state that Delhi High Court today occupies a unique place in the judicial system of our country on account of the high quality of litigation being dealt with in different fields of law. I consider myself privileged and fortunate to be in this Court for some time to serve the cause of justice in a humble way.

I have seen and observed that the Bar in Delhi High Court has been very co-operative and maintained cordial relationship with the Bench to upkeep the high esteem of this institution. It is really appreciable that the Bar fully understands its responsibility towards the Court and provides the desired assistance.

I am very happy and grateful to the learned members of the Bar for being very kind and affectionate towards me and for having extended the fullest co-operation to enable me to discharge my duties on the judicial side. I can say without hesitation that no unpleasant incident has taken place in my Court at any point of time.

During my tenure as Chief Justice of this Court, I had the good fortune of sharing the Bench with Justice Pradeep Nandrajog, Justice R.S. Endlaw, Justice Jayant Nath, Justice V.K. Rao and Justice Sangita Dhingra Sehgal. I am grateful for the great assistance received from each one of them.

The support extended and the affection shown towards me by all my brother and sister Judges has been quite phenomenal and I take this opportunity to thank each one of my brother and sister Judges for the love and affection showered on me.

Whatever progress I could achieve for development of this Court on the Administrative Side could become possible only with the constant support and insightful suggestions by my colleague Judges.

I am very grateful to the members of the Registry of the High Court and all the staff members who always extended their services whole-heartedly.

A special mention has to be made about the valuable assistance rendered by Justice Vinod Goel and Justice Chandra Shekar while they were functioning as the Registrar General and Registrar Vigilance respectively during the first two years of my tenure. I take this opportunity to thank them for all the support extended.

I also thank Mr.Girish Kathpalia, the Registrar General, Mr.Dinesh Kumar Sharma, Registrar (Vigilance) and Mr. H.C. Suri, Registrar-cum-PPS who have taken utmost care on all the issues on the Administrative side to ensure smooth functioning of the Registry of this Court as well as the District Courts.

My thanks are also due to Mr. Pankaj Kumar my Private Secretary, Mr. Amit Narayan, Mr.Kaushal Kumar Sachdeva and Mr.Prem Mohan Choudhary, my stenographers who have spared no efforts to discharge their duties with efficiency and to my satisfaction.

I am also thankful to Mr. R.K. Gupta, Court Master, Mr. C.S. Longia, Assistant Court Master, Mr. Arjun Singh, Restorer, and Court Attendants - Mr. Ghanshyam Maurya, Mr. Karan Rao, Mr. Puran Prajapathi and Mr. Than Singh for the distinguished services rendered by them.

My Usher - Mr. Jai Singh Rawat who worked with utmost sincerity and commitment and took every care to see that I am not inconvenienced on any account needs a special mention.

I am also thankful to my personal staff at residence - Mr.Vinayak & Mr. Melvin, Senior Judicial Assistants, Mr. Anand Prakash, Mr.Narayan Dutt Joshi, Mr Amit, Mr. Randheer Choudhary, Ms.Babita, Ms.Meenakshi and Ms.Deepali, the Court Attendants and Mr.Ram Awadh Yadav and Mr. Vinay Sharma, the two Chauffeurs who have been extremely hardworking and have been very affectionate and kind to me and my family members.

I also thank my Personal Security Officers - Mr.Jagat Singh, Mr.Sachin Kumar and Mr.Krishan Kumar as well as all the staff members of Delhi Police who are posted at my residence for the distinguished services rendered by them.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention about my parents and my family with whom I am very attached. I can say without any hesitation that what I am today is only because of my revered parents Late Sri G. Surya Rao and Smt.G. Savitri. I can never forget the concern they have shown and the support they have extended so as to ensure that I continue my practice in Hyderabad without any interruption. They decided to settle in Hyderabad only for the sake of my practice in High Court. But for the support they have extended, I do not think that I would have reached this position. I thank the Almighty for giving me such wonderful parents. I wish and pray that all girl children are blessed with such parents who believed in respecting the sentiments of a daughter and supporting her in all situations. I am the most fortunate daughter to receive such support, love and blessings of my parents all through.

I am also very fortunate to be a member of a closely knitted family.

My Brothers - Mr. G.V R Murthy and Dr. Jagannath, my sisters in law- Mrs. Padmini and Mrs Sai Sudha, my nephews Vijay and Ajay and my dearest friends Mrs. Sarada and Mr.Srinivas have made it a point to be here with me today.

It is a matter of great joy for me to have the company of many of my friends, well wishers and former staff members who have come all the way from Hyderabad to be with me and to make me happy and confident while laying down the office.

Words are inadequate to express my gratitude to them for their love and affection.

I must also say about Ms. Anureeta Sharma, who has been the only Law Researcher truly associated with me during my entire tenure. But for her unconditional support in each and every endeavor of mine, her love & affection and constant efforts to make me happy and comfortable always, I would not have been in a position to overcome the stress attached to the high office I held.

I must acknowledge with utmost gratitude the guidance, support, love and affection I have received from Hon'ble Shri Justice N.V. Ramanna, Judge, Supreme Court of India. Right from the day I met him about two decades ago, he stood by me always like a true brother. I am extremely fortunate to receive his love and affection in abundance. More than me, it has always been his dream and mission that I should attain greater heights in my career. His words of wisdom, genuine affection and his moral support enabled me to discharge not only my judicial duties effectively but also to remain confident and unperturbed always.

He has truly been the source of my inspiration all these years. No amount of words is enough to express my heart-felt gratitude to him and I continue to pray for his happiness, health, prosperity and success in all his endeavors.

Before concluding, I must say that as I part with this exalted office, I am the most contended person today.

I am laying down the office with utmost satisfaction of discharging the pious duty ordained to me by the Almighty to the best of my ability.

Parting is always painful, but I am alive to the fact that it is inevitable one day or other to every member of the judiciary and what remains forever is the great institution. Many eminent Judges served and laid down their offices at the end of their tenure and today it is my turn to take leave of you. The time spent by me during the long tenure of 16 years on the Bench, more particularly the last three years I have spent in this Court remains an extra-ordinary part of my life forever.

I must also say that I am greatly indebted to this institution which gave me not only the name and fame but also maturity in thinking and clear notions about the values of life.

I conclude wishing this Court continued progress and prosperity. I am sure that the members of the Bar will ensure that the prestige, dignity and independence of this Court will ever continue.

Thank you once again for the co-operation extended and the love & affection showered on me.

I shall forever, carry with me and cherish the memory of the most remarkable years I have spent amidst all of you in this Court.

Thank You.