

Good afternoon, Hon'ble the Chief Justice Ms. G. Rohini, my esteemed brothers and sister judges. I am indeed overwhelmed by the kind and generous words spoken about me by all the previous speakers. I wonder, if I really deserve these accolades. Nevertheless, I accept the honour, bestowed on me with all the humility.

Hon'ble Chief Justice G. Rohini is one of the most affable people I have come across. She meets everyone with the pleasant smile and exudes positive vibes. It is always a pleasure to be associated to a person like her. She doesn't seem an outsider to us and in fact she has become a part of this judicial family. In a short span of time she has endeared herself with all the colleagues and the members of the Bar and given us a feeling that she has been with us ever since. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to you.

It was the ardent desire of my father, Shri Arjun Das Gambhir, to see me become a lawyer but regretfully, he did not live long enough to even see me complete my law course. However, something in me

constantly tells me that it is because of his heavenly blessings that I could make it to the exalted position of a High Court Judge. It was a dream come true.

Every individual has a success story. I too have one. Being a first generation lawyer, and coming from a middle class family, success did not come easy to me. Compelled by circumstances, I started searching for a job and found one under the able guidance of my elder brother Sh. T.R. Gambhir. But service was not my cup of tea. It did not match my personality. Hence I resigned from service and joined the Bar in the year 1979. It was not an easy decision to take, and yet I took a calculated risk.

The struggle of a lawyer begins, from the very first day he enters the office of a senior lawyer and with every passing day it gets more and more onerous. Anxiety grips you, frustration creeps in, and above all empty pockets make you despondent. I went through all this, but today, I can say with pride, that I succeeded in smoothening all the rough edges, and overcame, the pitfalls, that came my way.

Early in the profession when I did not have much legal work and was still struggling to find my feet in the corridors of Tis Hazari Courts, I digressed a little, and thought of contesting the Bar election. So in the year 1983, I stood for the post of Additional Secretary (civil) and to my pleasant surprise won with a massive mandate. The Bar politics is an addiction. Having won an election I went on to fight a series of other elections. I was twice elected to the post of Additional Secretary, twice as Hony. Secretary and finally became the President of the Bar in the Year 1997. Without being boastful, I am proud of the fact that I became the youngest President of the Delhi Bar Association after defeating many a stalwarts in a multi-cornered contest. Having reached the pinnacle in bar politics, it was time to pay fulsome attention to the profession. One of my well wishers advised me to shift to the High Court. I told him that shifting to the High Court would mean uprooting me from my moorings. He then advised me to try for some panel. Luck favoured me and also my unblemished reputation as a leader of the bar that helped me in getting appointed as Additional Standing Counsel for the

Government of NCT of Delhi in the year 2000. I fully dedicated myself to this challenging task and totally divorced myself from bar politics. In the year 2004 I was appointed as Standing Counsel to represent Union of India and in the year 2006 I became a Judge of this Court.

Today, when I stand before you, I feel, as if, it was only yesterday that all this happened, though these years have left me with grey hair. This is the time to thank all my friends at the bar who stood by me in thick and thin. I am not spelling out their names because if I start doing that, this speech will never end. All I wish to say, and I am saying so from the core of my heart is that I received unprecedented love and affection from one and all including from those who were my opponents in Bar politics. The credit entirely goes to them. I would not have been what I am today had it not been for their unflinching and firm support.

I am immensely happy to see Mr. Rajiv Khosla and Mr. Jatan Singh , as President and Vice President respectively of the Delhi High Court Bar Association , also Mr. Sanjay Jain as the Additional Solicitor

General of the country. We all owe our roots to Tis Hazari Courts from where we all began this journey and I am glad to see them perform really well in their respective domains today. Even Mr. K.K Mannan and Mr. Rahul Mehra who owe their roots to Patiala House Courts have done extremely well for themselves.

*Life is like a piano, white keys are happy moments & Black keys are sad moments...but remember... that sweet music is only possible ...when both the keys are played together.*

Today when I look back, I recall many memorable events both painful and joyous.

The event that I found most painful was the lathi charge in the precincts of the Tis Hazari Courts. It was for the first time ever that the lawyers were mercilessly beaten by the police and the paramilitary forces, resulting in severe injuries to me and many of my colleagues. The incident sparked so much of outrage that an enquiry committee consisting of the sitting Judges of the high court was set up and the rest is history.

One other incident that caused me immense pain was the sudden bomb blast on 7th September, 2011 near the reception counter of the Delhi High Court resulting in loss of life of a young budding lawyer and caused injuries to many. The incident coincided with my birthday. Amidst all this chaos that ensued because of the horrific incident, I forgot it was my birthday and straight away went to the spot to check that no blast victim remained unattended.

As I said there were also joyful moments. I got the unique opportunity, to celebrate the centenary function of Tis Hazari Courts in 1993. Everyone knows that it turned out to be a great success. I can also take the credit of starting the educational lecture series for the young members of the Bar with the active assistance of the Delhi High Court Bar Association and Bar Association of other District Courts under the banner of "Learning to Share". Success story of these lecture series is well known to the members of the Bar and the Bench. I also started seminars for the first time in the District Bar and also organized Law-Day for the first time in the District Bar.

No Court is complete without a healthy Bar and no Judge can dispense real justice without the co-operation of the Bar. Speaking for myself I received utmost co-operation from the Bar. This Court has produced many legal luminaries and even at present there is no dearth of talent. This High Court is full of young, energetic lawyers who I feel, have abilities that border excellence and are capable of matching any adversary of good standing. If I am to compare myself with them, then I must candidly admit, that when I was there age, I did not possess or exude the same confidence, as they do. From Monday onwards I will miss their beaming faces fully charged and ready to face any challenge. Having said all this, I have a piece of advice for some of the freshers who are hesitant to take up litigation and prefer to join corporate firms. The reason, it seems, is instant monetary gratification. To them I have to say that lawyer in the true sense is the one who has gone through the rough patches of the profession and has stood his ground despite heavy odds. Initial years no doubt are tough but if one is able to hold oneself in those testing times, I can assure you that luck will smile at you and there will be no

looking back. Remember there is no substitute for hard work, honesty and integrity. I am reminded of an Urdu couplet,

***“Kirdaar se banaeye meinyaar Zindagi halat se Haiyaat ka sauda na kijaaye.”***

At this juncture, I would also want to make a suggestion to the Bar leaders, to help hold an interactive session of Senior lawyers with the young members of the bar on monthly basis, wherein the young lawyers can get their doubts pertaining to legal issues addressed by the seniors and impart their rich reservoir of knowledge that they possess and the interaction should be devoid of any monetary benefit.

Independence of Judiciary is the hall- mark of any democracy.

***Jerome Frank an American Legal philosopher*** said and I quote:

*"Courts in a democracy do not belong to lawyers or the Judges, they belong to the people."*



In today's media saturated atmosphere best selfies are the judgments. It is not the audience that matters. It may applaud you and you may hog the limelight. But what is important is whether you have done real justice to that consumer of justice who knocked at your door as his last hope. If you have given him back his stars, his is the real applause. I ask myself, have we succeeded? If not, will we ever succeed? I leave today with these questions craving for an answer.

A very important part of my this speech I have reserved for my colleagues on the Bench. I take pride in saying that we are a unique Court. We have many firsts to our credit. Our court took to lead in setting up E-Courts, Arbitration Centre, Full-fledged Medical Centre which caters not only to judges but also to lawyers, staffs and litigants. And above all we are a cohesive group who work in-tendem. Sometimes, we do have differences but they are confined only to institutional interests and they get buried soon after the issues are over. Differences of opinion in the words of Mahatama Gandhi should not mean hostility. He said and I quote: "If they did, I

and my wife would have been sworn enemies." My colleagues have been very co-operative, friendly, loving and affectionate. If unwittingly I ruffled any feather I am sure it will be forgotten. I shall miss them a lot.

I also take this opportunity to thank my wonderful staff. Mr. Raj Kumar Rawat, Assistant Registrar-cum- Private Secretary, who has been with me since the very first day, other members of my Court staff, who also performed their duties with all sincerity and devotion. I will always cherish their love and affection. I also acknowledge the valuable contribution of all my Law Researchers and Interns, I thank them for their dedicated services in the research work.

I wish to record my deep appreciation for the support and assistance extended to me by the Registry Officials in carrying out my duties on the administrative side.

My speech would be incomplete if I do not acknowledge the untiring support of my wife Ambika who always stood by me like a rock even in the most difficult times of my life, both my sons and

daughter-in-law for giving me unflinching support and encouragement in the discharge of my duties.

Partings are always painful. Although I am leaving with a heavy heart but with sheer satisfaction that whatever was within my means, I did for the institution and now I leave it to my posterity as I am not to judge me for my success and failure.

Thank you all.