

OPENING ADDRESS BY DILANI ALGARATNAM, PRESIDENT OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE FACULTY OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

It is indeed an honour for us at the Alumni Association to host this eminent gathering and welcome you, the Honourable Judges of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, Professors of Law, President's Counsel and our alumni and their spouses, to this celebration marking the 75th year of the Faculty of Law. I would like to, in particular, recognize on behalf of the Executive Committee and the Chairperson of this event, Mr. Mohamed Illiyas, President's Counsel, our distinguished invitees:

Lord Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya, PC

Hon Attorney General Sanjaya Rajaratnam, PC

Former Chief Justice and alumnus Justice Asoka de Silva who is also the Chair of our Education Trust, for which this event also is a fund raiser.

Emeritus Professor G.L. Pieris and Emeritus Professor Savithri Goonesekera, both alumni & revered lecturers and Vice Chancellors of the University of Colombo

Prof. H. D. Karunaratne, Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo

Prof. Sampath Punchihewa, the Dean of the Faculty of Law

Dr. Athula Pathinayake, Principal Law College; and

Mr. Kaushalya Navaratne, President of the Bar Association

We thank you for accepting our invitation.

We are here to celebrate a significant milestone of the Faculty of Law, all of us are justly proud of. The law and the values that the Faculty has inculcated in us, have given us the foundation to find our calling, whether it be as practicing lawyers, as members of the academia, as businessmen or women, diplomats, members of the public service or of the private sector.

I am pleased to note the presence of these eminent personalities here today, junior and senior, from all these areas and more, who have immensely contributed to the esteem in which this institution is held today. All of us have had the benefit of an invaluable education and a very versatile degree for

“free”, might I add. However, it is at the expense of the public at large who have paid for our education in taxes and or by cutting back on what they could have otherwise enjoyed. We are indeed grateful to them for giving us the opportunity for this celebration.

It is not merely the “learning”, but how our alumni have excelled in public life and how they have stayed true to the values of this great institution, of seeking justice for all and also being steadfast in that quest, that helps us celebrate today. From the academic staff to the fellow students of the Faculty, who imparted to us that learning, and ignited a fire in our bellies to explore and serve, have been instrumental in shaping how we think and how we become worthy citizens of this great country and the world at large.

We wish to salute all those who, over the 75 years, taught us the law and the ways of the world within the hallowed grounds of the University. We stand on their shoulders as we move into the next era. The alumni, whether they are from the academic staff of the Faculty or not, are but one ecosystem, with one feeding off the other. This will continue to be the truth for the years that follow, with the institution being a mere representation of how the academic staff and the alumni will, over the coming years, contribute to society. We wish Prof PUNCHIHEWA, the Dean and his staff all the strength to continue to be true to the traditions of the Faculty and build its reputation to greater heights. We also assure the Dean of the Faculty the Association’s continued support in this journey.

We hope that you enjoy the programme we have for you this evening and also help you revive and renew old acquaintances. The Association also hopes that we can, together with you, contribute to the upliftment and enhancement of the journey of a student in the Faculty, creating not mere holders of a paper degree but worthy global citizens learned in the law, who in their conduct reflect the vision of the Faculty, of moulding graduates who are committed to justice and conduct themselves responsibly. Thank you and have a great evening!