

LADY JUSTICE

The Bench & Beyond



See these and more inside:

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- Interview with **Dame Janice Pereira**
- Overview Of The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court Association of Women Judges (ECAWJ)



Editor's Note

Justice is more than a principle – it is a reflection of those who uphold it. As female judicial officers of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, we carry the weight of history, shaped by the resilience of those who came before us. Every woman who sits on the bench today carries the legacy of the pioneers who faced discrimination, defied expectations and paved the way for a judiciary that reflects the strength of society. Their struggles and triumphs have shaped the opportunities available to us now.

Our journey is made possible through the groundbreaking achievements of remarkable figures, such as Dame Janice M. Pereira, who shattered glass ceilings to become the first female Chief Justice of this Court in 2012. Her inspiring path—from being among the first female Virgin Islanders called to the Bar to ascending to the judiciary's highest role - reminds us that prog-

ress is built on courage, determination, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

We honour women like Dame Janice by continuing the work they started, ensuring that justice is not only served, but strengthened by our presence. With each ruling, each legal challenge we tackle, and every leadership role we embody, contributes to shaping the judiciary for future generations and this evolving story.

This newsletter is more than a publication—it is a unifying platform for connection, insight, learning and empowerment. Here, we will share knowledge, celebrate accomplishments, confront challenges and explore the unique experiences of female judges in the Caribbean. From case law analyses to personal stories of perseverance, each issue will serve as a reminder that we are never alone

in this profession and our collective journey. Expect legal discourse, insightful reflections, and thought-provoking perspectives in every issue. But more than that, this newsletter is a conversation, not just a publication. Your voices matter—your stories, experiences, and insights will shape this space. You are the heart of this publication.

As we launch this first issue, I want to thank the Executive of the ECAWJ for all their support and encouragement in helping us to get this issue off the ground and I invite you all to contribute, engage, and inspire. Together, we will continue to elevate the legal profession, ensuring that justice is not only upheld but enriched by the wisdom and leadership of women.

Welcome to this journey. Welcome to this community.

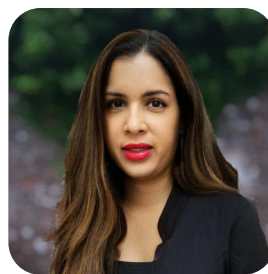
Meet The Executive of the ECAWJ



Justice Margaret
Price-Findley
CONSULTANT



Justice Kimberly Cenac-
Phulgence
PRESIDENT
Asst. SECRETARY



Justice Angelica
Teelucksingh
SECRETARY



Magistrate Ngaio
Emanuel
TREASURER



Justice Agnes Actie
1st VICE PRESIDENT
Asst. TREASURER



Registrar Melissa
Garraway



Justice Tamara Gill
2nd VICE PRESIDENT



Justice Cybelle
Cenac-Dantes
(Ag.)
PRO

Meet The Newsletter Committee



Justice Ann-Marie
Smith



Magistrate Veronica
Thomas



Justice Cybelle Cenac-
Dantes (Ag.)
CHAIR



Justice Nicola
Byer



Magistrate Ngaio
Emanuel



Master Tamara
Foster



Registrar Chanelle
Petty Barrett

Rex vs Methoni Vernon

Issues: Application for a stay of proceedings for abuse of process/illegal removal/breach of constitutional rights.

Background

This a very interesting yet troubling case concerning a Jamaican national Methoni Vernon who had been living in Antigua for over 20 years until he left and went to the Commonwealth of Dominica. While there he was unceremoniously removed and taken back to Antigua and Barbuda in an operation which can only be described as “the kidnap”!

He was brought back to Antigua without any extradition processes in train, denied legal representation and due process. All this time he was not brought before a magistrate and told that he would be deported to Jamaica.

Justice Tunde A. Bakre ruled on February 10, 2025, that Vernon was illegally removed from Dominica to Antigua in 2016 without a formal extradition request, violating legal and immigration procedures. The Court deemed his prosecution an abuse of process.

The “kidnap”

Mr Vernon left Antigua and Barbuda and traveled to the Commonwealth of Dominica, where he had a partner and child, when the Dominican police arrived at his home and stated that they had

a warrant to search the house for guns, drugs and ammunition (he claimed he was never shown the warrant). But he was taken to the police headquarters in Dominica anyway and kept there for two months. He indicated that he requested the services of a lawyer and this was refused and he was never taken before a Magistrate.

After illegally being kept in custody he was told that he was to be deported to Jamaica and put on a plane in shackles. Again not having the benefit of legal representation. Despite all of this, arrangements were made for his “deportation” on the ground that he had overstayed in the country. Mr Vernon was then transported to Antigua via Guadeloupe by plain clothed police officers, where he was charged with the murder of Roy Carridice. He was never shown any documents relating to his deportation (as none existed). When he finally arrived in Antigua and Barbuda all talk of deportation changed to being charged with murder. Again, he was interviewed without the benefit of legal representation, allegedly beaten and tortured and gave a caution statement where he confessed to the murder. A voir dire was held before Morely J and the matter was listed for trial. By this time he had managed to enlist the services of Counsel who mounted an abuse of process application; stating in essence, that to proceed to prosecute Mr Vernon in the circumstances would amount to an abuse of process thereby bringing the criminal justice sys-

tem into disrepute. Counsel for Mr Vernon made powerful arguments as to why the proceeding should be stopped urging the Court to examine the constitutional principle which underlies the jurisdiction to stay proceedings “the Courts have an inescapable duty to secure fair treatment for those who come or are brought before them”¹.

Jurisdiction of the Court

Both Counsel to Mr Vernon and the respondent relied on several authorities with regards to abuse of court process. Reference was made to the case of **Bennett v. Horseferry Road Magistrate Court(1994) 1 AC 42**. Where it was stated that “*a court had a discretion to stay any criminal proceedings on the ground that to try those proceedings will amount to an abuse of its own process either because it will be impossible (usually by reason of delay) to give the accused a fair trial or because it offends the court’s sense of justice and propriety to be asked to try the accused in the circumstance of a particular case*”. The court stated however, that it is a remedy of last resort and a discretion which the court will exercise sparingly. The Court stated that this leaves the burden of proof on the applicant even though it is on a balance of probabilities.

To further buttress the point the case of **The Queen v. Crawely and others(2014) EWCA Crim. 1018** was referred to where the Court referenced **Attorney General’s reference (No.2 of 2001) (2004) 2 AC 72** which expounded categories of cases which may ground such an application. See also **R. v. Brentford Justices, ExParte Wong(1981) QB**

¹ Connelly v. DPP [1964] AC 125

445.[14] It was thus conceded and agreed by both Counsel that the Court did have the jurisdiction to determine the application as a Court before which a criminal case had been brought.

Commentary

This case raises many serious issues and shows that the Court will not sanction discriminatory, unconstitutional and oppressive behaviour on the part of the State. When Mr Vernon was removed from the Commonwealth of Dominica there were no legal processes in train. The then Commissioner of Police², when asked for an explanation, indicated that Vernon was removed based on “informal discussions with the Commonwealth of Dominica police”. Mr Vernon’s abuse of process application highlighted that the State’s actions were knowingly unlawful. The evidence showed that there was an organised operation to unlawfully deport Mr Vernon to Antigua. The Antiguan officers took steps to conceal their identity as police officers, and to detain

Mr Vernon on the plane whilst it stopped in Guadeloupe, “in the event that [he] tried to flee”, despite being well aware that they had no authority to exercise their powers as police officers whilst Mr Vernon was not in Antigua.

There can be no doubt that Mr Vernon was effectively denied the protection of the Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda and that he had been illegally removed from the Commonwealth of Dominica.

The Death Penalty Project which assisted in mounting this application said “*The right to a fair trial is fundamental to the integrity of the entire legal system. We are delighted that the charges against Methoni were dropped recognizing the complete disregard the Antiguan State had for his constitutional rights. In this case, the State’s actions were so egregious that there was no possibility of Methoni receiving a fair trial, we are pleased that the Court has recognized this*”³.

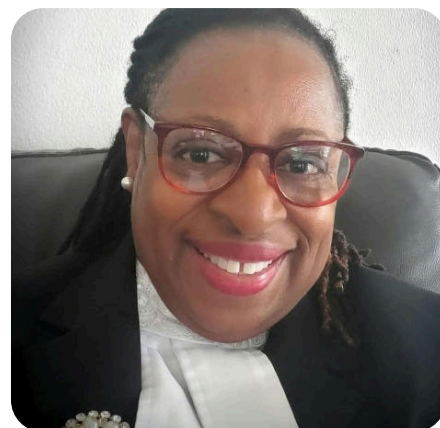
For further discussion of this case please see:-

<https://deathpenaltyproject.org/press-release-murder-charge-dropped-after-state-misconduct-deemed-abuse-of-process/>

<https://antiguaobserver.com/jamaican-freed-of-murder-charge-due-to-states-blunder/>

<https://antigua.news/2025/02/18/high-court-stays-prosecution-of-methoni-vernon-due-to-unlawful-rendition-and-breach-of-immigration-laws/>

<https://islandpressbox.com/unlawful-extradition-murder-accused-walks-free-due-to-state-collusion/>



Justice Ann-Marie Smith
Criminal Division
Antigua and Barbuda

² The Commissioner at the time was also an attorney-at-law

³ Bethany Jackson, Legal Officer at The Death Penalty Project

A Milestone for Justice: International Day for Judicial Well-being

by Master Tamara Foster

A Milestone for Justice: International Day for Judicial Well-being
On July 25th, 2024, the Nauru Declaration on Judicial Well-being was adopted at the Regional Judicial Conference on Integrity and Judicial Well-being. This landmark declaration underscored the fundamental truth that capacity to deliver fair impartial and

effective justice is intrinsically linked to the optimal mental, emotional and physical health of members of the judiciary.

Building on this crucial recognition, the United Nations General Assembly formally designated July 25th as the International Day for Judicial Well-being on March 4th, 2025. The resolution submit-

ted by the Republic of Nauru garnered overwhelming international support, with 160 nations voting in favour of adopting the resolution, only one country (The United States of America) voting against, and three abstentions.

This global commitment to recognizing and prioritizing the well be-

ing of judicial officers is testament to the fact that despite geographical and systemic differences, judicial officers around the world grapple with similar occupational stressors. They include secondary trauma, burnout, inertia, negative impacts on mental and physical health, decreased enthusiasm, diminished job performance, judicial isolation, and reduced job satisfaction.

These experiences and feelings might resonate with you but admitting them openly can be difficult. Acknowledgment of the inherent stresses of the judicial role often carries a sense of taboo, particularly for women judges. While we are confronted by universally recognized pressures, we face additional layers of complexity, unique to us as women. However, despite our unique and multifaceted demands, we dismiss our challenges to avoid the damaging perception of incompetence or weakness.

I have coined it “a culture of work before well-being”, driven by the pressure to tackle existing workloads that makes overwork and feigned emotional resilience seem the only viable option.

While we occasionally advocate for our needs, we revert to unhealthy patterns due to the absence of institutional and social support.

International Day for Judicial Well-being should be the catalyst for positive change. There should be intensification of efforts to cultivate a more equitable and supportive environment for female judicial officers, enabling them to

flourish and continue to contribute their invaluable perspectives to the administration of justice.

We have a collective responsibility to advocate for systemic change that allows us to successfully balance professional responsibilities with personal lives and societal expectations.

As we commit to prioritizing our well-being, the seven principles of judicial well-being should be our guide:

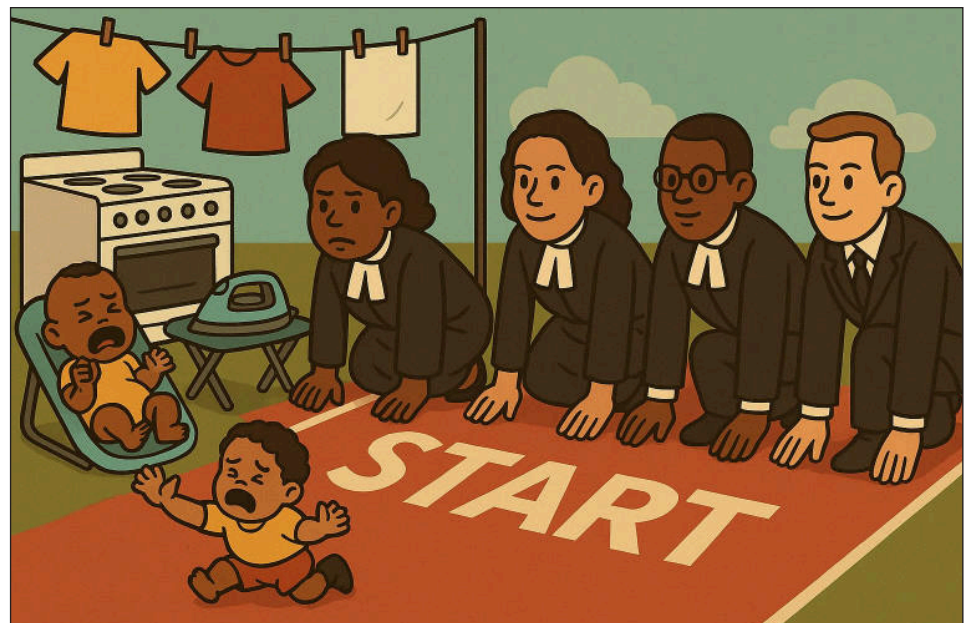
1. Judicial well-being is essential and must be recognized and supported.
2. Judicial stress is not a weakness and must not be stigmatized.
3. Judicial well-being is a shared responsibility of individual judges and judicial institutions.
4. Judicial well-being is fostered by an ethical and inclusive judicial culture.
5. Promoting judicial well-being requires a combination of awareness-raising, prevention, and management activities.
6. Judicial well-being initiatives must be tailored to the unique circumstances and requirements of national jurisdictions.
7. Judicial well-being is enhanced

by the protection of human rights.

It is time we, as judicial officers, allow ourselves to be on the receiving end of fair and lawful treatment – treatment that prioritizes our holistic well-being.

I encourage you to heed the advice of Dr Zimmerman referenced in Justice Peter Jamadar’s article *Judicial Wellness for Judicial Officers: Achieving Work-Life Balance: Challenges, Impacts, Solutions*:

“We judicial officers by and large all aspire to be perfect and deliver perfect justice, but we are human and must learn to accept that sometimes we will not meet our own high expectations, and we must forgive ourselves and move on.”



The ECAWJ's Inaugural Panel Discussion

Hard Talk: Gender-Based Violence – Beyond the Physical

&

The Unspoken Threat of Gender-Based Violence on the Security and Well-Being of Female Judicial Officers of the Eastern Caribbean

by

**Veronica E. Thomas
Magistrate**

**Family and Juvenile Court
Antigua and Barbuda
24th March, 2025**

multifaceted nature of gender-based violence (GBV), emphasizing the manifestations beyond physical abuse. The panel explored various non-physical forms of GBV, including emotional, psychological and economic abuse. The discussion focused on how these forms of violence can be as detrimental as physical abuse, often leaving deep, long-lasting scars on victims. The discussion underscored the many felt that it had only scratched the surface of this complex and multi-dimensional topic with many in the audience calling for a Part 2 to the discussion. This inaugural event has certainly whetted our appetite for more programming of this kind and we look forward with keen anticipation to future offerings from the ECAWJ.

Reflecting on the discussion surrounding the insidious nature of GBV, it occurred to me that female judicial officers in the performance of their judicial duties are not immune to the threats of GBV. While judicial officers are often viewed as enforcers of the law, female judicial officers sometimes face threats, intimidation, and even violence as a result of their work. Further, female judicial officers of the Eastern Caribbean region may be even more vulnerable to such attacks given our shared colonial history underpinning deep-seated societal and cultural norms around the issue of gender.

Set against the visually bold and striking backdrop of its radiant, golden yellow logo, symbolic of the unique and diverse characteristics of the female judicial officers of the Eastern Caribbean States, the ECAWJ came out with a bang in its debut featuring a virtual panel discussion in commemoration of International Women's Day and International Day of Women Judges 2025.

This writer was honoured to be a member of the esteemed panel alongside the other featured guests, Ms. Alicia Green, Director, Women in Need, BVI and Mr. Tyrone Buckmire, Director, Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic, Grenada in the event themed Hard Talk: Gender-Based Violence – Beyond the Physical expertly moderated by Her Ladyship, the Honourable Madam Justice Nicola P. Byer, Judge of the Family Division of the High Court of Justice in Antigua and Barbuda.

The discussion delved into the

importance of recognizing and addressing these subtle yet pervasive forms of violence to ensure comprehensive support and protection for survivors.

One of the key points raised was the societal and cultural norms that perpetuate non-physical GBV. The panel emphasized the need for community education and awareness to challenge and change these harmful norms. The role of the legal framework in protecting individuals from all forms of GBV was also highlighted.

The discussion also touched upon the challenges faced by victims in recognizing and reporting non-physical abuse. The panel called for the establishment of accessible support systems and resources to empower victims to come forward and seek help.

An interactive question and answer segment rounded off the one-hour program. However, by the end of this insightful presentation

There are numerous examples of GBV against female judicial officers in places such as Afghanistan and Latin America and many other parts of the world. In July 2020, a



Latina judge, the first to serve on the federal bench in New Jersey was believed to be the target of an attack where the male suspect opened fire at her home killing her 20-year-old son instead and critically injuring her husband. The assailant, over whose case the judge had presided, was “a self-proclaimed anti-feminist lawyer” whose “websites host hundreds of pages of openly misogynistic writings.” In June 2024, a female magistrate in Kenya was shot in the courtroom by a senior police officer and later died. Her assailant, it was reported, was angered by a decision that had been made to revoke his wife’s bail after she had absconded. Closer to the Eastern Caribbean region, it was only in February of this year that a female magistrate in Belize was attacked while on the bench by a prisoner.

One’s attention is naturally drawn to these reports of physical violence against female judicial officers which make for dramatic headlines in the media. However, we are reminded that not all forms of violence lend themselves to such dramatic display, although their effect may be just as traumatic. Indeed, GBV against female judicial officers goes way beyond the physical and encompasses a range of abusive behaviours including verbal threats, online harassment and psychological intimidation. In many cases, these acts are carried out by disgruntled litigants or individuals who perceive judicial rulings as unfavourable.

Although in the Eastern Caribbean there is a dearth of publicly

reported incidents of GBV against female judicial officers, that is not to say the problem does not exist. It is widely believed that the figures in relation to GBV in the Caribbean far outstrip the reported United Nations’ figures which indicate that 30% of women worldwide are victims of some form of GBV. Is it that our female judicial officers in the Eastern Caribbean are somehow insulated from this scourge that has managed to touch every other sector of our society in every other corner of the world? The most likely answer to that question is a resounding no.

Because we understand the insidious nature of GBV and the various forms in which it may present itself, it is incumbent on us to begin to examine and attempt to understand the true nature and extent of the problem. This is because the implications of GBV against female judicial officers are so critical that they have the potential to not only compromise the safety and well-being of female judicial officers but impact negatively on the administration of justice and the integrity of the justice system.

Traditionally, bar associations have been relied on to fulfil the role as defenders of the judiciary. It may be that the time has come to reevaluate that approach. With increasing numbers of female judicial officers, the issue of GBV presents its own unique challenges for the profession for which a traditional response may no longer be adequate. In the modern era, the use of the internet and in particular social media, adds another dimension to the problem calling for a more modern and effective approach to tackling the

issue.

First, however, we must begin by understanding the true nature and extent of the problem. Clear systems for the reporting, investigation and monitoring of incidents of GBV against female judicial officers need to be formulated and implemented across the Eastern Caribbean region. Also, academic research and data collection need to be undertaken to provide the basis for critical analysis of this issue. Empirical data will then form the basis for risk assessment, allocation of scarce resources and targeted policy solutions.

The ECAWJ has a crucial role to play by bringing awareness to the issue of GBV against female judicial officers, encouraging its members to report threats and advocating for stronger protections to ensure the safety and well-being of its members whose duty it is to enforce the law. This can include the implementation of laws that criminalise acts of GBV against female judicial officers and impose strong penalties for offenders. Additionally, through its network of female judicial officers, the ECAWJ can help to develop a confidential support system where female judicial officers can share experiences, seek assistance and receive psychological and legal support if they face threats or violence.

ECAWJ’s first installation of Hard Talk featuring the theme Gender-Based Violence – Beyond the Physical was certainly an opportunity to reflect on the dynamic nature of GBV and to consider its further implications within the wider sphere of the female judicial profession. It has certainly left us with a lot of food for thought and encourages us

to propel the conversation into areas that may not have previously been considered. While GBV against female judicial officers in the Eastern Caribbean region is an issue that remains in the shad-

ows, just as in the wider society, its impact cannot be ignored. It is therefore incumbent on all of us to work together to shed light on the issue so that as enforcers of the law, female judicial officers

are safeguarded from violence and intimidation so they can continue to serve their communities without fear.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

by Registrar Chanelle Petty Barrett

FINDING BALANCE AMIDST THE CHAOS



Who is a Caribbean woman? Is she strong, resilient and resourceful or is she barely holding it together? The post card image of a traditional Caribbean woman is invariably that of a resolute woman, precariously balancing a bucket of water or a basket of provisions on her head, walking purposefully along a narrow road while her children surround her, pulling at the hem of her full, colourful skirt.

While we live in more progressive times, we still share many similarities with that traditional woman. We struggle daily to find balance amidst the chaos of life, to follow our path without being deterred

by competing interests and manage the load so everything does not come crashing down.

Caribbean women are overwhelmed.

We are striving to excel in a work environment that glorifies busyness and sleeplessness, and sacrifices wellbeing on the altar of productivity, targets and organisational goals; while still meeting the demands and expectations of our personal life – super mom, dutiful wife, caregiver to aging parents, community activist, church outreach member, supportive aunty, trusted friend and the list goes on. Meeting the expectations of others means that we often neglect ourselves.

When we're spread-eagled across our beds at the end of a long day, work clothes still on, too tired to get into the shower, we feel far removed from that phenomenal woman described in Maya Angelou's poem. In our state of constant exhaustion, preparing a healthy meal or getting some exercise can seem like just another chore to add to our growing "to do" list. Picking up some comfort food from our favourite bakery and enjoying it with a nice cup of cocoa tea, while laying in bed,

seems a much better way to spend the few moments we have to ourselves. After all, isn't this what self-care is about? While we certainly deserve a treat every now and then, we have to guard against cultivating habits that lead to unhealthy lifestyles and eventually life-altering non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

According to the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) more than 60% of Caribbean adults are overweight or obese with more than half the adult population in some countries having three of the four major risk factors for cardiovascular diseases and diabetes, which are raised blood pressure, insulin resistance, excess body fat around the waist, and abnormal cholesterol levels.

While this data is alarming, of even greater concern to women is that Dr. Virginia Asin-Oostburg, the former CARPHA Director for Surveillance, Disease Prevention and Control in observance of World Obesity Day 2018, indicated that "women in the Caribbean have higher rates of obesity in terms of Body Mass Index (BMI) compared to men. They also have higher rates of abdominal obesity and are likely to be 3 times more obese than men... Obesity and physical inactivity put women at

excess risk of diabetes.”

It is common knowledge that physical activity and healthy diets can greatly reduce our risk of obesity and the associated health challenges of NCDs, yet it is easy

to fall prey to the same dietary choices and sedentary lifestyles that are literally killing Caribbean people. Self-care involves being intentional about the choices we make. It is about living mindfully; being mindful of what we feed

ourselves mentally, spiritually and physically and also being mindful of and responding to the needs of our bodies so they can perform optimally. When we live mindfully, we will make choices that positively contribute to our overall wellbeing.

WATCH YOUR STEP

From 1st to 7th March 2025, members of the Eastern Caribbean Association of Women Judges engaged in a Virtual Step Challenge. The goal was to get members moving and be intentional about incorporating physical activity into their daily routine. Participants had to record and submit the number of steps taken each day and the person with the most steps at the end of the week was named winner.

The challenge was keenly contested, with the daily totals spurring some participants to push harder, evoking expressions of astonishment from others, while causing others to admit defeat and throw in the towel. As the names of the participants were not revealed during the challenge, the results were eagerly anticipated to see who could possibly accumulate so many steps daily unless they were playing mass. At the end of the week, the second place winner was Justice Angelica Teelucksingh, third place was Justice Cybelle Cenac-Dantes and fourth place was Master Tamara Foster. A special prize for the eldest participant went to Justice Margaret Price-Findlay who recorded over 10,000 steps daily.

The winner of the Virtual Step

Challenge 2025 was Chief Registrar of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, Mrs Michelle John-Theobalds with a total of **184,868 steps**; a remarkable feat earning her the new title of Chief Stepper.

An inspiration to all, Mrs John-Theobalds shared in an exclusive interview her approach to the challenge, the importance of exercise and some useful tips on incorporating exercise into our daily routine.

What did you like most about the step challenge?

It got me moving and forced me to challenge myself.

How were you able to complete so many steps daily? What was your strategy?

My strategy was to keep moving. To do so I exercised twice a day, five days a week, in the morning and in the evening. I ensured that I added steps to a number of actions where otherwise I would have remained stagnant e.g. when brushing my teeth, taking a shower, cooking and holding conversations. I replaced certain activities with walking, for example while at work if I needed to speak to a

staff member, instead of calling on the phone I walked to their office and while talking to them I kept stepping. To make movement more comfortable I brought my trainers to office, and I ensured that every hour I made at least 1000 steps. In the last days, I upped this amount to 2000 per hour. To do this I power-walked regularly around the office. Finally, on an evening when I got home, after finishing my step exercise routine, I put on music and danced until I got tired.

Is exercise a regular part of your daily routine? If so, with your busy schedule, how do you find time to exercise?

I have learned that we must make time for the important

stuff. For me, exercise is important. I try to ensure that



exercise is a regular part of my daily routine, either first thing in the morning or on an evening and I spend a minimum of 1 hour exercising. I have a walking buddy so on some days we go walking in the evening. Other days I do workout routines online.

How has your exercise routine contributed to your overall wellbeing?

I have always been conscious of my weight. In recent years I have also become conscious of my general health and well-being. (I suppose aging will do that to a person.) To keep on top of it I have implemented a few measures such as, regular doctor's visits, exercise, diet, sleep and, my favourite - spa treatments! I've realised that it's a total package and exercise is a very important component.

What advice can you give to someone who has not yet made exercise a priority?

- Like so many other things in life, it's hard to get started but once you do it gets easier.
- Make exercise enjoyable. Choose routines that have music that you enjoy listening to and will energise and motivate you to keep going.
- Get an exercise partner, that way you can encourage each other.
- The best part is when you start seeing results. It may not come as quickly as you like but it's a thing that works from the inside out so even though you may not see it you will feel it!

THAT'S A WRAP

As important as exercise is to our health, of even greater importance is our diet. The sayings "you can't out-run a bad diet" and "abs are made in the kitchen" reinforce how critical it is to adopt healthy eating habits.



Justice Nicola Byer has earned a solid reputation, not just for her judicial prowess, but for her culinary skills. A multi-faceted Caribbean woman, in this edition, Justice Byer shares some of her favourite healthy recipes. She warns, "before anyone follows these recipes, please remember I cook as a Caribbean woman, that is, quantities are pretty approximate, but I tried to be as accurate as possible."

Eggplant "pizza"

This is my favourite in that eggplant can be pretty unappetizing but when you're trying to be healthy, you take chances and mix up your menu.

Ingredients

- 4 eggplants
- 2 small cans of tomato sauce (whether you use the salt added or not variety)
- 1 tablespoon of Italian seasoning
- 1 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar

- 2 cups of cheese of your choice (please do not use "pretend" cheese)
- 1 tablespoon of Complete seasoning (or Mrs Dash non salt variety to season the eggplant)

Method

1. Preheat oven to 375.
2. Peel and slice the eggplant.
3. In a well-greased casserole dish, place a layer of eggplant, sprinkle 1/2 tablespoon complete seasoning.
4. In a small bowl mix the tomato sauce and the rest of the ingredients.
5. Place half of the tomato sauce on that first layer of eggplant, then add half cheese.
6. Continue layering eggplant with the other ingredients until finish with cheese.
7. Bake for 25 mins uncovered until the cheese is melted (hence do not use pretend cheese) and its golden brown.
8. Serve as a side dish or main dish with salad as a total meal.

Egg wraps (adapted from The Bigman's mind and Arman Liew) - Zero carbs and low calorie.

Ingredients

- 4 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons of water
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Method

1. Mix all the ingredients together either in a blender or with hand mixer until frothy.
2. Use either a non-stick pan or grease pan with oil of choice and pour some of the egg mix into the pan turning the pan until the mixture is at the edge

of the pan.

3. Once edges start to brown flip the wrap and cook for another minute and then remove from heat.
4. Fill egg wraps with anything from veggies to meats to cheese.

8 TIPS TO GET MOVING

Our other Virtual Step Challenge top scorers shared their tips on how they incorporated the Step Challenge into their busy schedules.

The main take-away: use every opportunity to walk.

1. Get in an early morning and late evening workout.
2. Involve your pets in your exercise routine— eg. walk your dogs on mornings and evenings.
3. Walk around the office during a break and at lunchtime.
4. Stand at your desk and walk in place.
5. Keep moving while talking on the phone.
6. Take a walk around your building or get an umbrella and take a lunchtime walk around town.
7. If your workplace has stairs, use the stairs several times a day.
8. Install an app that alerts you when you need to move and start moving!

The 17th IAWJ Biennial Conference in Cape Town

by Justice Agnes Actie

The 17th IAWJ Biennial Conference was hosted by the South African Chapter of the IAWJ in Cape Town, South Africa from April 9-12, 2025, under the theme **Resilience: Women in Leadership to End Gender-Based Violence & Femicide**. The event brought together 850 participants comprising of judges, Magistrates and other legal professionals from around the world including a total of eighteen (18) members from the Caribbean community from the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, Jamaica, Bahamas and myself.

The conference explored critical issues to champion women's rights, and foster leadership to end gender-based violence and femicide. The first day commenced with a grand opening ceremony and welcoming remarks from His Excellency President of Republic of South Africa, Mr Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa. His Excellency spoke of the legal reforms in South Africa for greater represen-

tation of women on the bench as a transformative imperative over the past three years. His Excellency spoke of judicial parity and highlighted the fact that women judges are in the majority and are well placed in the leadership of the struggle to fight against gender-based violence. He highlighted the need to create greater public trust and confidence in the legal system so that victims can feel confident in knowing that justice will be done, and perpetrators will retreat from pursuing gender-based violence and femicide. He also spoke strongly against sextortion in the workplace where men in senior positions both on the bench and other environs use their power dynamics in requiring sex from younger subordinates for upward mobility. He states that women judges are the catalyst for change and advocated the need for more public education to create the awareness in women and young girls/boys from a very young age. He also advocated for men who are the main perpetrators to be made part of the conversation in the fight against gender

violence. His Excellency, spoke of the court's role and the collective responsibility and commitment as women judges to transform humanity and respect for women.

The second day of the conference focussed on resilient leadership, Diversity and Equity: Workplace safety for judicial officers (Mental Health and Self Care). We heard the first-hand experience of violence against a judicial officer. Judicial wellness and the need for associating together for judicial welfare through mutual self help organising in Associations, protecting judicial independence. The takeaway point for me was a presentation made by Magistrate Judge Nancy Joseph, Wisconsin USA, under the theme "Put Your Oxygen Mask on First. In this, we were reminded that we are to be mindful that we are responsible for making decisions that alter people lives, and that judicial ownership fairness and efficiency is paramount. However, a fair and sustainable system cannot be achieved where judicial officers are exhausted from work pressure and extreme stress. Judicial officers

are encouraged to create a balance, have a buddy system, ask for help when necessary, have peer to peer meetings, create structure for support and mentorship as a pledge to support judicial wellness.

The conference also dealt with the issues of Human Trafficking and Marginalized Communities; Intersecting struggles Gender based violence, Femicide, Sexual Harassment and Sextortion within the judiciary systems/workplace; Judicial Activism in Gender Based Violence cases: intimate partner violence; ensuring due diligence obligations of States; Activists judgments supporting Women's judges; criminal /civil court should work together in reducing gender based violence; The conference also highlighted Gender and Climate change; Promoting Judicial Engagement in climate change Beliefs : AI Technology and Cyber Violence. Impact of technology on gender Based Violences Cyber violence.

There is also a need as women Judges to empower women and girls from experiences using the theme **“HERStory beckons that the NOW is for SHERoes.”**

Judicial wellness was further emphasized and judiciaries around the word are encouraged to engage in activities to commemorate the declaration of Judicial Wellness Day on July 25,2025.

Overall, the conference was one of the best conferences that I have attended which brought together participants worldwide sharing common experiences and challenges that we all face as women judges and methods to deal with those challenges. The eighteen (18) members Caribbean Strong also engaged in

extracurricular activities such as safaris, adventure tours, dinners and other social activities. I will therefore make this clarion call for all women judges to join the association of IAWJ (USD \$50.00) so

that the ECSC can have a larger representation at the next biennial conference in Quebec, Canada.







A Life of Service and Justice: An Interview with Dame Janice Pereira



In an inspiring conversation hosted by the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court Association of Women Judges, Dame Janice Pereira, the Right Honourable and a revered figure in the legal world, opened up to Chief Registrar Michelle John-Theobalds about her journey, challenges, and vision. With her rich career and unwavering dedication, Dame Janice has left an indelible mark on the Eastern Caribbean region.

Early Influences and the Spark of Determination

Chief Registrar: Dame Janice, let's start at the beginning. What was young Janice Pereira like?

Dame Janice: Oh, where to start? Growing up as the middle child in a family of seven: two older sisters, one older brother, two younger sisters and one younger brother, I think I learned to adapt and relate to both older and younger siblings. My older sister once described me as quiet and calm, but I always had dreams. Initially, I thought I could become a teacher like my older sisters. I was intrigued by the idea of service. But then I thought perhaps a doctor, but my squeamishness steered me away. So, I moved away from the sciences and focused more on the arts, like history. Then, in high school, something happened. While peeking into the courtroom window, I saw the lawyers and judge at work—there was something so commanding about their black robes and poised demeanour. Intrigued, I pressed closer but was chased away by a police officer who told me I shouldn't be there. His stern warning fuelled my resolve, and I thought to myself, "Oh really! one day, I'll be right there, and I will be doing what they are doing." It was a defining moment that planted the seeds for my future.

Building a Foundation at the Registry

Chief Registrar: You were called to the Bar in 1981 and you first acted as Registrar and then appointed Registrar of the Supreme Court, Registrar-General, then Registrar of Companies and then in 1984 you became the first Registrar of the newly established Registry of International Business Companies. Many describe work at the Registry as mundane. What was it like for you?

Dame Janice: Mundane? Not at all. I saw my time at the Registry as a foundation that broadened my un-

derstanding of the court's inner workings. I remember overseeing everything—from deeds and births to managing international business companies. There was an entire ecosystem of processes and details, all pivotal to justice delivery. That grounding equipped me with invaluable insight when I transitioned to private practice and eventually to the bench. I remember organizing court files meticulously, ensuring smooth operations. It was anything but boring; it was the backbone of justice.

Taking the Plunge into Judicial Leadership

Chief Registrar: After an illustrious tenure in private practice from 1985 to 2003, you transitioned to the bench. What drove that decision?

Dame Janice: It was certainly a leap. Initially, I didn't imagine myself on the bench. But trusted mentors nudged me, saying it was time to consider judicial service. It felt daunting - thinking about the broader impact I could have. I wrestled with the pros and cons and eventually concluded that serving society in a different capacity would be the most meaningful contribution I could make. It wasn't just a decision; it was a plunge into the unknown, but a rewarding one.

Balancing Family and Judicial Duties

Chief Registrar: Balancing professional and personal life must have been challenging. How did you balance work, home, sibling interactions and the Appeal Court?

Dame Janice: A strong support system made it possible. I remembered when the children were small and they were in school and having to balance school and homework for them and doing all of these other things and really trying to put it all together. It takes a lot, I think, particularly for female judges with family. It takes a lot. It takes a lot of discipline. It takes a lot of time. And I think you need very much.

That family support of understanding that what you're doing as a woman is as important as what your partner may be doing, and having that appre-

ciation and understanding of what it is you're doing. Thankfully, by the time I became Chief Justice, I had a partner that was exceedingly supportive. I really could not have asked for a greater pillar of support in every respect. We took a modern approach to responsibilities—no “man's work” or “woman's work,” just a partnership. If one couldn't do it, the other one would. And it makes a world of difference in terms of what you can do and how you can do it without seeking to cover all of those bases, otherwise it can be really overwhelming. It can be quite difficult. So, in that respect, I count myself lucky.

The Weight of Being Chief Justice

Chief Registrar: How long did it take you to truly feel comfortable in your role as Chief Justice?

Dame Janice: When I was first appointed Chief Justice, I remember thinking of all of what it entailed, because I recognised it as an enormous task. It wasn't that I was questioning my competence, but simply recognising that I was going into a job that no woman had held before, of a regional court with nine States and heads of government and having to operate a court spanning these islands, considering their functions and the duties that came with it and knowing that the public would be questioning whether this would be something a woman could do well.

So I set about the task expecting to grow into it. It's not a place where you learn everything about your achievements in a year or two. It takes time because of the breadth of the court and its services. When I look back and reflect, in terms of one's vision and where you wish to see the court you need time to have that actually happen, to make the changes you want to and bring them about. Growing into it, learning as you go, being really and truly open to knowing that maybe you didn't do everything quite the right way but that you're learning from the process and taking it in stride, never losing focus on what you want to achieve.

It helped to maintain a focus on the work of the court. Who was it serving? The people....and the people who were working with you in the court, and bringing them along to share in your vision. I saw it

as a journey. You need all the hands, all the parts and all of those working together for the greater good, never forgetting that objective, which is really about the people and seeking to do justice for them.

Chief Registrar: When you look back on your career and your accomplishments at the ECSC, how do you feel?

Dame Janice: I feel like this was not just my achievement but an achievement we all made together, because I don't think there is anything you alone can do without the cooperation of others, and sharing your dream, your vision, and then sharing it with you, you all believe it can be done. I think that's what counts and makes it meaningful and what makes it an achievement. It's something we can all share when we achieve those milestones together. When we reach it, we know that we made it together.

I worked across the States, and while you may not get to know everyone you get to know quite a number of the players and they were all working towards the same goal and trying to make a difference. So no regrets. Sometimes I do wonder about projects I could have started sooner but then courts are always evolving as the society evolves and there will always be things to be done and to improve. That's what excellence is all about. It's not about a destination. It's about how to take and continue that journey of improvement from day to day, from point to point, each step of the way. Because courts are perpetual and they are here to reflect, in many respects our societal standards and norms and what makes us a people.

Chief Registrar: As the first female Chief Justice, what were some of the challenges you faced that might have been coloured by gender?

Dame Janice: The role came with its share of gender bias—sometimes overt, but mostly subtle. Comments like being “fair” sometimes hinted at unconscious bias. Asserting authority, for example, was sometimes seen differently when coming from a woman, or the misunderstanding of a question put by me as compared with a male counterpart which would be immediately understood. A man is often identified as strong, but a woman is hormonal. There is no aggression, it's just that you're being subjected to a different test without it being recognised that its

actually being applied. It usually just made me smile and which I would often joke about, but for the most part, I learned to address these biases without allowing them to overshadow my focus. It was about staying centred on the larger purpose—delivering justice and fostering growth.

Chief Registrar: Throughout it was often said that you made it (being Chief Justice) look so easy and effortless. How did you do it?

Dame Janice: I believe that I am capable of internalising stress and that's not a good thing health-wise. I would tell myself that this was my work, but I wouldn't take it home with me and dwell on things. I would simply wake up the next morning and get back at it. Of course, there were days when you really had a problem and you're trying to find a solution. The key was not taking it home with me but finding a way to deal with it head-on. Being mother or woman you learn a lot about how to multi-task and you can do a number of things once you are able to focus and determine what is priority. I would make a written list at times, sometimes two or three, and I would go "tick, tick, tick". The key is really knowing what to prioritize, not sweating the small parts of it and being able to assess the situation and make a decision, because the more time you take to make a decision then time is going. So make a decision and move on from it.

Reflecting on Milestones

Chief Registrar: As Chief Justice you wore many hats. Which part of your job did you value the most or gave you the most joy?

Dame Janice: The most joy came from the legal cases. Dealing with novel points. I love legal discussions. It gives you an adrenaline rush when engaging in really great legal discussion. That gave me the most joy. The administrative

aspect is very different and it requires a different skill set in that you are dealing with people, their positions, and that requires you to navigate personalities while knowing there may be decisions you have to take that are not popular, but nonetheless making decisions that are fair, and seen as fair, and treating each person with the respect they deserve so that each person understands why a decision was taken or wasn't taken.

It takes a lot to know how to treat with those things and I think my time as Registrar at such a young age, working with persons far older than I was (really the kid in the room) I had to ensure that I had their respect while at the same time learning to work with them. And then bringing to bear my experiences from private practice dealing with staff and their issues, because in a work environment everyone is not always going to see eye to eye, but ensuring that everyone is working together and working towards a common goal. The administrative aspect certainly took a bit more energy.

Chief Registrar: Would you consider mentoring on a voluntary basis?



Dame Janice: I would. Because while we may come from different places its really what we make of it and how we interact with each other that makes the difference. So if someone comes I have no issue offering what I have. I have always loved the law and I am happy that I am not as busy as I had to be. But now that I have the time I am happy to give my guidance if anyone thinks it might benefit them.

Advice for Aspiring Judges

Chief Registrar: Any advice for aspiring judges?

Dame Janice: A career on the bench is satisfying once you are oriented to giving service. And if this is your motivation to bring about change; whether its a person's life or society or some other way in which you can actually make a change, it is really a great career. If you are a person who finds it difficult making decisions, then that's not the place for you, because we operate in an adversarial system and you must feel comfortable making decisions. They may not always be correct because its not about getting it right all the time, but that's why we have an appellate system. It's all about giving that service, making a decision as you see it, and doing the best you can to apply the legal principles and the facts, and doing so in a way that is impartial. Patience, listening and taking the time to truly understand and appreciate what it is that a person is seeking to say to the court is important. And while persons may not always be as courteous as you would like them to be you just need to be firm but always fair.

One of the nicest things said of me that I recall, when I was leaving Anguilla as a judge, was that "no one can ever say that they did not have a fair trial." It was the nicest thing that could be said. They may not have necessarily agreed with the decision, but they got a fair hearing and she gave the reasons how she saw it. And I think that is really what it is all about. Because even as a legal practitioner, that is precisely what you want to see in your judicial officer – that that person that exercises that authority has done it in a way that is fairly and evenly balanced.

Life After Retirement

Chief Registrar: In retirement, how are you spending your days?

Dame Janice: I don't necessarily have any great schedules to keep. That feels amazing. And if I have nothing in particular to do, I don't have to think, "well, I have to get in and I have to be up at this hour. I have to do something else at 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock." Then there is that freedom and liberty to do that without thinking, I have to deal with this particular thing, and I have to attend to this particular issue. I used to have my little checklist but now I have my electronic diary, but it's to keep me on track with just a few things so I do not have time conflicts. But it feels great. I have gotten more into reading and singing which I love. I love that lightness and just being able to do things on my own time, my own schedule. It's a great feeling, because when I look back this is what I have done for quite a number of years. And I think what made me really aware was, one day after retirement, my husband and I were sitting in the back porch having breakfast and time just passed by. And then he said, "Okay, I think my wife is actually retired." So that is really good. It's good to have the time now to do that and simply enjoy that different aspect of life, whilst at the same time keeping busy, but not too busy, and have a better balance in terms of work life and Janice.

Final words

Chief Registrar: There is not a person who deserves it more than you, so we thank you so much for your contribution to the region through the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, for the legacy you have left behind. You have been such a great inspiration. We continue to wish you God's blessings and may his youthful favour continue to be bestowed upon you (you look so radiant) and it has been my greatest pleasure to chat with you. Thank you for taking the time. Thank you for being such an inspiration to all of us, not just the women judges, but just the people throughout the Eastern Caribbean. We continue to wish you God's richest blessings, and whatever you have to do, I pray that it will be satisfactory to you, it will bring you the most joy and the best of everything because you deserve it. So may God continue to bless you and thank you so much.

Dame Janice: Thank you, Madam Registrar, and thank all the organizers for this. I am so happy to see

all the steps and the enthusiasm in the Association. I was really so happy that we were able to get it going, get it started and to see all the wonderful things that are going on.

I thank also all those persons with whom I have worked over the years who have been just so helpful in terms of anything that I was able to accomplish. Someone was recently commenting to me about crises and COVID and what happened. And someone was saying, "Well, you know, the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court sort of bounced back pretty good in terms of the proceedings." And I said, "Let me tell you, when all of this was happening, I was able to call up Madam Chief Registrar and say, we need to pull out this thing. And we need to..... And I was working it out over the weekend, and she was right there with me whilst we worked on it until we got to a workable draft that we could send out." So I really don't think I could have done anything without

persons like you and all the numbers of persons who have simply worked in the various parts of the court office like the I.T. department.

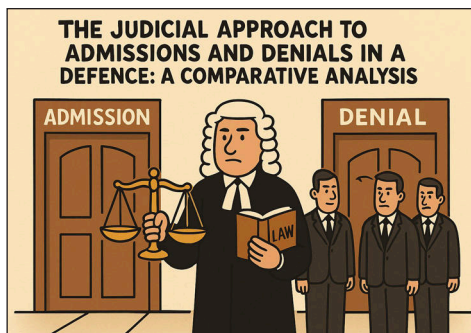
And the I.T. still check on me from time to time, which is so wonderful (laughs) and I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to work those years with you and with all the others. So God bless you. Keep looking well, as well. And of course, keep the service going.

Dame Janice's journey - from peeking into a courtroom as a young girl to becoming Chief Justice - is a testament to the power of determination, resilience, and service. Her legacy continues to inspire legal professionals and communities across the Eastern Caribbean.



The Judicial Approach to Admissions and Denials in a Defence: A Comparative Insight

by Justice Alvin Pariagsingh



In recent years, the courts across the Caribbean have increasingly adopted a more robust and disciplined approach to pleadings, particularly in the context of statements of case and defences. Two recent appellate decisions **M.I.5 Investigations Ltd v Centurion Protective Agency Ltd** (Civil Appeal No. 244/2008 Trinidad and Tobago) and **Heron's Flight Inc. v The Airports Authority** (GDA-HCVAP2024/0006 - Grenada) offer a compelling window into how courts are navigating the often-problematic terrain of admissions and denials under modern civil procedure rules. Though arising from different jurisdictions, both cases deal squarely with how Rule 10.5 of the Civil Procedure Rules (CPR), similar in both jurisdictions, ought to be applied and understood.

The Demise of the “Bare Denial”

In the **M.I.5 Investigations** case, the Trinidad and Tobago Court of Appeal offered a stinging rebuke of what it described as a textbook example of how not to plead a

defence under the CPR. The appellant's defence was a litany of unsupported denials, devoid of factual foundation or alternative narrative. At paragraph 5 of the judgment, Mendonca JA noted the defence offered only a “bare denial” of key allegations such as the volume of work done and the agreed fees, without offering any reason or contrary account.

The Court made clear that such pleading was plainly inadequate under Rule 10.5(4) of the CPR, which mandates that a defendant who denies an allegation must not only state the fact of the denial, but also the reason for it, and if seeking to advance a different version of events must state that version. The days of “holding defences”, where defendants might file a generic denial merely to buy time, are, as the Court put it, “over”.

Importantly, the Court took the view that a failure to comply with these requirements renders the defence effectively nugatory. If the defence does not properly traverse the claim, then judgment may follow as a matter of course. This reasoning underpinned the Court's decision to uphold the trial judge's order striking out the defence and entering judgment for the claimant.

A More Flexible, Contextual Approach

By contrast, the Eastern Caribbean Court of Appeal in **Heron's**

Flight Inc. adopted a more contextual and nuanced view of Rule 10.5 in dealing with similar arguments. There, the appellant sought to argue on appeal that the respondent had failed properly to deny the allegation that it had made a particular pre-contractual representation an omission which, it was said, ought to have led the court to treat the allegation as admitted.

The Court rejected this argument. It held that while Rule 10.5(3) and (4) does set out what a defendant must do namely, indicate which allegations are admitted, denied, or require proof it does not strictly require the use of the word “denied”, nor does it stipulate that a failure to deny in precise terms will amount to an admission. The Court reasoned that the essential question is whether, read fairly and in context, the defence puts the claimant to proof or joins issue on the relevant allegation. If it does, then the trial judge may legitimately treat it as a denial.

Indeed, the Court pointed to several passages in the defence that, while not using formulaic language, made it tolerably clear that the respondent was disputing the existence of the alleged representation. The Court concluded that the parties had effectively joined issue on the matter at trial, and that the burden of proving the representation lay with the appellant in the usual way.

The Common Thread: Clarity and Procedural Discipline

What unites both judgments is a shared commitment to clarity and

procedural discipline. The courts are no longer willing to entertain vague or evasive pleadings. Rule 10.5 is now seen not merely as a technical checklist, but as a critical tool for case management. The underlying rationale is plain: civil litigation is costly, and courts must be careful stewards of both the parties' and the system's resources. Parties who fail to articulate a clear and reasoned defence risk not only evidential difficulties at trial but the outright striking out of their case.

Yet, as **Heron's Flight** demonstrates, the rules must be applied with some measure of common sense. A defence which does not rigidly follow the language of the

rule may still suffice if it can be understood, in substance, to challenge the claimant's case. What matters is not the precise phrasing, but whether the pleading fairly signals the defendant's position and enables the claimant to know what must be proved.

Conclusion

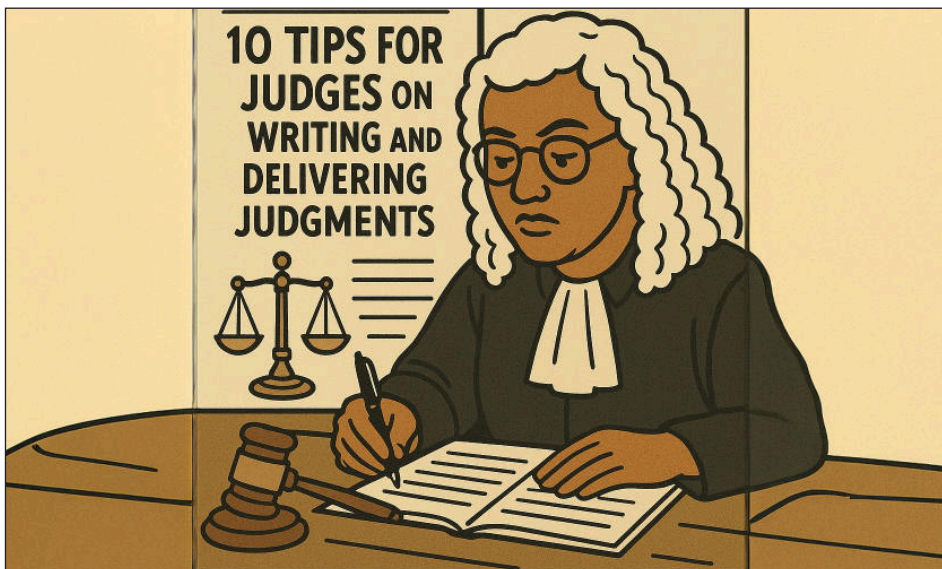
These cases, though factually and jurisdictionally distinct, converge on a clear judicial direction: pleadings must be meaningful, and denials must be substantiated. Courts are no longer willing to permit parties to proceed on vague generalities or tactical non-answers. But they are equally alive to the importance of substance over form. The ultimate

test is whether the defence clearly defines the issues and permits the matter to proceed in an orderly and efficient fashion. The balance between procedural rigor and practical fairness continues to shape the evolving landscape of civil litigation across the Caribbean.

Justice Alvin Pariagsingh
High Court of Justice
Saint Lucia



10 Tips for Judges on Writing and Delivering Judgments (With the Usual British Wit)



1. Assume No One Can Read

Write as if your audience includes a herd of overworked barristers, several disgruntled litigants, and at least one journalist who has never met a semicolon in their life. Clarity isn't optional; it's an act of mercy.

2. Short Words Win Cases

If you can use "big" instead of "magnitudinous" or "help" instead of "facilitate," for the love of Blackstone, do so. Latin phrases are charming, but unless you're actually summoning Cicero, spare us.

3. Beware the Sentence That Never Ends

A judgment is not an endurance test. If one sentence could double as a Victorian railway timetable, reconsider. The use of a full stop is not a mark of cowardice.

4. Structure: Like Building a Shed, But for the Mind

Introduction, background, legal issues, decision — in that order, please. If your judgment reads like a surrealist novel, expect an appeal. Possibly with illustrations.

5. Irony Is for the Tea Break, Not the Judgment

Tempting though it is to deploy your razor-sharp wit upon the submissions of counsel, resist. History teaches us that judicial sarcasm tends to age like unrefrigerated prawns.

6. Quote Sparingly — No One Came Here for a Greatest Hits Album

If you must quote authorities, do. But remember: citing eight separate cases to explain “reasonable doubt” impresses no one except your footnote.

7. Facts Are Not Optional Accessories

Treat facts like the bricks of a wall — not the scatter cushions of a living room. A judgment with-

out clearly stated facts is about as helpful as a map without roads.

8. Don’t Hide the Good Bits

Your actual decision (who wins and why) should not be lurking on page 93, after three dozen diversions on 14th-century equity practices. Front-load your findings like a sensible person.

9. Tone: Firm But Civilised

Even when parties have presented arguments crafted from string,

wishful thinking, and sheer audacity, respond with the tone of someone regretfully declining a third slice of Battenberg. Dignity is the best revenge.

10. Remember, Someone Will Eventually Read This Out Loud

Judgments live longer than you do. Write with the understanding that your words might be read aloud in court, parsed by academics, or worse, quoted on Twitter with added sarcasm.

Overview Of The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court Association of Women Judges (ECAWJ)



Some journeys are long and have many bumps and cracks along the way but one thing is sure, there is always a destination. This characterises the journey of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court Association of Women Judges (ECAWJ).

Retired Chief Justice, Dame Janice Pereira DBE LLD, was the catalyst for the formation of a women judges’ association. She shared her vision and gave the mandate and on 27th October 2022, the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court Association of Women Judges (ECAWJ) was incorporated as a non-profit company under the Companies Act of Saint

Lucia. The ECAWJ was formally launched on 5th March 2024 as part of the Court 57th anniversary celebrations.

At its inception in 1967 and until 1982, the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court was served by esteemed jurists all of whom were male. 1982 marked the turn of the tide when the first female was appointed to serve as a High Court Judge. We recognise this landmark achievement of Justice Monica Joseph of blessed memory.

Since then we have seen a steady growth in the number of female judges and other judicial officers who serve in the various Member States and Territories, with pinnacle moments in November 2008 when we saw the first all-female Court of Appeal Coram and in 2012, - the appointment of the first female (and longest serving) Retired Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, the Rt. Hon. Dame Janice Pereira,

DBE LLD and our first Patron.

Given the unique nature of our Court and the fact that our female judicial officers are required to serve in different islands separated by the waters of the Caribbean Sea, the formation of a women judges association provides an opportunity for interaction among sister judicial officers and to address the issues that are peculiar to women as they serve and navigate their various judicial roles.

The main objective of the Association is to promote greater understanding and a better resolution of legal issues facing women, and issues concerning female judicial officers.

The Eastern Caribbean Association of Women Judges caters for sitting judges, as well as to any person who holds or has retired from a permanent or salaried judicial post. “Judicial post” is defined broadly and includes a judge, magistrate, mas-

ter, court administrator, registrar, deputy or assistant registrar, and any person appointed or serving in a judicial or adjudicatory capacity including members of tribunals, boards, commissions or similar judicial or adjudicatory body. Our membership clause is also wide enough to enable col-

laboration with our male counterparts on matters deemed appropriate. Our membership now stands at 50.

The Association sees itself as impacting the society as a whole and embarking on programmes which will impact and inspire our young

women and girls to aim for excellence, but not just our women and girls, our young men as well. We believe that for society to heal and grow we must address both our females and males and we are committed to making a meaningful contribution to our OECS region in that regard.

Thank You

The Executive of the ECAWJ extends sincere gratitude to everyone who made our first All-Women Judges Newsletter a reality.

Special Thanks To:

- The President — for always being ready to lend a hand, even at very short notice.
- All contributors — who generously submitted material to enrich this issue.
- Chief Registrar Michelle John-Theobalds — for graciously taking on the task of interviewing our featured guest.
- Justice Alvin Pariagsingh — for courageously stepping forward with an article for this milestone edition.
- Our Newsletter Team — who jumped aboard enthusiastically to bring this issue to life.
- Stephen A. Dantes — for crafting our beautiful full layout and design concept.
- Leandra Foster — for assisting with final edits.
- Joi Sandiford of Saint Lucia — for designing our official logo. She is currently a second year student in Taiwan.

Your contributions have made this issue not just possible, but meaningful. Together, we've created something truly special.

LADY JUSTICE

The Bench & Beyond

