



# CO-CHAIR'S REMARKS AT PCWJ BOOK LAUNCH

The Hon. Mme. Justice Maureen Rajnauth-Lee

Book Launch of *Pioneering  
Caribbean Women Jurists*  
12 October 2021

## ABOUT THE CCJ ACADEMY FOR LAW

The Caribbean Academy for Law prepared an annual programme of activities based upon an assessment of need and successfully staged four biennial conferences. CAL programmes include participants drawn from various professions and fields of endeavour associated not only with courts but also from sectors that have some interaction with courts.

It was the year 1972. There was much excitement at a modest home of a young girl, who lived on Ariapita Avenue in Woodbrook, a suburb of Port of Spain, the capital of Trinidad and Tobago. There was a buzz in the air. The country was to have a new Judge – A woman from Barbados! The two grown women who lived in that house had received little formal education, but the news that Justice Marie Elizabeth Bourne had been appointed the first woman Judge of Trinidad and Tobago, and of the entire Commonwealth Caribbean, brought great joy to them. These two women were my aunt, Dorothy Weekes, who died almost 20 years ago at the age of 91, and my mother, Rita Rajnauth, who died in June of this year, at the blessed age of 100. “Imagine!” they would say to that young girl who had just completed her A Levels, “a woman can become a judge!”

Fast-forward almost 50 years. We gather virtually, in the midst of a pandemic, to celebrate the launch of this book, which captures the extraordinary stories, challenges, and accomplishments of 34 Pioneering Caribbean Women Jurists, including those of Justice Bourne. These remarkable women are pioneers in the truest sense of the word. This book contains colourful portraits of young women, several of whom overcame poverty and other serious obstacles. They were determined to become the best they could be. These women used their knowledge and achievements in the law as a platform to serve their peoples, their countries, and the region, with a passion and determination, so frequently recognized in Caribbean women. They broke through glass ceilings with confidence and even boldness, and accomplished many “firsts”.

I join with every speaker at this book launch in saluting each and every one of these Pioneering Caribbean Women Jurists - Eminent Caribbean Jurists - whose remarkable stories fill the pages of this book. It is my personal hope that this book will inspire young women and men throughout the region to strive to live exceptional lives of service.

In closing, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the CCJ Academy for Law, and in particular, to my colleague, Justice Winston Anderson, Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice, and Chair of the Academy, for inviting me to join him in spearheading this project. I am deeply grateful to Justice Anderson, the staff of the Academy, and in particular, Ms Susan Medina, Secretary of the Academy, for their advice and support. I join with my Co-Chair, Justice Anderson, in expressing our gratitude to the President of the Caribbean Court of Justice, Justice Adrian Saunders, for his overwhelming support of this project.

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I was that young girl who grew up in Woodbrook, and who heard in 1972, that a woman could become a judge. Co-chairing this project, has been a dream come true! Thank you for your kind attention.

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