



CO-CHAIR'S REMARKS AT THE CCJ ACADEMY FOR LAW, PIONEERING CARIBBEAN WOMEN JURISTS, BOOK LAUNCH

The Honourable Mme Justice Maureen
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**The CCJ Academy for Law, Eminent Caribbean Jurists Series, Virtual
Book Launch of Publication entitled, "Pioneering Caribbean Women
Jurists"**

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
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The CCJ Academy for Law is the educational arm of the Caribbean Court of Justice. Its essential mandate is to advance knowledge, education, learning, research, and the practical application of law and the administration of justice by providing informative and innovative perspectives on the law, particularly International Law. In 2019, the Academy introduced its Eminent Caribbean Jurists Series, and recognized and celebrated Eminent Caribbean International Law Jurists. The Pioneering Caribbean Women Jurists Project is the second installment of that series. It was co-chaired by Justice Winston Anderson and Justice Maureen Rajnauth-Lee, both Judges of the Caribbean Court of Justice. In addition to this Book, the Academy produced several videos highlighting the lives of these extraordinary Caribbean Women. Still in the midst of a pandemic, on 8 March 2022, the Academy hosted a Virtual Awards Ceremony to honour and celebrate these remarkable Caribbean Women.

Remarks
at the
CCJ Academy for Law - Eminent Caribbean Jurists Series
Pioneering Caribbean Women Jurists
Virtual Book Launch

by

The Honourable Mme Justice Maureen Rajnauth-Lee, Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice and Co-Chair of the Pioneering Caribbean Women Jurists Project

12 October 2021

A Woman Can Become a Judge!

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 the entire Commonwealth Caribbean brought great joy to them. These two women were my aunt, Dorothy Weekes, who passed almost twenty years ago at the age of ninety-one, and my mother, Rita Rajnauth, who passed in June of this year at the blessed age of one hundred (100). “Imagine!” they would say to that young girl who had just completed her Cambridge Advanced Level Examinations, “A WOMAN can become a Judge!”

Thirty-Four Extraordinary Eminent Women!

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 thirty 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 Virtual 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.

A Dream Come True!

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.

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.