



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

**134 HENRY STREET
PORT OF SPAIN
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**
Telephone: (868) 612-5225 Fax: (868) 627-1193
Website: www.ccj.org

MEDIA RELEASE

(For immediate release)

No. 03:2024

Date: 16 January 2024

STATEMENT ON THE PASSING OF RETIRED CCJ JUDGE MR JUSTICE JACOB WIT

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) regretfully advises of the passing of retired CCJ Judge, Mr Justice Jacob Wit. Mr Justice Wit was a member of the inaugural CCJ bench in 2005 and he diligently served until his retirement in December 2023.

This native of the Netherlands was an eminent jurist with wide legal expertise in private law, commercial and admiralty law, insurance, bankruptcy and insolvency, company law and intellectual property, criminal law, military law, administrative law, constitutional law, and international human rights law. Prior to joining the CCJ, he adjudicated over cases in Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, and the Dutch Windward Islands of Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius, and Saba.

Justice Wit was a polyglot, with fluency in several languages and will be remembered for his wit inside and outside of the courtroom. He also served as a Ranking Member of the CCJ Academy for Law and was the President of the Constitutional Court of Saint Maarten, a part time role. Recently, Justice Wit was the 2020 recipient of the Nederlandse Juristen Vereniging Award because of his long and effective contributions to forging and maintaining public trust in the judiciary in a turbulent environment.

CCJ President, the Hon. Mr Justice Adrian Saunders commented that “it is a sad day for the Court. Justice Wit and I worked together since 2005 when we formed part of the inaugural Bench of the Court. He was the lone Civil Law Judge on the current CCJ Bench with rich experience in military law, administrative law, constitutional law, and international human rights law. His involvement with the CCJ Academy for Law and his role in coordinating the Academy’s most recent Biennial Conference and Regional Town Hall focusing on crime, paired with his passion for regional

criminal justice reform are recognised and deeply appreciated. I will certainly miss him and his contributions to the Court and to the region.”

Justice Wit was also fondly regarded and highly respected by his peers on the Bench, the Court, and the entire region. His judgments and rich contribution to the work of the CCJ Academy for Law, will endure. The Court will conduct a special sitting and open a condolence book to recognise the Judge’s contribution.

Our sincerest condolences are extended to his family.

-End-

About the Caribbean Court of Justice

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) was inaugurated in Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on 16 April 2005 and presently has a Bench of seven judges presided over by CCJ President, the Honourable Mr Justice Adrian Saunders. The CCJ has an Original and an Appellate Jurisdiction and is effectively, therefore, two courts in one. In its Original Jurisdiction, it is an international court with exclusive jurisdiction to interpret and apply the rules set out in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC) and to decide disputes arising under it. The RTC established the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). In its Original Jurisdiction, the CCJ is critical to the CSME and all 12 Member States which belong to the CSME (including their citizens, businesses, and governments) can access the Court’s Original Jurisdiction to protect their rights under the RTC. In its Appellate Jurisdiction, the CCJ is the final court of appeal for criminal and civil matters for those countries in the Caribbean that alter their national Constitutions to enable the CCJ to perform that role. At present, four states access the Court in its Appellate Jurisdiction, these being Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Saint Lucia and Guyana. However, by signing and ratifying the Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Court of Justice, Member States of the Community have demonstrated a commitment to making the CCJ their final court of appeal. The Court is the realisation of a vision of our ancestors, an expression of independence and a signal of the region’s coming of age.

For more information please contact:
The Public Education & Protocol Unit
Tel: (868) 612-5225- exts. 2252, 2260
Email: ccjcomm@ccj.org