



# Remarks in Tribute to Mr Justice Jacob Wit at the CCJ Academy for Law 8th Biennial Conference

The Honourable Mr Justice Winston  
Anderson, President of the Caribbean  
Court of Justice

## **CCJ Academy for Law 8th Biennial Conference**

Hyatt Regency Suite, Trinidad and Tobago  
26 November 2025

**The CCJ Academy for Law's** mandate is to provide informative and innovative perspectives on the rules and the roles of law, particularly International Law. Additionally, the Academy provides a platform for examining court administration and encouraging best practices in the judicial administration of justice. The CCJ Academy for Law provide a forum for discussing legal concepts and rules in the areas particularly of, general international law, international trade law, regional integration law, and comparative law.

**Remarks in Tribute to Mr Justice Jacob Wit**  
**delivered by**  
**The Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson,**  
**President of the Caribbean Court of Justice & Chairman of the CCJ Academy for Law**  
**on the occasion of**  
**The CCJ Academy for Law's 8th Biennial Law Conference,**  
**'The CCJ at 20: Reflections on Caribbean Jurisprudence'**  
**26 November 2025 || Hyatt Regency || Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago || 9.32am-9.42am**

Please permit me to stand on the protocols established and to greet you as Excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning to all.

On 16 January 2024, the Caribbean Court of Justice, the CCJ Academy for Law, and the region lost a legal giant, an eminent jurist, and a great man.

Mr Justice Jacob Wit was a member of the inaugural Bench of the CCJ for eighteen years, serving from the Court's inception in April 2005 until his retirement due to ill health in December 2023. For most of that time, he was the Ranking Member of the CCJ Academy for Law, which he helped conceptualise and establish in 2010. As Deputy Chair of the Academy for 13 years, he was intricately involved in all its activities and achievements.

Hailing from the Netherlands and domiciled in Curacao, Justice Wit was the lone civil law voice on the CCJ Bench. In our many panel discussions on cases before us, he often used this unique position and his wry sense of humour to examine, dissect, praise and criticise the common law way of doing things. With his vast experience in numerous areas of private and public law, he authored clear, analytical and profound judgments, often with a touch of humour. At the Special Sitting of the Court in tribute to Justice Wit, held in January 2024, many remarked on his significant contributions to the Court's jurisprudence. His opinions, like those in *Attorney General v Joseph and Boyce*<sup>1</sup>, *Romeo da Costa Hall v The Queen*<sup>2</sup>; and *Ramkishun v Fung-Kee-Fung*<sup>3</sup> showcased his keen intellect, commitment to the rule of law, desire for practicality, and his novel

---

<sup>1</sup> [2006] CCJ 3

<sup>2</sup> [2011] CCJ 6

<sup>3</sup> [2010] CCJ 2

approach to finding a just resolution to disputes. He advocated valiantly for a new approach to interpretation of the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in our Constitutions. He advocated for speedier and practical reforms of the criminal justice system. His intense study of the provisions of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas generated a deep interest in the possibilities of the Caribbean Community. He had a naturally inquisitive, investigative, and meticulous mind, which shone through in his judicial reasoning and writing.

With respect to his contributions to the Academy, he was a constant force of inspiration, pouring his wisdom and desire to educate into our work. He kept us connected to Suriname and the Dutch Caribbean. He mobilised his energy and intellectual creativity into many of the Academy's initiatives, including particularly its 4th Biennial Conference held in Sint Maarten in 2016, which for the first time brought together Caribbean lawyers from different countries, legal systems, cultures, and languages. For over a year, Justice Wit helped plan the Academy's 7th Biennial Law Conference, held in Barbados in November 2023. Despite his deteriorating health, he remained fully engaged. He proposed topics, identified and contacted prospective speakers, monitored registration, and ensured that the conference remained practical and purposeful in its focus. The resultant **Needham's Point Declaration on Criminal Justice Reform** was as much his achievement as anyone else's.

Bob, as we on the Bench and many of his judicial colleagues knew him, was a special person. For me personally, he was an extraordinary friend and confidant, a happy source of guidance. For all of us here, he left lasting contributions to the law. He served us with distinction and with a fervour to develop the law in such a way as to provide clarity and improve our way of life and, indeed, the way of life of the people of the region. Through his enduring commitment to the CCJ and the CCJ Academy for Law, his legacy lives on. We remain in his debt for his tremendous contributions to the development of our Caribbean jurisprudence. And to his recognition that the Caribbean Court of Justice is an expression of a bond locked away in our collective memory. A bond of unity and justice spanning ethnicities, geography, and time. And therefore, a bond which will never die.

**[HAVE A SEAT & VIDEO TRIBUTE WILL BEGIN]**