

THE RT HON. THE BARONESS CARR OF WALTON-ON-THE-HILL
SWEARING IN OF THE LORD CHANCELLOR, ATTORNEY GENERAL AND SOLICITOR GENERAL
COURT 4, ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE

15 JULY 2024

1. My Lord Chancellor, it is a great pleasure to welcome you, your family and many friends to court 4 today. In particular, we greet your parents, Mr and Mrs Ahmed – Mahmood and Zubaida - twin brother Nassar, sister Salmah and brother Omar – not to mention your sisters-in-law, nephew Yusuf, niece Zara, and our youngest guest, your niece at the ripe old age of two – Hafsa.

2. As is so often the case on these historic occasions, your appointment marks a first, or rather a triple first. I do not, of course, refer to you being the first Lord Chancellor to have been inspired to come to the law through watching John Thaw play Kavanagh QC. Great actors and actresses have all too often been an inspiration to those who enter the legal profession.

3. Your swearing-in is significant for far more substantive reasons. It is so, not only because you are the first Lord Chancellor to swear their oath on the Qur’an, but also because today’s ceremony marks the first time that a Lady Chief Justice has sworn in a female Lord Chancellor. Both of these firsts highlight how your office, our constitution in microcosm, continues to evolve and reflect the society which it serves. I come to the third of your firsts in a moment.

4. My Lord Chancellor, you studied law at Lincoln College, Oxford. There you developed both legal and political acumen. Not only did you secure election as Junior Common Room President, something which no doubt called on skills of subtle persuasion, but in doing so you convinced a then future Prime Minister to vote for you. You also achieved the distinction of being awarded the Prize for best performance in the Lawyer’s Ethics finals examinations. And you spent considerable time working on access and mentoring schemes, assisting students from many and diverse backgrounds to fully realise their potential. Shrewd advocacy which bears results. A deep knowledge of ethics, of

professional ethics. A commitment to helping others. I am confident that you will deploy all three qualities in the service of justice, not least in your efforts to secure funding for our courts and tribunals.

5. Following the successful completion of your studies, you undertook pupillage at 12 King's Bench Walk under the watchful eye of William Audland KC, whom we are also delighted to see here today. You went on to specialise in professional indemnity law as an employed barrister with Berrymans Lace Mawer. This is the final first. No previous Lord Chancellor has been drawn from the employed Bar. Experience of the independent and employed bar - and of the solicitors' branch of the profession - will no doubt inform your understanding of the challenges faced by all those who seek justice as well as those who strive to secure its delivery.
6. Having established your legal career, politics beckoned. You were elected as Member of Parliament for Birmingham Ladywood in 2010. Shortly thereafter you became a Shadow Junior Home Office Minister. And from there you have gained experience as a Shadow Minister for Higher Education, as Shadow Financial Secretary and then Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Most recently you have served in the Shadow Cabinet as Labour Party National Campaign Coordinator and, from September last year, as Shadow Secretary of State for Justice. And so, following the General Election, we wish you well in your new office.
7. My Lord Chancellor, you will know that it is often and properly said that the primary duty – the primary service – of any government is to protect its citizens. And that that is achieved through securing the rule of law at home and abroad. Your oath today is one expression of that duty. It is also given effect by the statutory duties placed upon you to uphold the constitutional principle of the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, and to ensure that there is a properly financed, efficient and effective system to support the carrying on of the business of the courts and tribunals. Securing the first of the three duties necessarily depends upon securing the latter two.

8. One of the great strengths of our constitution is that, whilst Parliament, Government and the Judiciary each has their separate domains, they can and do properly work together. Both the separation of powers and the interdependence of powers lie at the heart of our uncodified constitution. The management and adjudication of proceedings, deployment and listing responsibilities, whether in our civil, family or criminal courts or tribunals - lie solely within the ambit of the judiciary, but the administration of those courts and tribunals is very much the product of a partnership between the Government and Judiciary. The same can also properly be said for many other aspects of our justice system, a point made clear in the spirit of the Concordat, which was entered into 20 years ago by the then Lord Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor, and the terms of the Constitutional Reform Act which followed it in 2005.

9. There will no doubt be challenges and choices to be made today and tomorrow. That is an inevitable feature of governing. We will work with you and your Ministers as you face these demands. I very much look forward to forging a stable, long-term partnership with you as Lord Chancellor within – of course – constitutional bounds, in the service of justice and the achievement of justice.

10. Mr Attorney, it is also a pleasure to welcome you, your wife Caren, daughter Katy, and family to court today. Like My Lord Chancellor you too have experience of both law and politics. For you though, while you studied Politics, along with Modern History, at Manchester University, politics has taken something of a backseat. Upon completing your degree, you switched to law and were called to the Bar in 1993. After completing your pupillage, you became a tenant at 30 Park Place in Cardiff. You then moved from there to practise from Doughty Street Chambers, where you took silk in 2009, before moving to Matrix Chambers in 2014. Most recently you have been balancing your practice with responsibilities as Chair of the Matrix Chambers' Management Committee at Matrix, effectively the Head of Chambers, and those that came in 2019 with your appointment as a deputy High Court Judge.

11. The office of Attorney General is, as we all know, not as ancient as that of Lord Chancellor. It is after all only 563 years since the title was first used to refer to the principal law officer

for the Crown. Notwithstanding the fact it is a mere youth in constitutional terms, it is an office that plays an important role in securing the first duty of government. Mr Attorney, your office requires you to provide the Government with practical, robust and accurate legal advice, acting as Guardian of the Public Interest and protecting the rule of law. As adviser, you provide the Government with the information necessary to enable it to carry out its responsibilities consistently with domestic and international law. As guardian, you protect the proper administration of justice and, as one of your predecessors Lord Elwyn-Jones put it, take *'proceedings where the interests of the public are endangered or, [where] acts tending to public injury are done without authority.'*

12. Mr Attorney, your practice at the Bar has encompassed both public and private law. You have expertise in the domestic and the international arena. You have appeared on many occasions before the Courts in this building, just as you have in the House of Lords and the Supreme Court. And for the last five years you have also, as you recently put it to me, as a deputy High Court judge *'had the opportunity to observe at first hand the diligence and brilliance of our modern independent judiciary'*. You have not just confined yourself to the courts though. As we well know, the delivery of justice goes beyond adjudication in court. Justice also encompasses just settlement. Where that is concerned, it is noteworthy that you led the settlement negotiations for 900 victims of the Grenfell Tower Disaster last year; a process that led not only to the settlement of their compensation claims but also the establishment of a restorative justice fund and, earlier this year, a restorative Testimony Week.

13. Mr Attorney, your experience at the Bar should well equip you to perform your many duties both outside the courts and before them. I look forward to working with you, when appropriate, as you discharge those functions - and to adjudicating - entirely independently - upon your submissions, when called upon to do so.

14. Finally, Madam Solicitor, we also welcome you, your husband Dan - who is uncharacteristically not in the front row today - daughters Nora and Miriam, and your family to court today. You were called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in 2008, having achieved a first class degree in History from Queens' College, Cambridge and a LLM from

Harvard. You commenced your practice at Francis Taylor Building, before moving to Matrix Chambers in 2021. It is quite possibly the first time that both law officers have hailed from the same Chambers. Unlike that of the Attorney General, your practice though has focused on – amongst other things – public, planning, local government, election, and environmental law; areas in which you are known as a leading junior.

15. Your legal expertise goes further. You have experience of the Israeli Supreme Court, having spent time there via an Inner Temple Scholarship as a Judicial Clerk. And you have provided human rights training in Yangon, Burma on behalf of the British Council. You have also provided pro bono legal advice for the charity, Toynbee Hall. And you have been involved actively in national politics since 2015.

16. Now, I am told that in addition to all of the above, you have taught at the LSE. I understand your graduate seminar carries the name 'Law and the City.' The title may perhaps pay tribute to a well-known American TV Series. If so, I wonder if there is scope to draw on its sequel. Why might that be? Well, you were first elected to Parliament, as MP for Finchley and Golders Green, just over a week ago. 'And just like that' you are here today taking your oath as Solicitor General, your first ministerial office. We wish you well in it and look forward to also working with you, as appropriate, as you discharge your responsibilities.

17. My Lord Chancellor, Mr Attorney and Madam Solicitor, on behalf of the judiciary of England and Wales may I congratulate each of you on your appointments and wish you well in the discharge of your constitutional responsibilities. We look forward to working with you constructively to secure the proper administration of justice and maintain the rule of law.