



**Introductory remarks by Sir Burton Hall, Chief Justice,  
at Ceremony for Admission to the Bar  
27 October 2006**

Before we commence this morning's exercises, in recognition of the disappointment of some and the consternation of others I, in welcoming you here, would make some observations as to why we have gathered at the National Centre for the Performing Arts instead of the Supreme Court Building in Bank Lane where such ceremonies have traditionally been held.

The obvious reason is, of course, that, to accommodate the greater numbers of persons who come to be admitted as Counsel and Attorneys of the Supreme Court of The Bahamas, it has become necessary to revisit the manner in which these exercises are conducted. Accordingly, traditions of place as with customs of form have had to yield to the practical considerations.

Today is historic as it marks the first time that 27 persons would have been admitted in a single ceremony in The Bahamas. One year ago, similar numbers were accommodated by four successive ceremonies held over two days. This resulted not only in one of the courtrooms available for trials being put out of use for two days but it imposed an undue burden on the staff assigned to the Office of the Chief Justice in arranging and re-arranging seating in chairs which had to be rented for the occasion.

After consultation with the Registrar of the Supreme Court and the Bar Council, on the occasion of the ceremony in December of 2005, we procured the permission of the relevant government agency to use this site. While, of course, not an ideal setting – after all, it is a theatre, not a courtroom – that innovation proved satisfactory.

Today marks the third ceremony at this site and our experience in the efficacy of this arrangement will be reflected in a revision of the Practice Direction on the Order of Ceremony for Calls to the Bar to be issued before the end of this year. Among the revisions will be the provisions that, when the number of persons to be admitted exceeds 12 in number, the ceremony will be held at the National Centre for the Performing Arts instead of the Supreme Court and, when the number of persons exceeds 20, the time of the ceremony will be moved to 10:30 in the morning.

I continue to entertain the hope that any new Supreme Court building will include a "Convocation Hall" or similar gathering space which might accommodate ceremonies such as this. I hope that the Bar will support me in my ongoing discussions with the Executive on this point. I have urged that the provision of such a public gathering space will inure to the benefit of the entire community as, subject to the necessary security arrangements being put into place, that facility would be available at nights and on weekends for certain public functions.