

**Speech By Sr. Adv Abraham Vakkanal,  
Senior Member, Law Reporting Council,**

for the farewell function to  
Justice Alexander Thomas,

held at  
Banquet Hall of Kerala High Court  
on 24-8-23 at 4.40 pm.

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Honourable Chief Justice AJ Desai,  
Justice Alexander Thomas,  
Justice Mushtaq,  
Justice Anil K Narendran,  
other Honourable Judges,  
learned senior lawyers,  
law officers of the State,  
learned lawyers,  
Office bearers and staff of KELSA and Mediation Council  
and Editor, Staff & Reporters of ILC and guests:

1. We all are gathered here to bid farewell to Honorable Justice Alexander Thomas, the senior-most judge, as he retires from office, inter alia, as Chairman of the Law Reporting Council, in a few days.
2. Judges are important figures in the life of lawyers, and I take this occasion to thank you for being a personality, we could look up to.
3. Justice Alexander was never one to shirk work. He has always been the poster boy for the age-old saying – “work is worship”.
4. And as an extremely brave judge, he has been a great source of encouragement for all of us in dispensing

justice, including delivering several landmark judgements, that you all are aware of.

5. I have known Justice Alexander for about 30 to 35 years, both as a judge and as a lawyer.
6. It is due to his hard work, diligence, and adherence to professional ethics, that he has gained the trust of the members of the bar, who still see him as one amongst them.
7. But there is one quality of Justice Alexander that I want to call out – perseverance. Perseverance is a virtue, and most of us do not have that quality in full measure. But at the same time, Justice Alexander is perseverance personified.

There are many instances of this quality being showcased, but I shall recount only two:

one, in the judicial side and another, in the administrative side – both of which I have been personally involved in.

8. In one of the Writ Appeals before the Division Bench headed by Justice Alexander, where I appeared as a senior counsel, his lordship though in agreement with my case, he was reluctant to grant relief directly. Instead, he directed the cooperative department and the Director Board of the society, to complete the procedure and to grant him ie: the former secretary of Society all arrears of salary and pension within a time limit. Though I insisted the court to do it directly, considering the four rounds of litigation he had already been through earlier, and considering the hostile attitude of the authorities shown henceforth, the bench politely turned down my request.

9. After about six months, one lawyer approached me and said that in a Contempt case in connection with the earlier judgement that came up before the bench of Justice Alexander, he wants my presence in court while considering it. Though I had no engagement, since the court wanted my presence, I appeared.
10. To my surprise, I saw Justice Alexander severely scolding the counsel for the Society and Cooperative Department for not obeying his orders in letter and in spirit and also, solicited my views and openly told in Court that at the time of earlier judgment itself, we should have accepted the advice of the Senior Counsel, & granted him reliefs directly, considering the history of the case.
11. To make a long story short, Justice Alexander took the respondents to task and made them to produce orders before the court within a time limit granting reliefs and thus, the petitioner got full relief.
12. Another instance in the administrative side relates to the hike of emoluments of Editor and Reporters of ILR. Normally, I know, it may not be fair to disclose the emoluments. But, I have the consent from the Editor to do it to drive my point.
13. The proposal to increase it from Rs 30,000 to Rs 50,000 for Editor, and from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 for Reporters, was a contentious issue for three years, right from chairmanship of Justice Vinod Chandran, and when Advocate General late Sri Sudhakara Prasad was in office. They had done their best, but the Government steadily opposed that move, obviously due to financial constraints. It is while so that Justice Alexander was appointed as Chairman, Law Reporting Council, hardly 5 months back.

14. He took up the proposal with all earnestness and got it sanctioned in jet speed, last week. Initially, the government agreed for an enhancement of Rs 40,000 only for Editor and what I learnt is that Justice Alexander did not agree and at last, the government had to yield and our Editor Shri. Shiraz is now getting a pay of Rs 50,000 per month as Editor for this part time role. We do not know, what magic Justice Alexander has performed to make the Government to agree to the proposal. Just like the previous Editor, Justice V. G. Arun, Shri. Shiraz is also workaholic and a perfectionist.
15. The examples I mentioned are only two. But there are many more.
16. Give Justice Alexander any task, and if it is genuine, he will see to it that it is accomplished - despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.
17. Another peculiarity we found in him is that he used to give sound advices to the Bar members in the course of arguments. I would like to emphasize the positive side of it. We do appreciate Justice Alexander for the time he spent so, as efforts to mentor and help lawyers to grow their skills and in shaping their personality.
18. You have always been there to listen to our troubles and inspire us. And we always know that we can count on you.
19. What has impressed us lawyers most is your rock solid self-belief and forthrightness. You have remained calm through adversity and have been a source of strength for all of us.
20. I, distinctly remember, during the historic and devastating floods of 2018, and also, when there was

clash between lawyers & police in 2019, you personally came to us in the association, to discuss with problems and to find solutions.

21. Within these 5 months of Chairmanship, you were able to launch e-version of ILR series & e-payments. Under your stewardship, I am very proud to say, Law Reporting Council could scale greater heights within just 5 months, which normally may not have been possible even in 5 years.
22. It is Justice Alexander who brought Justice Arun, who worked as editor of ILR for long before his elevation as judge, as a special invitee to the Law Reporting Council again to utilize his long experience fruitfully.
23. Today, as we bid you farewell, as Chairman Law Reporting Council of this High Court, please accept our best wishes and we pray to God Almighty, to grant you good health, happiness, and an active and fulfilling role in your next innings too.
24. I, on behalf of Indian Law Reporting Council, wish all the best to Justice Alexander Thomas.

Thank you all for patient listening .