

Term 3
2016

It's All About Us



“Justice Beyond St Pats and Building Bridges.”

SJAG Term 3 2016

Taking Liberation Beyond the Gates— Gillian Daley

A Farewell— Joseph Bejjani

Justice at St. Patrick’s College—Tony Elias

Liberating Education and Sustainability—Joshua Sabino

The Unity of Music—Marco Pecora

The Gift of Passion—Jett Hendry

Justice Calls—Nicholas Fazio

Refugees Compete in Rio—Darcy Jenson and Jason Maroun

Islam Misconceptions—Andre Volpato

GUEST REPORTS

“WHO ARE THE MARGINALISED?”

The L.G.T.B.Q.I Community—Jamie Merhi

Gender Inequality for Women—Christian Guarna

CONTENTS

TAKING LIBERATION BEYOND THE GATES

It's that time of year again when we say farewell to our Year 12 students and we recognise the many and varied contributions they have made to St Patrick's College in their time here. The work for justice saw many young men from Year 12 stand in solidarity with the marginalised and work to make a difference in the lives of those in need. I commend the work of all those within the College's Social Justice Action Group (SJAG) as well as those who have participated in events and actions to show what St Patrick's College stands for.

By the time students leave St Patrick's they will have had the opportunity to be apart of the Junior School Social Justice, SJAG, Year 11 Social Justice Service, a justice partnership day in each year level, the Year 10 Justice & Advocacy Forum, Jesus on the Streets at the Year 12 Spirituality Day, visits to Chalmers Rd School in Year 10 and various different initiatives run by the College such as Detention for Detention and the Winter Sleep Out. In conjunction with this are all major College celebrations like assemblies and Founders Day which espouse the EREA touchstones to be lived in everyday life. Community members also contribute to the College's Lenten Appeal, Winter Appeal, Christmas Appeal, Junior School Fundraising and year group justice partnerships. As well as these actions all curriculum areas have implemented or are in the process of implementing an education for justice and peace.

Sadly, there are some students who will travel through their time at the College untouched by anything that has been put in place. Many leave the College without any commitment to justice in the world. Such is humanity and the power of outside influences. We can only hope that something happens down the track to switch on the light.

Thankfully we have many fine young boys and men who recognise genuine injustice and want to do something about it. You are NEVER too young to work for justice. Young people have a voice, so make it heard when fighting for good. We all have to make sure we take our thoughts and silent support into action, advocacy and standing in solidarity. As a community we are founded on liberation and justice. It is the legacy left by the Christian Brothers to be carried on by us. We are to be the light of truth and justice in the world and not leave it to others.

TAKING LIBERATION BEYOND THE GATES (CONT.)

The Year 12 students who leave us this year have been great campaigners for justice. They instituted the Winter Sleep Out, they began the Ration Challenge to support Refugees, they established Fair Trade hot chocolate stalls, they interacted with staff and students from Lucas Gardens School, they made videos and art to support many causes and they spoke with passion at assemblies. It would be difficult to find a more compassionate, caring, thoughtful and hard-working young man than the Social Justice Prefect for this year, Joseph Bejjani. He set a tone for others to follow and lead with bucket loads of authenticity. He was ably supported by Joshua Sabino, the Stewardship Prefect, and Christian Sassin, the Spirituality Prefect who both offered different skills and a desire to get involved. College Captain, Declan Armstrong, and Vice-Captain, Tony Elias were magnificent in lending their support whenever needed and showed clearly what our values at the College are about.

Our greatest wish now is for our departing students to be the 'hands' of Christ in the world, through what they say, how they act and who they are.

Good luck and God bless Year 12. May the Spirit guide you in your pursuit of justice for all.

Gillian Daley

Director of Identity



A FAREWELL

The Term 4 2015 – Term 3 2016 school year has been one filled with the promotion and awareness of Social Justice within our College community. As the elected Social Justice Prefect, I have aimed to be able to ignite the passion for Justice within the lives of each and every student here in the College. Through my ambition to do so, I have been able to truly understand the call of Justice within our society. We, as humans, must understand that we are obligated through a common bond of humanity which guides us to treat one another with the equal love and stewardship instilled in us all by the Creator God.

With this in mind as the foundation for Social Justice in our society, we can observe the way in which we are called to care and exert compassion and kindness for all within our community.

It is not the way in which we are dismissively obliged to give 'charity' that makes a difference, rather, it is the pure intent and kindness of one's heart. This allows for a positive flow on effect for all of society to create a ripple which will eventually come back to you. This notion is intrinsically embodied within the circle of life. As we are young infants, we require the nourishment of our parents in order to grow and learn to become a living and contributing part within society. Yet, as we grow older, so too do our parents, the one's who bore the gift of life unto us. This requires our nourishment and care for them as they leave the humanly world and enter the world of perpetual peace in the Kingdom of God. Thus, emphasising the way in which we are called even by the circle of life to be aware and care for the other.

A FAREWELL (CONT.)

The mere fact that we have been born into a life of relative comfort and pleasure is out of chance. We have no control of the circumstances in which we are born, thus, it is our duty to care for those who are unfortunately unable to care for themselves. This applies to all areas of our life, whether it be through the care for the elderly, homeless, those seeking a better life, or those fleeing from oppressive circumstances.

That is why we should act with compassion. That is why we should be a voice for the voiceless. That is the true call of Justice.

In saying that, I hope that each of you are able to understand how prevalent the call for justice is and how pivotal our responses of action are. This has been exemplified through the year of Justice from Term 4 2015 – Term 3 2016, and I hope it will be continued within the College in the years to come as a microcosm of the larger society.

Joseph Bejjani

Social Justice Prefect



JUSTICE AT ST. PATRICK'S COLLEGE

St. Patrick's College is different for reasons that vary from student to student. From commitment to passion, from involvement to independence, St. Pats has always been a place that explores and brings about the best in all its students. It can be owed to the core foundation of the Christian Brothers for the wholistic education that all students were given since the College's inception. The gospel values and consequently the EREA touchstones outline a specific basis focused on that which I believe makes St. Patrick's different, which is the students' need to care for not only each other, but for the greater community.

Thereby it is no surprise that the journey to my final days at the College has been the most diverse across weighted experiences in charities, fundraisers, excursions to shelters and a comprehensive education that has a special heart for the other, the needy and the marginalised.

My personal experiences of justice at this school have always been owed to the opportunities and discussions organised tirelessly and continually by the likes of Mrs Rodricks and Ms Daley, who have helped develop me into the student I proudly am today.

The call to justice is unequivocally innate.

Like our conscience of right or wrong, our sense of values and urge for compassion for others is simply something we're called to ignite with the people we get to meet and undoubtedly help.

It's about being a part of something greater that ties the boys to what they do, their understanding of others and their commitment to help those who are less fortunate fills us all with a mutual appreciation of where we're from and what we have. As such, I urge those especially in younger years to be involved where they can, because they will walk away with experiences that they will hold close to themselves along with other key memories of the St Patrick's experience.

Over the years I have been lucky enough to gain wisdom from aged care, to give time to charities but one especially dear to me is attending homework help at St. Joachim's in Lidcombe. Helping those in younger years with their work and education is a mutual gift that I can walk away from my schooling life, happy knowing that I made a difference at all.

Tony Elias

Year 12

College Vice Captain

Fight The Good Fight
of Faith



"We open hearts and minds, through quality teaching and learning experiences so that through critical reflection and engagement each person is hope-filled and free to build a better world for all."

- EREA Charter Touchstone of Liberating Education

Saint Patrick's College Strathfield opens its education to all, so that its students are taught to have an open heart and mind, filling each person with hope and freedom to build a better world for all. The aim of the liberation of education is to engage students and equip them to be self-aware and to critically think about situations, as well as to instil a willingness and ability to act as agents of change within society.

We at St Patrick's College enable students to experience an awareness of the issues surrounding the environment through curriculum, service and the culture of the school. The Social Justice Action Group took part in Clean Up Australia Day in March this year, with the boys being spoken to beforehand about the issues surrounding the amount of pollution and rubbish growing in areas around Australia. The simple act of empowering the community to action; to clean up, fix up and conserve the environment demonstrates that the injustices are being highlighted in the education provided at the College, in order to better the students as people and as agents of proactivity and change. The planned reintroduction of the vegetable patch and garden outside of the Markwell Building is also a demonstration to the connection that Saint Patrick's College places on educating its students on the importance of reconnecting with the natural world, whilst integrating with the curriculum such as that of science, as well as instilling within them a sense of personal and social responsibility. The culture of the school places a heavy emphasis on the concepts of reuse, reduce, recycle, educating students on the environmental consequences associated with irresponsible disposal of rubbish. In all of this, we as a community come to an understanding that through education, we are all taught to keep our minds and hearts open to help us work for a better world for all.

Joshua Sabino

Year 12

Sustainability Prefect



THE UNITY OF MUSIC

Music has given me the opportunity to travel the world and develop international relationships, the means to vocalise significant justice issues and the avenue to communicate with all; building bridges rather than walls. One aspect of music that has truly drawn my attention is its unique capacity to be culturally specific yet globally human. Song, dance, rhythm and melody are often referred to as international languages and I truly believe that this is true. Words can often be misunderstood and can easily cause conflict, but nobody will ever consider a crotchet or a crash cymbal to be offensive. Whilst I recognise this is quite a childish concept I also believe that its innocence is the beauty of it. Music is innately human.

I have found it interesting, being an outsider to the culture, how the beating of a durbakke or tabel has the ability to unite communities despite the religious views of the drummer. This typically middle eastern music is shared between Muslims and Christians alike and is celebratory often played and danced to at weddings. Could it be, and I write this naively, that music is one of the avenues for peace within our society; even this year having played Lebanese beats on the bass drum at sport I have recognised that despite my Italian heritage I have been embraced and accepted with joy.

In my years at Saint Patrick's College I have been known for finding any excuse to perform...and for the most this is true, but in saying this I must reinforce that my desire to perform has been driven by the desire to show a common passion between all cultures and hence all people. In 2015 on Reconciliation Day, Oliver Lavermicocca and I played the didgeridoo and other world instruments from the Middle East, Sicily and Asia. This organic improvisation of world music truly vocalised through song the multicultural nature of Australia and perhaps the role and potential unity of humans. Each instrument despite its key, tone or orientation, played beautifully in harmonious unity.

As St Francis said, "make me an instrument of your peace"...let's all take this literally and use music as an avenue for peace.

Marco Pecora

Year 12

Cultural Co-Curricular Prefect



THE GIFT OF PASSION

I joined social justice relatively late during schooling in term 4 last year. The driving force for joining was the amazing experiences of my fellow peers. Each week there was a new issue and a new approach to helping the disadvantaged. On top of this there were numerous events my peers attended returning with renewed insight regarding so many different areas of life from all over the world.

After joining, there were innumerable opportunities presented to me right from the beginning. These included writing articles for this very publication, taking part in talks regarding improvement in the College's efforts towards social justice, detention for detention campaigns, white ribbon initiatives, clean up Australia day and even just assisting the community in events at the school for example barbecues.

It was over this time that I was exposed to many issues; those the general public rarely have any knowledge of. A great example of this being Fair Trade. I knew little to nothing regarding the issue upon entering the meeting devoted to it, however, I left with a new found passion to support the ideas embodied in fair trade. This passion came to fruition with the development of the Fair Trade Initiative for 2016— the fair trade hot chocolate store. For one week a group of our year 12 members, including me, sold Oxfam hot chocolate in the Powell Pavilion every morning. I think it was this event that really encapsulated the importance for the social justice efforts in this school with numerous students of all years attending the store with an amazing turn out no one could have expected. The spreading of such knowledge was the true gift this group had given me; the ability to broaden others understanding of the world just out of the general public's view. It is for this reason that I think I speak for all year 12 boys who have had the opportunity to partake in such a group, thank you to all the individuals integral to the groups success and the school as a whole for the unrivalled and unbiased support of any and all issues presented to them.

Thank you for the instilment of purpose and passion to support all.

Jett Hendry

Year 12



**DON'T BE
SILENT**

JUSTICE CALLS

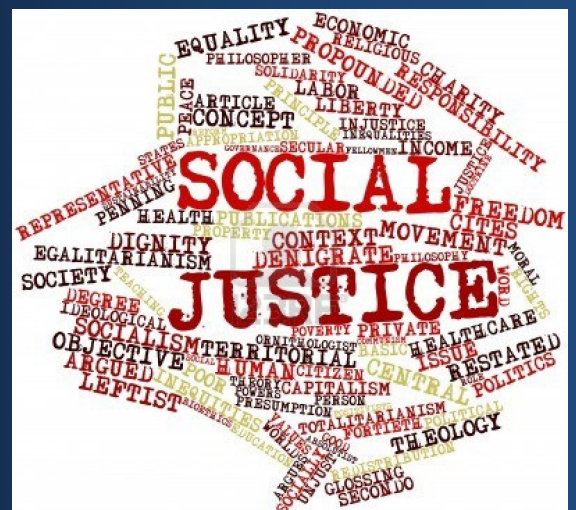
I can definitely say that my time in social justice has been a vastly enriching and unreplaceable experience. For a long time I have heard about the many things that the Social Justice Action Group does and was always inspired to join. As a part of the Social Justice Action Group I have constantly found myself confronted with the many deplorable conditions that people have to suffer through every day. My time during social justice has seen me work to help these kinds of people that find themselves on the very periphery of society. Our help is needed desperately, something that social justice has definitely shown throughout my time, and the Social Justice Action Group has enabled me to have my own part in lending out my hand and making a difference in their lives to help make it much easier to get through life.

The little things that we take for granted become so much more valued once you come to understand them. The Social Justice Action Group has had such a humbling experience on my own life, teaching me to appreciate all the things in my life while always making me more aware. Without a doubt I would recommend Social Justice to others simply for what you take away from it, let alone what you can put in.

Throughout my time in the Social Justice Action Group I have had the honour of participating in causes such as the Winter appeal, the Winter sleep Out, Detention4Detention and the Fair Trade hot chocolate store, just to name a few. By doing acts such as these I feel as if I am making an active contribution to assisting people that are being unjustly treated and disregarded by society. This is an attitude I am going to take with me out of St Patrick's College, one which I hope all boys do. Social Justice incorporates a significant portion of our school touchstones, and as I leave school I will bring these touchstones with me, as well as all the attitudes I have gained in my time in the Social Justice Action Group.

Nicholas Fazio

Year 12



REFUGEES COMPETE IN RIO

They were selected as humans with a message, as humans wanting the same opportunity as all, to “send a message of hope to all the refugees of the world” (International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach). The Refugee Olympic Team, which comprised of 10 different unique athletes, all had a universal mission to showcase their talents on an international scale in a life-changing opportunity. Their opportunity was a tribute to the perseverance and courage of all refugees, giving them not only a voice, but raising global attention to the magnitude of the refugee crisis which has lately been criticised in the public domain. In 2012, the year of the last Summer Olympics in London, there were 11 million global refugees; however this number has increased by nearly three-quarters in 2016.

Among one of the athletes was Yursa Mardini, an 18 year-old Syrian living in Berlin, Germany. Known for pushing a capsized boat for hours to rescue 20 people fleeing from Syria, Yursa attained the title of a hard-working, brave young athlete who continually rose to challenges presented before her. She was the first athlete to represent the refugee team in Rio, placing first in her 100m butterfly heat and swimming in the 100metre freestyle among the world’s best. Rodrigo Sini, a Brazilian paint artist, justified the inclusion of the Refugee team, stating: “There is no medal that justifies the pleasure or the weight each of them carries, for the story each of them has, for the determination and courage they all had when they had to abandon their home countries to restart their lives somewhere else.”

Popole Misenga is another member of the Refugee Olympic Team who grew up in the Democratic Republic of Congo and faced unbearable hardship at the age of 6, witnessing the murder of his mother. He sought asylum in Brail in 2013 and transferred his will to learn into perfecting the sport of Judo, making it to the round-of-16 before getting knocked out. Rami Anis, a 25-year old Syrian born male who fled from war-torn Syria in 2015 shares a similar story. He clocked a personal best in the men’s 100 metre free-style and received a standing ovation in lieu of his achievement, to which he replied “I don’t want to wake up from this dream”.

Fleeing from South Sudan were five unique athletes; Rose Nathike Lokonyen, Yiech Pur Biel, James Nyang Chiengjiek, Anjelina Nada Lohalith and Paulo Amotun Lokoro. Fleeing Sudan at a young age, the athletes could recall running 10km races barefoot due to the extreme poverty they experienced, and the continual shortage of clothing and shelter. Although none of the athletes achieved medals, their participation is symbolic of the unity and diversity of the Olympic Games, which was vividly reflected in the Opening Ceremony. Their inclusion in the Olympic Games is a testament to the work of international organisations who continually work towards promoting and advocating refugees on an international scale, so that they, as humans, may have a voice and be granted the same rights as all humanity.

Jason Maroun and Darcy Jenson

Year 12



ISLAM MISCONCEPTIONS

On August 10, the entire Year 11 cohort, accompanied by our year 11 Studies of Religion teachers, visited Gallipoli Mosque, Auburn and St Mary & St Merkorious Coptic Orthodox Church, Rhodes in order to supplement our classroom learning. The excursion was an enjoyable experience and allowed us to completely engage with the religion and see Islam for ourselves in a different light to what is usually portrayed in the media. Keeping to the theme of this term's *It's Time*, 'Peacebuilding', my SOR class was recently shown an episode of the ABC documentary series 'You can't ask that'; a show which aims to better inform the Australian public of various minority groups. The episode, centered around Muslims, featured Australian Muslims from various parts of Australia and walks of life. The guests were sat down and asked to answer a number of questions that had been anonymously sent in online. Questions and answers were interesting and the episode is definitely worth a watch. Misconceptions are debunked and some guests admit to being a little bit lazy when it comes to following Islamic rules. (Link provided on the next page).

When examining common stereotypes concerning Islam, it's important to realise the difference between cultural influences and religious policy. For example, there are questions raised regarding the rights received by Muslim women. Many countries across the world, including Muslim countries, have patriarchal cultures (cultures in which men are automatically assumed to lead), which are often socially constructed and influenced by the traditions, gender roles, and practices of that culture. Islam as a religion, preaches equality of the sexes. "Islam doesn't subjugate women. Men subjugate women." – Abdul Abdullah (You Can't Ask That – Muslims). There are many Muslim women who have made great accomplishments in the fields of science, entertainment, academia, art, and politics— including Ameenah Gurib, a professor of biology and president of Mauritius (Muslim Majority African country) and the likes of political activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Malala Yousafzai.

'Islam doesn't mix with other religions'. Again, it's important to make the distinction between the behaviour of various cultures and politics of countries compared to actual religious theology. Islam is a religion of the book, which is in the same family of religions as Judaism and Christianity. All three of the religions share many similarities, including important religious figures, historical events, and spiritual beliefs. In fact, Muslims are religiously required to believe in Jesus as a divine prophet. There have been numerous periods of history throughout the Middle East where Muslims, Jews, and Christians have lived together for centuries.

ISLAM MISCONCEPTIONS (CONT.)

The final stereotype that I'll mention is that Islam promotes violence and terrorism. According to the Council on American-Islamic Relations, prominent Muslims, Islamic organisations and Islamic scholars have repeatedly condemned the terrorist attacks of September 11 and terrorism in general. One letter sent to President George W. Bush was signed by leaders from nine American-Muslim organisations, which together represent most of the seven million Muslims in the United States.

'Jihad' is a term that is often misunderstood and associated with violent radical militants. However, according to Muslim advocates, the word jihad means to "strive, struggle and exert effort." It is a central and broad Islamic concept that includes struggle against evil inclinations within oneself, struggle to improve the quality of life in society. It is important to note that more often than not it is only the acts of violence committed by Muslims that are labelled as terrorism, as Jamila Hussain says during her interview on 'You Can't Ask That', "When a non-Muslim commits a criminal act, his religion is almost never mentioned. It's only Muslims who get their religion put up in lights and get blamed for whatever they've done."

I would encourage all to watch the video in the link below.

You Can't Ask That – Muslims <http://iview.abc.net.au/programs/you-cant-ask-that/LE1517H004S00>

Andre Volpato

Year 11



GUEST REPORTS

THE GUEST REPORTS FOR THIS ISSUE OF THE IT'S TIME MAGAZINE ARE SELECTED SUBMISSIONS FROM A CLASS ASSESSMENT RUN BY MS. BURGESS IN HER YEAR 10 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS.

EACH ARTICLE IS CENTRED AROUND THE QUESTION

‘WHO ARE THE MARGINALISED?’

THE L.G.T.B.Q.I COMMUNITY

The lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer and inter-sexual community (LGBTQI), are a group of people marginalised due to their diverse sexual orientation. However, despite how different they may sound, these people are really no different from you and me. About 11% of Australia's population is accounted for by Australians of a diverse sexual orientation, sex or gender identity; where since 1996 to 2011, the reported number of homosexual couples has more than tripled.

This community really isn't any different than us. In fact, you wouldn't always be able to recognise someone as part of this group that easily. However, our and most other societies are quite blind to this fact and as a result, impose harsh judgement and cruelty onto these people making them feel the need to hide their individuality and sexual uniqueness. As a result, an LGBTQI person is 3 times more likely to suffer from depression and are constantly victims of verbal homophobic abuse, social exclusion, embarrassment and humiliation, cyber bullying and graffiti.

Equality and freedom from discrimination are fundamental and basic human rights. This is regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or because they are intersex, however it is still something that the LGBTQI community unfairly lacks. Even after the amendment to the Sex Discrimination Act of 1984 in 2013, where discrimination against these people was made to be against the law, LGBTQI are still experiencing discrimination, harassment and hostility in all parts of everyday life. This includes in public and at work. As a result, many of them hide their sexuality or gender identity when accessing services at social and community events and in the workforce. Continuing further, adults are not the only ones affected but adolescents are to. About 80% of homophobic bullying occurs at school and has a significant impact on their education and well-being.

Despite all this, there have been some positive developments including protective school policies allowing LGBTQI to feel safe and secure. Now they are almost 50% less likely to be physically abused at school and to suffer other forms of abuse as well. They are also less likely to harm themselves and attempt to commit suicide. People in same sex couples also tend to be more highly educated and more likely to work in highly skilled occupations which further establishes how they are not similar to us but exactly alike and they should be treated so.

However, after these efforts to help the LGBTQI community, they still remain in a continuous struggle and it is up to us now to aid in the support. So I am calling out to all of you to learn more about this community and to try to understand how they feel. By educating yourself, you will be granted a great power for you to educate others. It's time to come together and help make a difference.

Jamie Merhi



GENDER INEQUALITY FOR WOMEN

Throughout time women in society have been considered as having a low status in the world. As time progressed, the world began to change making women more equal to men. Although there is still feud and controversy on the debate of gender inequality. Many women are not appreciated and not viewed in a good way due to the threat that women have empowerment over men. Gender equality is a complex issue and a hard to define subject. Around the world today, the status of a woman varies depending on the culture. This means that the status of women could be improved in one culture but in another decline or remain unchanged.

This is seen in Saudi Arabia, where women aren't allowed to drive and men aren't allowed to drive women they're not closely related to. In Australia women are allowed freely to drive without issue and allowed to be in a car with a male they are related or not related to. Women are just as equal to men because at the end of the day, we are ALL human and we are ALL one people. *Girls and women have had major problems since 1990, but they have not yet gained gender equality. Still today women are discriminated against in health, education and even in political representation.*

According to the world bank, women between the ages of 15 and 44 are at a greater risk of experiencing rape or domestic violence than cancer or even car accidents. Also the UN released last year that 70% of women worldwide experience violence during their life which is unfair and wrong in many ways. Some shelters in countries exist, to protect women who fear for their lives. Males do this as a result of seeing women as more intelligent, more valued and having more to offer.

There are different attitudes when males look at women. When a male speaks at a conference for example everyone thinks they are powerful, strong and understand what is being said, but often when a woman speaks conveying the same message, they are perceived as looking vulnerable and confused. Women in society should be treated equally as we are all the same. **He For She** is a worldwide feminist campaign launched by the U.N. Women with an aim to promote gender equality by encouraging men to openly speak out against sexism in solidarity with the women's rights movement. Emma Watson released this speech in 2014 which grabbed many viewers and audience's attention. Emma said in her speech:

"I want men to take up this mantle. So their daughters, sisters and mothers can be free from prejudice but also so that their sons have permission to be vulnerable and human too – reclaim those parts of themselves they abandoned and in doing so be a more true and complete version of themselves."

Christian Guarna

Year 10



Thank you for reading the latest edition of the *It's Time* magazine.

The Social Justice Action Group would like to wish the best of luck to all departing Year 12 students.

Thank you for all that you have contributed to SJAG throughout the years, you will be dearly missed.

God Bless and may you all continue to strive for justice in all that you do.

FAREWELL...