

**Speech in conjunction with the admission of Advocates in
the High Court of Sabah and Sarawak at Kuching High Court
delivered by The Honourable Justice Yang Arif Tuan Wong
Siong Tung, High Court Judge on 19th June 2026**

Yang Berusaha Tuan Tarmizi bin Mohamad Tazuddin,
representing the State Attorney General of Sarawak;

Ms. Kay Ting Huong Kheng and Mr David Teo representing the
Advocates Association of Sarawak;

Learned counsels moving the petitions;

Parents, family members, friends, and all those present this
morning;

And most importantly, the 17 newly admitted advocates.

1. Today, this Court has admitted all of you, the 17 petitioners, as advocates of the High Court of Sabah and Sarawak in Sarawak. This is a meaningful occasion. It marks the end of one stage of your journey in life, for many of you as students and the beginning of your professional life as advocates and officers of this Court.
2. I congratulate each one of you. I also congratulate your parents, families, masters, and all those who have supported you along the way.
3. Admission to the Bar is not merely a ceremony. It is not merely the wearing of robes. It is not merely the signing of documents or the entry of your names on the Roll. It is the moment when you accept, in a public and solemn way, the duties and responsibilities of advocates and officers of the Court.

4. Your admission today must not be treated as a formality. It is a serious professional commitment. It is a commitment to the Court, to the profession, to your clients, and to the public. It is also a commitment to yourselves. It reminds you that the law is not only a means of livelihood. It is a public trust. From today, your words, your conduct and your judgment will affect the rights, liberty, property and dignity of other people.
5. As newly admitted advocates, you may sometimes think that your greatest asset is your knowledge of the law. Knowledge matters. Skill matters. Hard work matters. But your most valuable asset is your integrity. An advocate's honesty and trustworthiness are the true foundation of his or her professional life.
6. Your reputation will begin to be built from today. It will be built not only by the cases you win, but by the way you conduct yourselves every day, whether you keep your word,

meet deadlines, speak candidly to the Court, deal honestly with clients, admit what you do not know, and correct a mistake when one is made. A reputation for integrity is built slowly, but it can be damaged quickly by one dishonest act or one careless compromise.

7. You must also remember that you are not merely the mouthpiece of your client. You are advocates and officers of the Court. You must present your client's case firmly and fearlessly, but always within the law and consistently with your duty to the Court. You must not mislead the Court, suppress material facts, or make allegations without proper basis. No case is worth winning at the cost of your honesty, integrity or honour.

8. I also wish to say something about civility and professionalism. Practice can be demanding. Litigation is often adversarial. Disputes may be emotional. Clients may be upset. Opposing counsel may be firm. But none of this

justifies rudeness, unfairness or disrespect. Courtesy is not a sign of weakness. It is part of the discipline and dignity of an advocate.

9. Treat opposing counsel with courtesy. Treat witnesses and parties fairly. Treat court staff with respect. They are the people who keep the system moving every day. Treat the Court with candour and dignity. True professionalism is shown not only when things are easy, but when you are under pressure. A good advocate can be firm without being discourteous, and persuasive without being aggressive.
10. You must also remember the public dimension of your profession. Many people in our community still find it difficult to obtain legal advice or legal representation. Some are poor. Some are from rural areas. Some do not understand the legal process. Some are frightened by the courts and by legal language. As advocates, you have the knowledge

and position to help narrow that gap and make justice more accessible to those who need it most.

11. I encourage you, even in the early years of practice, to set aside some of your time for public service and pro bono work. This may be through legal aid, community advice, assigned cases, or assistance to those who genuinely cannot afford legal representation. Such work may not bring much financial reward, but it will give you experience, humility, and a clearer understanding of the human purpose of the law.
12. Today's admission also does not mean that your learning has ended. It means that your real learning now begins. The law changes. Procedure changes. Society changes. Technology changes. The expectations of clients and the courts also change. You must therefore continue to read, think, ask, learn and improve.

13. Do not do things merely because they have always been done that way. Understand the purpose behind each document you draft, each objection you take, each submission you make, and each advice you give. A careful advocate is not one who claims to know everything. A careful advocate is one who recognises the limits of his or her knowledge, checks the law and facts properly, and learns before acting.
14. Finally, I wish to speak briefly about resilience and well-being. The legal profession is rewarding, but it can also be stressful. There will be long hours, difficult clients, urgent deadlines, disappointing outcomes and moments of self-doubt. These experiences are common. They do not mean that you are weak. They mean that you are human.
15. Take care of your mental and physical health. Maintain friendships outside work. Spend time with your family. Seek guidance from senior members of the Bar. Speak to

someone when the burden becomes too heavy. A tired and broken advocate cannot properly serve the client, the Court or the administration of justice. Balance is not a luxury. It is part of sustaining a long and meaningful career.

16. To the 17 newly admitted advocates, I hope you will practise law with courage, honesty, humility and compassion. May you always remember the professional commitment you have undertaken today. May your careers be useful, honourable and fulfilling. May you become advocates who are trusted by your clients, respected by your peers, and helpful to the Court in the administration of justice.
17. Once again, congratulations to all of you.
18. The Court now directs that, upon payment of the prescribed fees, the Registrar shall enter the names of the 17 Petitioners on the Roll of Advocates kept by this Court.

19. The Court is now adjourned. Thank you.