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TRIBUTE TO LATE MR. KUNDAN LAL ARORA,
SENIOR ADVOCATE
FULL COURT REFERENCE - SEPTEMBER 29, 2006

MY LORD, THE CHIEF JUSTICE, YOUR LORDSHIPS,
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE D.P.WADHWA, FORMER JUDGE OF
HON'BLE SUPREME COURT, MR. P.P. MALHOTRA, *Justice Satpal*
ADDITIONAL SOLICITOR GENERAL OF INDIA, MR.
RAMESH GUPTA, CHAIRMAN, BAR COUCIL OF DELHI,
STANDING COUNSEL FOR GOVT. OF INDIA AND THE
GOVT OF NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, OFFICE *Mr. K. V. Singh, Secy Delhi High Court Bar*
BEARERS OF DELHI HIGH COURT BAR ASSOCIATION AND
OTHER BAR ASSOCIATIONS, RESPECTED SENIOR
MEMBERS OF THE BAR, RESPECTED RELATIVES OF LATE
MR. ARORA, MY COLLEAGUES AT THE BAR, LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN:

A torchbearer of humanism has passed away.

With the demise of Kundan Lal Arora Ji, Senior Advocate, Indian legal fraternity has lost one of its most luminous jurists. The word "Jurist" is much debased in India; we have developed a tradition where knowledge, virtue and even wisdom comes *ex officio*, to a point that anyone even remotely connected with law is described as "Jurist"! In this context, Mr. Arora's life was a constant message on how not to be a Jurist.

But he was a Jurist in the complete sense of the term; he lived a life of law and justice. Possessing an unsurpassed grasp of legal principles, he wore his learning lightly.

Born in a small town of District Lahore in 1912, Mr. Arora started his practice in Lahore in 1936. He shifted to New Delhi after partition and practiced in almost every Court, both in civil and criminal law. Slowly his practice changed lane and he confined his practice to criminal law, where he was successful both as a prosecution counsel and defence lawyer, in equal measure. His eminence was enormous in handling economic offences. His presence in many landmark cases are well known. He attained prominence as a lawyer by dint of hard work, by carrying on the study and practice of Law, habit of deep thought and intensive research, a habit which stays as the mightiest weapon of success in this profession. From a humble beginning, Arora Ji went on to create a legal empire. As a lawyer he was always far sighted, seeking to open new gates, to be able to walk into the open, breathe fresh air and be prepared to take the paths thitherto untrodden path in jurisprudence by others, especially when it

came to criminal law. He innovated a skill in persuasive Advocacy which has escaped most of us. Daniel Webster, the greater American Lawyer said, "The power of clear statement is the great power at the Bar". Arora Ji had this natural trait in him.

According to him legal fraternity's dreams, whether bench or Bar, have to be bigger, ambitions higher, commitments deeper, and efforts greater. This was the dream he had for the legal fraternity and the administration of justice.

He often said that between his past, the present and the future, there was one common factor: relationship and trust. This, according to him, is the foundation of our growth. It is yet another proud moment for Delhi High Court Bar that one of its esteemed member was able to send five of his chamber colleagues as Hon'ble Judges of this Hon'ble Court and the Hon'ble Supreme Court. One of his colleagues has been the Law Minister a number of times. Mr. P.P. Malhotra, also from his chamber, is the Additional Solicitor General of India today. Mr.

R.D. Jolly, who is the Senior Standing Counsel for the Income Tax Department, Mr. Gulati, Standing Counsel for CBI were also his chamber colleague. So are many others, who are the shining stars of this Bar today.

like Mr. Kamid Nigam, Mr. Pawan Varang, Mr. Anil Kumar

Great men "are the guide posts and landmarks in the society". The population of this country is accelerating, but the numbers to fit that description are rapidly diminishing. To me, this is an alarming aspect of the Indian polity - the steep decrease of men who can be reckoned as "guide posts and land marks in the society". Now, there is one less to be counted in the reckoning.

His retirement from the profession in 2000 was a great disappointment, not only because one liked to hear him and learn from his Court craft and art of cross-examination, but particularly because he was a most lovable human being, who always upheld moral values. After all, consistency of the moral dimension is the true measure of greatness in every human soul. Arora Ji was a great soul, in every aspect.

He understood the value of knowledge better than many. He was always modest, warm and affectionate. Success never spoiled him though he moved in higher circles. He never lost the common touch and forgot his beginning. Fame and fortune made him more humane. I used to meet him as a junior, in the beginning of my career. Even if he is hurrying up the stairs with books and files in hands, he never missed to acknowledge a greeting. Conferences in his chamber were a delight for any junior. I was overwhelmed by the way he treated juniors. While being respectful to the Bench, he was firm in his style and approach. He was extremely decent and warm to the opposite counsel and the witnesses.

Aroraji remained a bachelor. He led a saintly life, was deeply religious and a true Hindu. He was a living example of good words, good thoughts and good deeds.

With an unblemished career, and the righteousness few can match, he has lived a full life leaving about three months roughly to complete ninety four.

On the 21st of September, he must have certainly and befittingly remembered what the great poet Tennyson sang:

“....And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;
.....
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.”

Aroraji crossed the bar on the 21st of this month and no doubt, met with his Pilot.

The memory of his good work and many – splendoured life should guide us to the inner imagination of law with replenishing gentle capacity of legal process to tame the arrogance of power, wherever it may be.

Our heart-felt condolences and prayers are with his relatives.

MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE.

Amarjit Singh Chandhiok.
President
Delhi High Court Bar Association