

The Hon Justice Francois Kunc

Francois Kunc SC was sworn-in as a judge of the Supreme Court on 8 April 2013.

Francois Kunc is a Renaissance judge, fluent in six languages, who was once given the choice between becoming conducting assistant to Sir Charles Mackerras or becoming associate to Justice Lockhart.

Justice Kunc attended Sydney Grammar where he developed a love of music.

Speaking on behalf of the New South Wales Bar, Attorney General Greg Smith SC said:

Music was a significant part of your education and I understand that before becoming a legal practitioner you seriously considered a career in classical music and had ambitions to become an opera conductor. You studied piano, violin, voice and conducting. As a treble you sang solo and chorus roles with the Australian Opera, beginning what has been an almost lifelong association with that company.

His Honour worked as a solicitor at Allen Allen and Hemsley before being called to the NSW Bar and joining 11 Wentworth Chambers in 1992, taking silk in 2007. He had a wide ranging commercial and equity practice at the NSW Bar, which included acting for the Commonwealth government and major public companies, and cases involving an international dimension.

His Honour delivered a speech in reply, during which he expressed his deep gratitude to his colleagues and staff from the Eleventh Floor:

I will not even try to articulate what being on the Eleventh Floor has meant to me. ... One does a lot of living in twenty one years. Deep friendships are formed, joys and successes shared, tragedies and vicissitudes endured. Every member of that floor, including its newest recruits, holds a very special place in my heart.

His Honour was the president of the Law and Literature Association of Australia, and serves on the Editorial Board of the Journal of Equity.

He continued his passion for music and his faith whilst at the bar – he was the long standing secretary of Sir Thomas More society, was a cantor at St Mary's Cathedral, and is on the board of the Opera



Australia Capital Fund and deputy chair of the Archdiocese of Sydney Liturgical Commission. He is also involved with the Layne Beachley Aim for the Stars Foundation.

In his closing remarks, Justice Kunc invited the audience to reflect on the importance of Australian legal and political institutions. He said:

When my parents became Australian citizens, I believe in the 1950s, they each received a copy of the King James version of the Bible with a picture of the Queen inside the front cover. It would be wrong to think of that gift as the quaint or risible gesture of a politically incorrect or naïve era. It meant a great deal to them precisely because it symbolised, particularly in the person of the Sovereign, the stable institutions of government and respect for the rule of law which drew them, and hundreds of thousands like them, to a country like Australia. Because of the generally fortunate times in which we live, there may be a temptation to take the rule of law and the integrity of our institutions, of which this Court is one of the greatest examples, for granted. The stories of my parents, their contemporaries and others who continue to arrive on our shores, remind us that we should resist that temptation at all costs.