

Justice Asoka De Silva – Sri Lanka’s New Chief Justice



Hon. Justice J.A.N. De Silva took oath as the Chief Justice on 8th June 2009. His Lordship thus became the 32nd Chief Justice in Sri Lanka. Chief Justice J.A.N. De Silva had been a member of the board of Sri Lanka Judges’ Institute and has later become a member of the Judicial Service Commission on 2nd April 2008.

His Lordship was born on 17th May 1946, and is a distinguished old boy of St. Anthony’s College, Katugastota. After graduating from the University of Ceylon in 1971, He was enrolled as an Advocate of the Supreme Court in December 1972. After a short period in the private Bar he joined the Attorney General’s Department on 2nd April 1974. He became a Senior Deputy Solicitor General on 1987 and after serving 22 years in the Attorney General’s Department he was appointed a Judge of the Court of Appeal on 12th October 1995. Chief Justice Asoka De Silva became the President of the Court of Appeal in February 2001 and later elevated to the Supreme Court on 01st August 2001.

His Lordship has obtained a Masters Degree in Administrative Law in 1983/84 from the University of Colombo and has done a Postgraduate Diploma in criminology at the University of Illinois in the United States of America. His Lordship served as a lecturer in Law College as well as in the Faculty of Law.



Chief Justice Asoka De Silva represented Sri Lanka at the Sustainable Development Conference in Brazil and also served as a member of the National Task Force to formulate the National Environmental Policy.

On 18th March 2004, at the Anthonian Awards of Excellence, Chief Justice Asoka De Silva was awarded the “ Antonian Excellence Medallion” for the honour brought to his alma mater by achieving excellence in the field of Law.

Justice J.A.N. De Silva was appointed to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda as a permanent judge by the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan on 3rd August 2004. Justice Asoka De Silva served the ICTR as one of the 16 permanent judges in the tribunal in trial chamber II.

We congratulate and wish His Lordship the Chief Justice all the very best on behalf of the SLJTI.