

ADDRESS BY
HIS HONOUR MR TOM PAULING AO QC
ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
ON THE OCCASION OF
RECEPTION FOR PATRONAGES
Government House, Darwin
18 November 2008

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to welcome you to Government House and I acknowledge the Larrakia people and their ancestors, traditional owners of the land on which this house stands. It is a special pleasure because we know, or have come to know, many of you who represent organisations for which we offer patronage.

During my first year in office, I researched the Patron Saints, in the hope that one of them provided at least a modicum of direction as to how I should proceed as a “Patron”.

Unfortunately the one mentioned for the date nearest to my swearing-in last year, which took place on 9th November, is St. Martin. His Saints Day is 11th November and he is the Patron of winemakers, and incidentally of drunkards!

Martinmas Day, was originally the Feast of Bacchus amongst the Romans and those employed in the vineyards came to look upon

the saint as their patron; while drunkards were recommended to invoke him to save them from their besetting sin!

I also note in passing the coincidence that Mrs Pauling trained at St Martins Hospital, in Brisbane. It was built as a memorial to those who had fought in World War 1, with the name chosen because the Armistice had been signed on St Martin's Day.

Patronage is most commonly associated with artists and the arts in general, but in the case of Galileo, for example, it extended to academia and the sciences. Galileo benefited from the patronage of both the Marchese del Monte and the Grand Duke of Tuscany during his career. As for Michaelangelo, his patron was a Pope.

As Administrator of the Northern Territory, I fall a long way short of a Grand Duke or a Pope. But, nevertheless, patronage is something both Mrs Pauling and I take extremely seriously.

We hold fifty-five patronages at the current time which cover everything from health, education and youth issues to sporting codes, from cultural and social organisations to a refugee centre.

In the past year, I have enjoyed meeting some sixty per cent of you and I look forward to future opportunities to learn more about your objectives and successes.

I noticed that Mrs Pauling recently received an interesting letter providing a comprehensive briefing regarding developments at Melaleuca Refugee Centre. I would urge you all to similarly keep us abreast of your programs as only then can we feel involved and perceive ways to be useful to you as Patrons.

It is also timely to make special mention of those whose roles are purely voluntary. It is one thing to direct and manage an entity as a salaried General Manager or CEO. But to sit on committees in any capacity as a volunteer, and contribute with energy and personal effort, is essential for the success of your organisation.

Necessary but often exhausting fund raising, promotional campaigns, newsletter production, membership drives, even counting the hard cash, the work of volunteers is at the heart and soul of the associations we support. It is because of their sustained efforts, that we are minded to help as much as we are able.

Those of you who provide leadership and direction are indeed a vital component. Knowledge of the big picture combined with a passion for achieving outcomes on the ground can achieve truly remarkable results.

A good example could be seen earlier this month at the Desert Knowledge Symposium in Alice, where the importance of networking was also evident.

A fellow speaker was a quite brilliant American, Dr Margaret J Wheatley, co-founder of The Berkana Institute, a global charitable foundation. I recommend her website to you all as well worth visiting for inspiration and as a way to find terrific links to Nobel Peace Prize winners like Mohammed Yunus who set up the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.

Here's a sample from Margaret: *I've been a speaker, consultant, and writer since 1973. I've been inside most kinds of organizations - from the Girl Scouts to the U.S. Army, from Fortune 100 companies to small town churches - and lived and worked in many different cultures and countries.*

I love the diversity, and I love even more the realization that around the world, we share a common human desire to live together more humanely and more harmoniously.

As we strive to make our organizations and communities work decently in these difficult times, if we are to find true solutions to the problems that afflict us if we are to work together more intelligently, we will need to choose processes that evoke our curiosity, humility, generosity and wisdom.

Let me give you an example. A group of businessmen met regularly at a hotel in Paramatta, New South Wales. With Christmas coming up, one of the group suggested they pool some money to help an orphanage up the road.

After the money had been sent, someone from the orphanage came seeking a name to whom thanks might be sent. “Smith” said one, “Mr Smith and the others – all Smith – we are The Smith Family”. In fact none of them were named Smith. There was a clear example of generosity and humility and the beginning of a terrific idea.

Thank you for coming tonight, thank you for all that you do for our community and I hope that you all enjoy the forthcoming season of peace and goodwill.