

Sir Jack Jacob QC



One of the leading English lawyers of modern times celebrated his 90th birthday on 5 June 1998. Julian Harris looks back at the outstanding career of Sir Jack Jacob.

Sir Jack Jacob was described by Lord Lane CJ in 1990 as 'England's leading proceduralist, as a result of his mastery of both the practical and academic aspects of procedural law' (see *International Perspectives on Civil Justice: Essays in honour of Sir Jack I H Jacob QC*, Sweet & Maxwell, 1990). In his long career as a Master of the Supreme Court he exerted a strong influence on the development and reform of the administration of justice through his work on the White Book and service on a number of government committees. These activities were combined with a variety of academic appointments at British and overseas universities.

He drafted practice directions, including the direction which, since the 1976 House of Lords decision in *Miliangos v George Frank Textiles Ltd*, has regulated the practice for the making of claims and the enforcement of judgments expressed in foreign currency (*Practice Direction (Judgment: Foreign Currency)* [1976] 1 WLR 83). When serving on the Winn Committee on personal injuries litigation (1966–68) he prepared the paper on interim payments and drafted the rules which became RSC, Ord 29. He was also chairman of the working party on the form of the writ of summons and appearance which recommended


changes in the form of writs introduced in 1979. In his role as a Master and then Senior Master of the Supreme Court he provided great assistance to judges and counsel when difficult questions of law arose.

In 1980 Sir Jack was compelled by law to retire as Senior Master at the age of 72 and this freed up more time for him to pursue his many academic and writing interests. His association with London University goes back a long way – he graduated from UCL in 1930 and was a Visiting Professor in English Law there for many years. On 1 February 1986 he took over as Director of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies on a temporary and part-time basis following Professor Diamond's retirement.

Sir Jack took over the directorship at a time of increasing financial stringency for the Institute. A sub-committee chaired by Sir Robert Megarry was set up to make proposals for the future development of the IALS, and adopted Sir Jack's recommendation that a full-time director should be appointed. He also fought off an unexpected challenge in the form of the Naylor report which recommended that the Institute's library (along with those of most other Senate institutes) should be merged with the central university library

to form a single humanities library.

This proposal represented a threat to the Institute's existence, but a special meeting of the Committee of Management organised by Sir Jack unanimously rejected the scheme and persuaded the university authorities to take no further action. On a happier note, he organised the visit of Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal, Chancellor of the University of London, in October 1986 to mark the Institute's fortieth anniversary. He retired as Director on 31 January 1988, handing over to Professor Terence Daintith.

Sir Jack's reputation has spread far afield, and he is known and respected throughout the world. Osgoode Hall Law School at York University, Ontario, where Sir Jack was a Visiting Professor in 1971, has established the Sir Jack Jacob Prize in the Administration of Justice in honour of his 90th birthday and in recognition of his many contributions to the School. A prize of \$250 will be awarded annually to the first placed student in the *Seminar on the Administration of Justice*. 

Julian Harris

Senior Information Officer, IALS

CURRICULUM VITAE

Queen's Bench Division, 1957–80; Senior Master of the Supreme Court, Queen's Bench Division and Queen's Remembrancer, 1975–80. Honours: Knight, 1979; Honorary Freeman, City of London, 1976. Academic appointments: Director, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, 1986–88; Honorary Lecturer in Law, University College, London 1959–74; Visiting Professor of English Law, University College, London, 1974–87; Honorary Visiting Lecturer, University of Birmingham, 1964–65; Honorary Lecturer in Legal Ethics, University of Birmingham 1969–72; Honorary Visiting Lecturer, Imperial College of Science and Technology, 1963–64; Honorary Visiting Lecturer, Bedford College, 1969–71; Honorary Visiting Lecturer, European University Institute, Florence, 1978; Visiting Professor, University of Sydney, 1971; Visiting Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, Toronto, 1971; Visiting Professor, Polytechnic of Central London, 1981–85. Editorial positions: Advisory Editor *Atkins' Law Forms* 1962–63, and Chief Advisory Editor since 1984; Editor *Annual Practice* 1961–66; General Editor *The Supreme Court Practice* since 1967; General Editor *Civil Justice Quarterly* since 1982; Advisory Editor *International Encyclopaedia of Comparative Law Volume XVI Civil Procedure*, since 1968; Publications: *Law relating to rent restrictions* (1933, 1938); *Law relating to hire purchase* (1938); *Chitty & Jacob's Queen's Bench Forms* (19th, 20th & 21st edn.); *Bullen, Leake & Jacob's Precedents of Pleadings* (12th edn. 1978, jointly with Iain Goldrein 13th edn. 1990); *The reform of civil procedural law and other essays in civil procedure* 1982; *The fabric of English civil justice* (Hamlyn Lectures), 1986; *Pleadings: principles and practice* jointly with Iain Goldrein, 1990; contributions to *Halsbury's Laws of England* and *Atkins Court Forms*.