

CHIEF JUSTICE SHEIKH AZMAT SAEED FULL COURT REFERENCE

By:

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A wonderful man, a very good Judge, an affable Chief Justice, witty, full of humour and life, is how I would describe Chief Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed. Armed with a razor sharp mind; a keen intellect, and a tremendous ability to understand he has adorned the bench for 7½ years.

There are Judges, who are liked by some members of the legal fraternity; then there are Judges, who are liked by many members of the legal fraternity and then there is Chief Justice Azmat Saeed, who has admirers both at the Bench and at the Bar.

My Lord the Chief Justice has been a great all rounder at the bar. The Banking Sector swears by his name on account of his brilliance; the leading Companies and Industries always took him as their first choice counsel and the State too did not lag behind. His Lordship served the Lahore Development Authority as their Chief Legal Advisor and also served as a Deputy Prosecutor General NAB during his days in practice. His Lordship was always Courteous towards the Bench while practicing and equally polite towards the Lawyers as a Judge. This makes him stand out.

Be it his outlook towards society in general or his avid interest in the rights of women and minorities, Chief Justice Azmat Saeed has always been on the right side—Right according to his heart and correct by all legal standards.

Chief Justice Azmat Saeed has no airs about him. He is down to earth and humble. He does not have a gigantic ego but is equally firm when he has to be but is always willing to change his mind upon being convinced. He is not interested in the nuances or the paraphernalia associated with the office of a Judge let alone the office of the Chief Justice. His Lordship is an asset for the judiciary.

But what makes him stand out is his razor sharp mind, his ability to comprehend intricate and complex legal issues and arguments amazingly quickly (some times even at the expense of preempting the counsel appearing before him) Icing on the cake is his photographic memory.

Besides his inherent brilliance, his association over the years, with brilliant minds such as Mir Murtaza Bhutto (with whom he went to school in Rawalpindi), Raza Kazim (with whom he worked), Abid Minto and Khawaja Haris has made him that much more knowledgeable, wise, witty and sharp. His love for books is known to all of his friends and whenever time permits, he reads literature and history ardently.

One liners such as **'think before you ink'** (to someone with incorrect pleadings) or **"so are you"** to a short and small sized counsel, who insisted that his case be taken up out of turn since it involved a small issue or even **"the cheapest thing on earth is our time"** to counsel who keep on insisting despite being wrong, are all accepted by the legal fraternity, because, every one knows that there is no malice involved in these remarks. His Lordship is a gem at heart and first to rise for the cause of the legal community. His handling of the Police during the Jhang Bar turmoil during his days as a senior puisne Judge speaks volume of his affection and regard for the legal community.

His Lordship is a good Judge, because he has worked hard. An all rounder in every sense of the term and a master of Civil, Company and Banking laws, Chief Justice Azmat Saeed is at equal ease with the Constitution. Kindly see his Lordship's judgment in **PLD 2011 LAHORE 231**) on the issue of powers of the Governor of a Province. His Lordship has also given path breaking judgments in the field of administrative law and in this regard I draw you attention to **PLD 2010 LAHORE 1**. These are but two of his most recent judgments.....

His concepts are crystal clear; he is precise and concise. His judgments depict a man, who is clear headed and calls a spade a spade and not a tool of agriculture implement. The Supreme Court, I have it on authority, is all praise for Chief Justice Azmat Saeed's style of judgments. What should be said in two lines is said by His Lordship in two and not more.

Absolutely un-ambitious and not one to chase honours, his Lordship was happy in not taking oath in 2007 and preferred to go home. He was made various offers, but he declined saying that his was a case of principled stand against a Military Dictator. For those who know him, this was expected of him.

As a Judge, His Lordship is patient and lawyers arguing before him seem to have a Carte Blanche and indeed a license to take as long as they want to establish a point. However, there is one area, in which His Lordship will put his foot down and almost proclaim "thus far and not any further". He does not allow any twisting of facts, because his Lordship believes that the bedrock of all judicious determinations can only be made strong and acceptable if the facts are not tainted or twisted. I am sure that if he had allowed a golden rule to be inscribed on his table, it would read that everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own set of facts.

He is encouraging and facilitating especially for the younger lawyers and is fulsome in praise and generous in compliment to those who are new in the profession. His manner of expressing approval is subtle and indirect.

Since we are contemporaries and have literally grown together in the profession, I cannot resist the temptation to inject a personal note in what is an official appreciation and a tribute to Chief Justice Azmat Saeed's achievements and successes. I have seen him grow, mature and blossom. Speaking for myself, it has been an unadulterated pleasure to work and grow alongside him. I, therefore, declare that when he is not around in Court Room No.1, I will miss him. But then if there is one thing permanent in life, it is change and so sir, farewell and god speed.

Good luck Sir,

At the same time, I take this opportunity to welcome another legal luminary and a noble Judge, I refer to none other than Justice Umar Ata Bandial who will now adorn the office of the Chief Justice. One of the most descent and dignified members of the profession. In him we have great expectations and pledge our unflinching support. I welcome his Lordship.