

**REFERENCE BY THE HON'BLE SHRI P. D. DESAI, CHIEF JUSTICE,
HIGH COURT, BOMBAY, TO THE LATE SHRI JUSTICE G. A.
PAUNIKAR, FORMER JUDGE OF THE BOMBAY HIGH COURT, ON
TUESDAY, THE 5TH FEBRUARY 1991, AT 11 A.M.**

Mr. Advocate General, Mr. Government Pleader, Mr. President of the Bombay Bar Association, Mr. President of the Western India Advocates' Association, Mr. Damodar on behalf of the Bombay Incorporated Law Society and Members of the Bar :

Within less than a month we have assembled again to mourn the death of a former Judge of this Court, Justice Ganapati Atmaramji Paunikar, who expired on 30th January 1991.

Justice Paunikar was born on 1st July 1924. After obtaining the Master's degree in Political Science from the Nagpur University, he initially chose teaching as his vocation in life. He secured appointment as Lecturer in Political Science in the Hislop College, Nagpur, in 1949 and worked as such till 1951. During this period he studied law and obtained LL.B. degree from the Nagpur University. His career took a turn when he enrolled as an Advocate on 11th February 1958. he started practice at Nagpur and was appointed as Assistant Government Pleader for the Nagpur Bench of this Court in 1976. While at the Bar he was elected as the Vice-President of the High Court Bar Association, Nagpur. He was the legal adviser to various Associations, such as, the Nagpur Vinkar Sahakari Sut Girmi, Yarn Merchants' Association, Nagpur, Maharashtra State Handlooms

Corporations and various other institutions and bodies.

He was appointed permanent Judge on 7th July 1983. It must have been a matter of great pride and satisfaction not only for him but also for his family and friends since he rose to occupy this high positions having made a modest beginning as a member of the weavers' community.

On behalf of my colleagues and myself I offer sincere condolences to the bereaved family for whom the loss is irreparable.

May his soul rest in peace.

5-2-1991

SPEECH BY MR. A. S. BOBADE, ADVOCATE GENERAL

My Lord the Chief Justice and Mr. Justice Dhanuka,

Honourable Mr. Justice G. A. Paunikar has suddenly left us. After a day's hard work at the Nagpur University, he suddenly got a massive heart attack and he succumbed before any succour could be given to him. He had not known illness before so razor thin is the dividing line between life and death.

Honourable Mr. Justice Paunikar, My Lord, was a brilliant student and worked for law with an unusual doggedness after doing his stint as a Professor in Political Science in Hislop College, Nagpur. He was an able Advocate and I remember he was so overworked that his clerk normally carried two or three diaries to note the numerous cases in which he was due to appear.

When he shifted to High Court and later became a Government Pleader, his versatility in law glowered. He was at home in every branch of law. His integrity and acumen were impeccable. He should have adorned the Bench much earlier; not merit but appointment eluded him for a long time.

My Lord, any death is sad but in the death of Hon'ble Mr. Justice Paunikar we have lost a good man and able Judge. He faced great odd coming as he did from weaver community. He was extremely popular and

was one of the leaders of society in Vidarbha. He was, after retirement, Vice Chancellor of the Nagpur University for a short time.

Such was Honourable Mr. Justice Paunikar whom we will miss for a long time. May his soul rest in peace.

5-2-1991

SPEECH BY MR S. G. PAGE, GOVERNMENT PLEADER, A.S. HIGH COURT , BOMBAY.

My Lords, to some early, to some late, but to all inevitably must come that summons, the summons which cannot be defied, the summons which must be obeyed, the summons from the Court of the Great Judge of all of us. To Mr. Justice G. A. Paunikar that summons came on the 30th day of January and we have gathered here this morning to render our homage to his memory and to pay our tributes.

My Lords, Late Justice Paunikar after obtaining his Masters Degree in Political Science joined as a Lecturer in Hislop College, Nagpur. He then did his LL.B. From the Nagpur University and enrolled himself on 11th February 1958. He had to struggle hard in his early life. However, in the profession he earned both name and fame. He was Legal Adviser of various associations. He had great capacity for sustained work. He was shrewd, forthright, courteous and considerate.

My Lords, late Justice Paunikar was persuaded to accept seat on the Bench of the High Court of Bombay after completion of about twenty-five years of practice at the Bar and at a great personal sacrifice, His Lordship responded to the request. On 7th July, 1983, late Justice Paunikar took the oath of office of the Judge of this Hon'ble High Court. The judicial career of late Justice Paunikar is marked by independence of thought and

almost infinite capacity for taking pains. Late Justice Paunikar had a knack of understanding points of Law and facts swiftly and of stating them simply.

My Lords, late Justice Paunikar will be remembered for his qualities of independence and forthrightness in conducting an Enquiry of Commission in the alleged illegalities in cases of de-reservation of plot of lands in City of Sangli.

My Lords, late Justice Paunikar has the distinction of being the first person to be appointed as a Judge of the High Court from the Weavers' community. His Lordship successfully proved the words of Maharathi Karna :-

I join Your Lordships, the Advocate General and my other brothers at the Bar in paying humble tributes to late Justice Paunikar, with these words :-

Life's race well run,

Life's work well done,

Life's victory won,

Now commeth rest.

May the departed soul rest in eternal peace.

5-2-1991

SPEECH BY MR. I. M. CHAGLA, PRESIDENT, BOMBAY BAR ASSOCIATION :

My Lord the Chief Justice & my Lord Mr. Justice Dhanuka,

We at the Bombay bar were not privileged to know the late Mr. Justice Paunikar very well. He hailed from Nagpur and I believe, with the exception on one brief session, sat on the Nagpur Bench. But friends from Nagpur all speak of him as an upright, courteous and conscientious Judge and one who gave satisfaction to one and all.

It was these very qualities that made him the natural choice for an inquiry into what was commonly referred to as the Sangli Land Scandal – a matter of the utmost delicacy as it involved the friends and relatives of persons in high places. There were truck-loads of documents that were transported to Nagpur. Justice Paunikar sifted through every one of them with the greatest diligence and after a through inquiry submitted an exhaustive report to the Government.

Justice Paunikar was busy to the end. His paramount interest was the Nagpur University of which he had been sometime the Acting Vice-Chancellor. He was the Governor's nominee on the Executive Committee and was concerned with various enquiries in the University and other educational institutions.

Despite this elevation to high office, Justice Paunikar never forgot his humble beginnings to which my Lord the Chief Justice has referred. To the end he attempted to redress and, very often, succeeded in redressing the grievances of the weavers' community to which he belonged.

On behalf of the Bombay Bar Association I join my Lord and my colleagues in offering our very sincere condolences to the members of the bereaved family.

5-2-1991

**SPEECH BY MR. M. V. PARANJAPE, PRESIDENT,
WESTERN INDIA ADVOCATES' ASSOCIATION.**

My Lord the Chief Justice and My Lord Justice Dhanuka :

I on behalf of Advocates' Association of Western India fully associate with the sentiments expressed here. Mr. Justice Paunekar, I think, had few terms of sittings in Bombay. Unfortunately I did not have any occasion to appear before him. But my colleagues at the Bar told me that he was very courteous and a Judge who listened to the advocates patiently. He was also reputed to be very quick in understanding the intricacies of subject matters involved before him. His knowledge of political science came to his assistance in delivering judgments in complicated social matters. He enjoyed a very good reputation in Bombay even though he was for a very short duration sitting in Bombay. Bombay Bar is very grateful to him for delivering judgments which satisfied all the parties involved in the matters. My Lord, Mr. Justice Paunekar came from a very humble family of weavers and in this country it has been the privilege of occupying the highest positions only by upper classes of the society and, therefore, it is very significant that a man coming from weavers' community the only person so far occupying the highest position Justice Paunekar proved himself equal to the task, not only equal to the task but much superior to the many who claim to be belonging to highest class. My Lord I fully associate with what has

been said here by Your Lordship as well as my colleagues at the Bar and I pay humble respects on behalf of the Association to the departed soul and offer our condolences to the bereaved family.

5-2-1991

SPEECH BY MR. D. D. DAMODAR ON BEHALF OF THE BOMBAY
INCORPORATED LAW SOCIETY.

My Lords, Advocate General and my colleagues at the Bar :

I associate myself and on behalf of the Bombay Incorporated Law Society with the sentiments expressed by my Lord the Hon'ble the Chief Justice, the learned Advocate General and my other colleagues at the Bar on this sad occasion to mourn the death of Mr. Justice G. A. Paunikar, the former Judge of this High court. In his death we have lost an able jurist, a humanitarian and above all a gentleman.

I on behalf of myself and the Bombay Incorporated Law Society convey my heartfelt condolences to the members of his bereaved family. May his soul rest in peace.