

Wedding of Emma Law and Marc Chilton held at The Crab Shack and Shed 5 on the Wellington waterfront on Saturday 1 February 2020.

Speech by Sir Roderick Deane.

Emma and Marc, dear Kathleen, Carol and Mark, Judith and Bruce,
Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this joyous occasion.

I am Roderick Deane.

It is my great privilege and pleasure to welcome you all here today to celebrate the marriage of Emma and Marc. They were formally married in September to facilitate them moving back to the United Kingdom where they presently live. So today is the party where we can all participate in the celebration of these two admirable young people joining their lives together as a married couple.

Emma and Marc are not only both hugely talented, but they are also warm and charming young people whose lives and careers can give all of us faith in the future. I have only met Marc recently, having nonetheless heard much about him over the past few years. On the other hand, Gillian and I have been close to the Ngan and Law families for what now seems like forever. We are much blessed with their abundant friendship.

Emma's family has made a huge contribution to our communities. Her grandfather, Dr Roy Law, was the first Chinese New Zealander to graduate as a medical practitioner from the University of Otago. He also established the first high quality Chinese restaurant in Wellington, the Lotus, in the 1960s. Her other Grandfather, Sun Park Ngan, was a very successful businessman, among other things having been the clever and conscientious provider of fruit and vegetables to the NZ Army in Waiouru, the NZ Air Force at Ohakea, and Massey University.

And today we are especially honoured to have Emma's Grandmother with us. Can I pay a particular tribute to dear Kathleen, one of the world's special Grandmothers, and the matriarch of a remarkable family. We are blessed to have Kathleen here today as the effective representative of all the wonderful grandmothers.

We all know that Emma's Mother Carol is of course the best Chef in Wellington and a wonderful fundraiser for charitable causes while her Father Mark has all the family's business and entrepreneurial flair. Of more importance to all of us here today, they are the most wonderful friends, caring and loving.

With these splendid antecedents it is not surprising that Emma has turned out to be such a beautiful young woman but also such a hugely talented one. What may be unexpected of course is that the talent is so much in the world of art.

Emma graduated as the top student in art history from the University of Auckland, has held senior leadership roles at a number of top galleries in London and Beijing and has most recently become the Exhibitions Manager for International Touring at the prestigious National Gallery in London.

So today we have a blending of the worlds of art and science.

Marc's Father Bruce and Mother Judith were Southlanders alias now Queenslanders. Judith's family lived in Dipton next to our former Prime Minister, Bill English. Judith was a nurse and then a dental nurse. Bruce is a leading pharmacist having held senior roles with Abbott Laboratories and later May and Baker in New Zealand before becoming a Lecturer at the University of Otago. Today he is a specialist compounding pharmacist in Queensland.

Bruce and Judith's strong scientific and medical intellects have been inherited by Marc whose CV is wholly impressive, filled with creative and innovative work as a biomedical scientist in London across an amazingly diverse range of biomedical issues. For example, the Queen bestowed upon Marc the special Honour of the Ebola Medal for Service in West Africa for his work on the Ebola Virus outbreak in Sierra Leone. The work of the London based scientists was described by The Times "as an extraordinary example of research expertise being deployed in real time in the real world". Marc's research has also encompassed compounds leading to the breakthrough drug to treat chronic Hepatitis C. His postgraduate work resulted in a further Master of Science degree last year from the University of London.

Emma and Marc first met in 2012. Marc was smart enough to choose Emma as a flatmate for their house on Camden Square in London.

As we now all know, it turned out to be a happy experience for them both although I am mystified to recount that Marc was a bit slow off the mark, so to speak, and they only starting “seeing each other” just before Emma took off for Beijing late in 2015. I should explain that the phrase “seeing each other” is Emma’s choice of words in an email to me and I am still endeavouring to work out just what it amounts to. Gillian says she knows but has not felt able to explain to me.

The romance blossomed despite the distance between Beijing and London. It is no surprise to note that Marc visited Emma many times.

Your invitation to this wedding celebration was designed by one of Emma’s friends and favourite artists, the world famous Swiss artist Nicola Party. It is called “Two Trees in Love”.

What could be more symbolic ?

Your dining tables tonight are enhanced with totara branches, Emma’s choice of native tree to remind us of our New Zealand heritage. The mighty totara, as the tree is often known, also symbolizes the strength we can bring to each other by love and friendship.

So today we celebrate the marriage of two truly outstanding young people,

- Marc, honoured at a remarkably young age by Queen Elizabeth II for his outstanding work in West Africa,
- a leading participant in some of the world’s pathbreaking biomedical scientific research; and
- Emma, the top student at her university when she graduated, and
- now having just been asked to take up one of the most prized international positions in the world of art.
- It is in a sense the bringing together of art and science, the joining together of great talents, and the marriage of two very special young people.
- In a world beset with challenges we are blessed with what love can deliver.

As Sir Roger Scruton, a famous English philosopher, wrote about art but with words that apply equally to science

At a time when authenticity is being swamped by manufactured feelings, “art is the final test of sincerity: the one thing which cannot be faked”, projecting, with near-miraculous freshness, “a vision of human life that enables us to live to the full, to accept our mortality, and to recognise in the intensity of our experience the value of being what we are”.

Marc and Emma, we extend our love and warmest best wishes for the future and may you both value being what you are, individually and together.

I know Marc and Emma would each like to reaffirm the importance of today and share their thoughts with you.