IN THE DISTRICT COURT

OF NEW SOUTH WALES

THE CHIEF JUDGE
THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE D PRICE AO AND
THE JUDGES OF THE COURT

MONDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2024

**SWEARING IN OF HIS HONOUR JUDGE DAVID BARROW SC AS A JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

Mr Dominic Toomey SC on behalf of the New South Wales Bar
Mr Brett McGrath, Law Society of New South Wales, on behalf of solicitors

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 (Commission read)

 (Oaths of office taken)

PRICE CJ: Judge Barrow, it gives me very great pleasure to welcome you to this Court. You bring to this Court a very fine reputation in the criminal law. I am sure you will make a substantial contribution to the work of the Court. On behalf of all the judges of the Court I congratulate you and wish you all the very best in your judicial career.

BARROW DCJ: Thank you, Chief Judge.

PRICE CJ: Mr Toomey.

TOOMEY: May it please the Court. As is customary on such occasions I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, and pay my respects to their elders past and present. It is my privilege to appear on behalf of the New South Wales Bar to welcome your Honour’s appointment on behalf of the New South Wales Bar. We are sharing this significant occasion with your Honour’s family, your wife Suzanne, stepsons Alex and Xavier, your daughter Miranda, your other stepson Dominic is unable to be here as he recently landed in Zurich where he will be studying German law on exchange. We also welcome your mother Nora who is here today, your brother Grant and your sister Jane. Some of your in‑laws are also in attendance and we welcome the extended family.

 Your Honour was born in New Zealand to Nora and Graham Barrow who were also both born there. Your parents met at a local council meeting at which your mother was working as a clerk/secretary and which your father was attending as a journalist. Later in Australia your father became an author of numerous titles about bushwalking and the history of Canberra. Your mother had a varied and interesting vocational life as a stenographer, then setting up a library at ANU and later assisting international post graduate students at the university. Post retirement your mother also tutored English and for many years participated in conversation groups helping migrants with making social connections and settling in culturally.

 If your Honour would indulge me briefly, the story of your mother’s good work assisting migrants to find their feet reminded me of that told to me by another Kiwi colleague of ours, Bernard McHardy who is one of 11 children and whose mother Moira had done similarly good work assisting Vietnamese refugees in their smallish coastal town of Waihi in the North Island. Moira recounted to Bernard, the fifth of her 11 children, an encounter she had had in the street in Waihi with a particularly bigoted man who had said to her belligerently, “Why are you helping those Vietnamese, Moira? Before you know it they’ll be breeding like flies.” At that point in the story she turned to Bernard and said wryly, “Fancy saying that to me”. But I digress.

 It was when you were aged two that your parents moved to Australia where your father had accepted a job with the Hobart Mercury. After six years the family moved from Hobart to Canberra for work opportunities. On the voyage across Bass Strait the rest of the family was struck by terrible seasickness. Although you were only nine and had not before then presented as much of an extrovert, you spent most of the trip chatting with other passengers and making your own way to the ship’s dining area for meals with the staff wondering whether you might be an orphan stowaway. At that young age you were already showing indications of your adaptable social skills and strong independent personality.

 As a child you were easy going and quite a good student. Already a deep thinker it is said that you were inclined to daydream in the classroom while staring out the window. You attended Daramalan College for high school in what would have been the post‑daydream period because you did very well in year 12, a testament to what had then become your disciplined approach to your studies and always managing the workload well in advance of deadlines. That no doubt will be music to the Chief Judge’s ears.

 After school, like any self‑respecting Canberran, you worked in the public service for a year before studying Arts and Law at ANU. You made lifelong friends at university and have always nurtured those friendships closely since.

 Your vocational life has been guided by a strong social conscience and work ethic, never motived by accolades or personal ambition. Rewarding cases have come to you in recognition of your hard work and meticulously thorough approach to preparation and through the encouragement, indeed sometimes urging, of peers who have needed to persuade you to pursue vocational opportunities. Such is your modesty that you have been particularly reluctant to participate in any process that requires you to speak to your own achievements. It is therefore my pleasure to share just some of your achievements with today’s audience.

 Your Honour brings to the bench close to 40 years of experience as a legal practitioner having been admitted in 1985 with more than 20 years of service at the Legal Aid Commission from 1988 to September 2009 followed by 14 years at the Bar. In 1995 you completed a Master of Laws at the University of Sydney and as a solicitor you received accreditation as a criminal law specialist in 1996. From 2001 to 2006 you were in charge of the Legal Aid Commission’s statewide appellate criminal practice and established the Commission’s coronial inquest unit from 2006 to 2008.

 It was while running indictable appeals for the Commission that your reputation, both as a lawyer and an advocate, grew amongst the Bar. When you were eventually called to the Bar in 2009 members of Forbes Chambers were delighted to have you among their number. I am told that Forbes was your chambers of choice and that it was actually the availability of a room there that prompted your decision finally to make the jump.

 Although then junior as a barrister you had a deep and broad knowledge of the criminal law and vast experience from instructing and appearing in courts at every level of the judicial hierarchy. As a solicitor you had also instructed the leading silks in complex criminal appeals in both the CCA and the High Court. Your experience, your ability to write elegantly and concisely and your sound judgments saw you quickly become the junior of choice for silks running major and complicated conviction appeals, including a number of such appeals to the High Court.

 In 2011 you were led by Murugan Thangaraj SC in the High Court in the successful appeal in *Muldrock v The Queen* which called for the consideration of, among other things, the status of standard non-parole periods in the sentencing process. Also that year you were again in the High Court as junior to Justin Gleeson SC having been led by Tim Game SC in the CCA in a successful sentence appeal, *Green v The Queen*, which became a leading case on the principle of parity in sentencing.

 In 2014 you were again led by Tim Game SC in *Honeysett v The Queen* in another successful appeal to the High Court concerning putative expert evidence from an anatomist who had given evidence over objection concerning morphological comparisons of images captured on CCTV and those of the accused.

 You have also appeared in dozens of appeals in the New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal where convictions have been set aside, whether with verdicts of acquittal entered or a retrial ordered.

 As a junior you were described as reliable, concise, calm, sensible and practical with the added attribute of being a delight to work with. You have, of course, also appeared unled with great success. To offer but a few examples there was the murder trial in the ACT Supreme Court in which the young person you represented was acquitted of the charge. There was a drug sentence appeal in the CCA upheld on the basis that the aggregate sentence imposed was manifestly excessive, and a CCA conviction appeal resulting in an acquittal for a young person accused of a sexual offence.

 Across those and many other matters your Honour honed your expertise in what can be highly technical aspects of the criminal law, including jury directions, fitness for trial and sentencing considerations and calculations.

 As a trial advocate you have conducted the gamut of matters appearing both for the accused and for the Crown in trials for both Commonwealth and State offences. You have also appeared regularly before the Coroners Court including as counsel assisting the coroner in inquest proceedings and you have been junior counsel assisting in aspects of the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse.

 As well as having a sound and ready knowledge of the law, your Honour will bring to the bench a practical wisdom and intuition. As already observed, those who have led you speak particularly of the soundness of your judgment and of your equanimity.

 In the finest traditions of the Bar you have done much work without any fanfare on a pro bono basis, always agreeing when asked to roll up your sleeves for some of the most vulnerable in society, ensuring they had excellent representation in what would otherwise have been a vastly imbalanced power dynamic.

 You are not only universally respected but you yourself demonstrate respect universally. The qualities you displayed as a courtroom advocate will transfer well to the other side of the bench. You are courteous and thoughtful, well‑prepared and a good listener, with a measured and concise presentation.

 Your Honour was appointed silk only last year. Becoming senior counsel was one of the vocational milestones that your Honour had to be urged to pursue, not only because of your modesty but also because you were otherwise solely focussed on the work at hand in every case. Without wishing to sound trite, the Court’s gain is the Bar’s loss.

 There is no doubt that you would have developed a successful practice at the inner Bar, but this opportunity when presented self‑evidently offered your Honour the choice of deploying your skills and compassion, a different concept from the sworn off affection in the decision‑maker’s role, a role that you had thought about from time to time for a while.

 Your appointment has been enthusiastically and warmly welcomed. It is quite clear that the qualities of which your friends and colleagues have spoken and which I have attempted to summarise here, make you ideally suited by temperament and experience for the role of judge.

 You have had some wonderful mentors in your legal career, both before and after you were called to the Bar. Paul Byrne SC was a big influence. You briefed him many times when you were at the Legal Aid Commission and you remained close until his death. As Harrison J once quipped, “Entering Paul’s chamber was known by some wags as ‘going to the Byrne’s unit’”.

 Senior Public Defender Martin Sides QC, later a judge of this Court, was another mentor. He gifted you his wig and robes when you were called to the Bar and gave you his silk gown when you became senior counsel. And at the Bar, as already alluded to, you have worked closely with Tim Game SC in many important cases over many years, becoming close colleagues and friends.

 In your personal life you have had the support and encouragement of your wife, Suzanne Leal, also an experienced lawyer in child protection, criminal law and refugee law. Publicly, Suzanne is, however, perhaps best known as the author of five novels and is a regular at writer’s festivals, one being that which my partner Sally is the president, the Scone Literary Festival. That is www.sl--

 Your relationship with Suzanne, the love of your life, was new when you came to the Bar, beginning a chapter of your life in which you became both a barrister and a stepfather to three boys. You admirably cared for your new family bringing fun into their home life, playing cards and other games and creating obstacle courses for the children. It was special for you all, of course, when you and Suzanne had Miranda, growing the love in the family. Suzanne’s father is said to have had great admiration for you for the love and care you showed her and the boys in those early years.

 Outside of the law and family your great obsession is cycling. You cycle every day, including to and from work and on long endurance rides in Australia and overseas. The statistics on your cycling apps, you recently informed your chambers’ colleagues, reveal that you have pedalled the equivalent of two circumnavigations of the globe.

 You also participate in a swimming club called The Eels, a name derived from Eric the Eel who shot, or should I say dove, to fame at the Sydney Olympics.

 You have always enjoyed playing sport with cricket being a big favourite from early on. You have a love of bushwalking fostered in you, no doubt, by your father who would frequently take the family out on bushwalks during your childhood and, as mentioned earlier, your father was the author of numerous books on the subject. He was also for a time a newspaper cricket writer. Your own love for the outdoors and passion for the natural environment inspired, among other travels, your expedition to Everest, trekking in Nepal as a young man, and you continue to enjoy travel.

 Your Honour, the late Sir Robert ‘Piggy’ Muldoon, when in his role as New Zealand Prime Minister, was once asked by a cheeky Australian journalist whether he was concerned that some 15,000 New Zealanders were settling permanently in Australia each year. He shot back with what is undoubtedly one of the great ex tempore responses, “Not at all” he said, “It will raise the average IQ of both countries”.

 There are, however, notable exceptions. Your Honour has not only been a great acquisition for Australia but Prime Minister Muldoon clearly did not appreciate what he and his countrymen were losing when the Barrows crossed the ditch.

 The barristers of New South Wales wish you all the best as your Honour now embarks on the journey of judicial life.

 May it please the Court.

PRICE CJ: President of the Law Society, Mr McGrath.

MCGRATH: May it please the Court. I too acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, the traditional owners of the land on which this Court stands, and pay my respects to their elders past and present. I acknowledge and extend my respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are with us here today.

 On behalf of the solicitors of New South Wales it is a privilege this morning to congratulate your Honour on your outstanding appointment. As we have heard your Honour has had a remarkable career. As those in this room know, it has been marked by integrity, compassion and talent representing those often on the fringes of our society.

 Equally, in your private life you are described as an outstanding friend and father and an exceptional endurance athlete with a dedication to cycling that, as we have heard, and according to Google Earth, has taken you to the circumference of the globe twice.

 People from professional and personal walks of life from varied backgrounds, ages and places were awed by what your Honour has done in criminal law and the manner in which you have carried yourself through it. It was therefore very hard to find anecdotes about cycling crashes but the team at the Law Society are not novices, your Honour. The following is from a text, as evidence comes in many forms, the source shall remain nameless, “Picture the scene. Before the risk aversion that children bring, way too fast down Akuna Bay” - and for those not devoted to cycling noted as a silly angle of inclination on the Northern Beaches - “speed leaves Barrow nowhere to go but down and into a wall, gravel, the serious associated rash.” The rest reads like poetry, “Gets up fine but then sees blood gushing and those famous legs fold. White as a sheet, clinging to the tarmac, who would have thought DB could get paler than he is. So much for the fearless lawyer.” And that is a quote, your Honour, that is not from me.

 Despite further inquiries, your Honour, no other stories poetic or otherwise were forthcoming about any crashes in cycling. The group your Honour rides with, the Davids, as the one Alan in the group noted, share a love of cycling and the same first name. As with many friends they also share a love of humorous anecdotes, in this case about your Honour, balanced only by admiration.

 Whilst they did not necessarily know the year your Honour was admitted as a legal practitioner, being 1985, they did admire the sheer number of people your Honour has remained friends with throughout the course of your life. As evidence, a source remarked that one could be out somewhere with your Honour, bump into a fascinating person and later inquire as to your acquaintance and invariably being told that your Honour had met them 40 years ago, say, or as an old neighbour, or through a little known area of fascination that you hold in a vast array of interests. Your Honour appears to have never lost a friend in your life.

 Social accolades aside, your Honour has been a humane, considered and balanced stalwart of the criminal justice system since 1988.

 As we have heard your Honour was born in 1960 in New Zealand. Your father worked in journalism and later public relations for the Australian government in Canberra. You have inherited a love of bushwalking from him, although your brother was not so keen, refusing to go near a eucalyptus tree even now.

 Your mother, in addition to raising you, your brother and your sister, no small task, was also at one time the secretary to one of Australia’s most prominent historians, Manning Clark. Your Honour has recalled that at one point your mother also ran the library at the ANU history department. Now this may surprise some of the audience, but your Honour used to like to ring her up pretending you were someone else and make all sorts of demands on her, ordering ridiculous books, and demanding they be ready when you got there. Fortunately for you and unfortunately for your mother, it took some time for her to recognise your voice.

 Your Honour has also credited your sister as a model of resilience. In your Honour’s words, your sister’s ability to persevere, her stoicism and bravery is an inspiration. She is the most courageous person your Honour knows.

 Your Honour has said that you had no aspirations to do anything legal growing up. At high school you noted that you did do some sort of test and a government department offered you a job which you turned down. Your father subsequently decided you would need to support yourself, which at the time your Honour resented, although now greatly appreciates. It meant that you pursued a dead‑end job and used your marks to study law at ANU part time. In doing so you promised yourself that you would never work in that kind of bureaucratic thing you were doing ever again, and with one small exception you have not.

 Your Honour was called to the Bar in 2009 and appointed senior counsel in 2023. You were no stranger to Court advocacy in criminal matters. Equally, your Honour’s earlier work as a solicitor with the New South Wales Legal Aid Commission from 1988 until September 2009 added value, insight and talent to the profession. Your Honour has been cherished by many solicitors in New South Wales who have sought to learn and emulate your clear path of professionalism and compassion.

 As a solicitor your Honour originally began in the area of practice with little guidance and a lot of poorly paid work. It quite clearly showed you what you did not want to do. This was the second and last time your Honour would ever accept such a role. It helped propel a move into finding what was to become a calling, that at the Legal Aid Commission. After spending some time on the roster as part of your work in private practice, an ad in the paper led you to Legal Aid full‑time. Your former employers were incredulous at the time but the move was utterly correct. Your Honour spent the next 20 years there at Legal Aid. The work of such dedicated solicitors is invaluable to our society.

 One example of many. Between 2006 and 2008, your Honour established the Commission’s Coronial Inquest Unit. Representing the next of kin of people who have died in State care, custody or psychiatric hospitals is central to preventing such tragic deaths in the future. It goes to the heart of improving some of the most severe failures of the State. It is also not something that your Honour would ever offer to those already unaware of this. Humility runs honestly and deeply through your character.

 Your Honour was also an accredited criminal law specialist from 1996 until 2009, and between 2001 and 2006 your Honour oversaw the Commission’s statewide appellate criminal practice. These are impressive functions. They represent people who would otherwise be without representation right when they are extremely vulnerable.

 But that does not necessarily illustrate what made your Honour so valuable in this role. It was your Honour’s warmth and kindness that led people to want to work there. Our researchers heard this from many people who are now senior criminal lawyers, legal managers and have had extensive careers in the law.

 You were noted as being adored as a boss, collegiate with complex people and leading a united, calm team with hard work, consistency and warmth.

 Your presence with people who are grieving in inquests, compassion with people in poverty and calmness with people in psychosis were all examples we heard, demonstrating the many shades of compassion contained within your Honour’s character. It was put eloquently by one colleague who said simply that your Honour’s humanity dignified those around you.

 There is, of course, an alternative tradition to these ceremonies revealed well by the observations of your cycling friends. They saw another side. It was noted that a while back your Honour was the first one in the pack to get a carbon fibre bike. As some noted, despite the new bike, those riding behind you would still notice odd, completely different coloured socks, a faded 20‑year old top, baggy cycling shorts with the bottom almost worn through. Their simple take was somewhat different to the one I just mentioned, “He is good at the sexy bike, he is unsexy with what he wears.” You were said to be able to ride on forever, like a big, slow diesel engine. Whether riding through the Pyrenees or the highlands of New South Wales, you were indefatigable, steady and unstopping, and according to one less sympathetic correspondent, slow and not brave. Friends can be cruel, your Honour.

 A meeting of both perspectives also came through an anecdote about riding two and a half thousand kilometres across part of America with a friend for fun. Casually, without complaint, but equally when you could not sleep, it was normal to find you had been working on a brief from 4am in the morning.

 As we have heard, since coming to the Bar 14 years ago, your Honour has continued to appear at all levels of the justice system. Summary hearings and trials have been regular in the New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal and before the State’s coroner. Your Honour was counsel assisting the coroner in inquest proceedings, junior counsel assisting in an aspect of the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse. You have appeared for both the defence and on behalf of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions and appeals to the High Court of Australia.

 For the past 14 years your work as a barrister at Forbes Chambers, a bastion of justice for criminal matters, has been of high standards and integrity. For one noted for gratitude, quiet reflection and persuasion, it is apt that today I am able to reflect back that gratitude that the profession I represent has for your Honour. Our profession considers you an excellent choice for the District Court of New South Wales.

 It is my pleasure to say today on behalf of the more than 40,000 solicitors of New South Wales, congratulations on your appointment, your Honour, and we wish you the very best.

 As the Court pleases.

PRICE CJ: Judge Barrow.

BARROW DCJ: Thank you, your Honour. Chief Judge, Chief Justice, Justices of the Supreme Court, Judges of the District Court, honoured guests, practitioners, family, friends, I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the traditional owners of this part of Sydney upon which the Court stands. Thank you to everyone for coming, making time to be here and thank you to anyone who is watching online and making the effort to do that, including you Kirsten Edwards.

 I am very honoured and excited to have been invited to join this Court and I have been overwhelmed by the support of friends and colleagues and I would like to thank the members of the Court for being so welcoming as well. And thank you Mr Toomey and Mr McGrath for your generous speeches.

 As you have heard, when I was two my brother Grant and I came to Australia. He was just a tiny baby and my parents Graham and Nora moved to Hobart, and like many Kiwis I think my parents moved here for better opportunities and it was a particularly big sacrifice for my mum leaving behind everything and everyone that she knew.

 My late father was, as you have heard, a journalist and a writer, and he got that job with The Mercury in Hobart and then we moved to Canberra where we grew up and my sister Jane was born not long afterwards. My father was a mad cricketer and a bushwalker and he did pass on those passions to me but only cricket to my brother. He died in 2017, but my mum, my brother and my sister are here today and it makes me very happy to share the day with them. My mum has always supported us in every way she could and it was probably only when I became a parent that I realised just how much she did for us when we were growing up.

 We still have relatives in New Zealand, wonderful ones, and the only really irritating thing about our connection with New Zealand is my brother’s unhealthy and irrational obsession with the All Blacks. A more tenuous link, having been only a few weeks old when he came to Australia, is hard to imagine.

 I went to the ANU and I did that Arts Law degree. I did it because I thought I might eventually get a job. I had no real idea of what I would do and I spent most of my time at university playing sport and socialising and watching bands and putting off the evil day when that great lifestyle would end. I was the beneficiary of a free tertiary education and I was very grateful for that. I wish everyone could still have it.

 We were not a legal family. At university I only knew one lawyer, Bruce Topfer. He was the father of my friend Rob but Bruce was more interested in farming cattle and sheep and I did not actually know he was a solicitor until much later. Eventually student life ended, I came down to Sydney to do College of Law.

 The truth was I came down here in pursuit of a student from the ANU who was coming, but she did not come, and the relationship went nowhere and when I arrived here, I did not know anyone. I did not know any lawyers, I had never been in a courtroom. I had no ambition or plans but one of the things about that course was I met new people and some of those I have stayed good friends with over the years including Dino Bertini who is now almost a retired member of the Bar, and Jacqui Gray who has practised as a solicitor in Sydney for a long time.

 Dino, who was a much more sophisticated person than me, took me into his family and I spent many happy days there. At one of the first parties I attended at his house I met my first wife Kathy who was a general practitioner. I had never met a doctor before in anything other than a consultation room and I was a bit overwhelmed, particularly because I had no work ethic at all. She was a very dedicated, hardworking person and over the years she showed me what a professional life can look like. Although our marriage ended I am delighted that her brother, Professor David Currow, is here today.

 When the training course was over my ANU friend Rob was blunt about my prospects and he suggested that I write letters to suburban and country practices and I would get a job like that. It probably would not work today but it was good advice for me, he knew me well and I got a job in Richmond with a medium‑sized suburban practice and I quickly realised I became one of the two lowly solicitors, and my job along with now Professor Tracey Booth, who I think is here too, was to go to Court when cases were chaotically underprepared and to take the judicial verbal beating that would follow, and we got to do the Legal Aid roster one week in four.

 My first positive experiences in court came from those appearances in the Windsor Local Court. It was the work that I quickly realised I really loved and after 15 months in Richmond I applied for a job at Legal Aid and as has been said, to the incredulity of my employers who could not understand why I would make such a ridiculous choice, I went to the Legal Aid Commission. It was that Legal Aid work that opened my eyes to the type of work I wanted to do as a lawyer.

 From then on, over the 34 years since 1988, I have worked for many people, normal everyday people, and most of them, or many of them, have been very disadvantaged. So, I stayed at Legal Aid for 20 years, and as has been said, I did cases from the Christmas bail roster in the Local Court to instructing silks in the High Court.

 While I was there, I met and I was influenced by many talented and generous people, Phillip Boulten SC was just on his way to the Bar when I joined Legal Aid, Justice Mark Ierace and Judge Martin Sides QC. They were both public defenders at the time. I worked with Clare Farnan who is now an enormously experienced magistrate, Antony Townsden and Sophia Beckett who are both judges of this Court. Robyn Burgess, an extraordinary public defender inspired me with her courage and her brilliance. I briefed Judge Peter Zahra and Paul Byrne, as you have heard, and like so many of us, it is a hard thing to think about the fact that they are no longer with us.

 In 2008 I decided to go to the Bar after being offered the opportunity to go to Forbes Chambers. I had not really aspired to it. It was probably a bit of a midlife crisis. Forbes was and remains a finishing school for so many lawyers with a similar background to me and it was a place that I did know well and it was full of people I already liked and respected. Tim Game SC operates a largely automated appellate practice at Forbes. Unaware of the magnitude of this or how persistent he could be, I agreed to do some work for him and I fell under his spell. Over the 14 years I was part of Forbes I worked closely with him on many cases, mainly in the Court of Criminal Appeal and sometimes in the High Court, and of all the people I have had the pleasure to work with, Tim had the biggest impact on my development as a lawyer, as he has on so many others and in my opinion the contribution he has made to criminal justice in Australia is astonishing.

 Although most of my work has involved representation of accused people, I have had the opportunity to conduct quite a number of criminal prosecutions for the Commonwealth DPP, and through that work and doing defence work, I have met many effective and admirable lawyers who ensure that prosecutions, Commonwealth and State, are conducted fairly and efficiently. I saw how hard it is to prosecute a case when I did that work.

 As I developed and matured, I came to realise just how crucial a well‑functioning criminal justice system is in ensuring our democratic society functions effectively and although it will never be perfect, we can be proud of our legal system. As is well known, this is the busiest trial court in Australia and in my opinion it also has a very important function in reviewing the decisions in the Local Court. For these reasons, I understand how pivotal the position is and as Judge Brady said on Friday, it is more than a job.

 I am also conscious of the impact that criminal proceedings have on victims of crime and their families and witnesses, on the police, on accused people and their families and I am not going to forget that in the cases that I am involved in in this job.

 Leaving Forbes Chambers has been a wrench, a little bit like leaving home for the first time. I could not imagine a more inspiring and worthwhile workplace, although I have been accused of revisionism by Gabby Bashir SC, I cannot recall one unhappy day in the 14 years that I was there. I want to thank all my current and former colleagues at Forbes, especially our clerk Ryan Coleiro and our librarian Michele Crozier.

 By the time I completed the Bar exams in 2009 I had re-established my friendship with Suzanne Leal. We had worked together at Legal Aid in the 1990s. When she heard I was thinking about going to the Bar she rang me up and told me not to do it and I ignored that advice. Our relationship started on the weekend before the Bar course commenced and I disgraced myself by being late on the first day and I was ticked off by Chris D’Aeth, the then director of the course. After that I never trusted Suzanne’s advice about bus routes or timetables and I took to riding my bike to the CBD, something that I have in common with now retired Judge Sides whose marathon rides from his house to Campbelltown Court were legendary, and with current gun District Court cyclist, Judge Tim Gartelmann SC.

 I had always wanted a family, and Suzanne came with a readymade one, three very young boys, Alex, Dominic and Xavier, and they charmed me and delighted me from the beginning. They never resented me and they always made me feel welcome and over time I became their stepfather, and some time later I became the father of Miranda and they became her brothers. Suzanne has given me happiness and contentment and support, a fantastic family and, as you have heard, she is a talented novelist and a lawyer too.

 The boys are now adults, I am proud of all of them. I went from no experience with parenting, aged 48, to an instant trio of tyros and then a quartet and it happened very quickly and it has made such a difference to my life. All of them continue to make me happy but I am hoping for a bit more respect at home.

 I mentioned that our family in Canberra was not a legal family. Nothing could be further from the truth now, given that Suzanne has also practised in criminal law and Judge Justin Smith, the boys’ dad, is a member of this Court.

 It became apparent to me that this aspect of our lives was getting away from us a bit when one of Miranda’s friends who was probably about seven went home from a play date at our house and asked her mother, “What’s manslaughter, mum?”

 As you have heard, some of my friends and I swim together. It has been good for mental and physical health I think. Our spiritual leader, the esteemed Legal Aid solicitor and the godfather of Miranda, John Pearson, could not come today. The only requirement to join our swimming group was to match Eric’s time at the Olympics which is one minute 52 seconds, in the hundred metres freestyle and it is not as easy as you might think.

 I have had a lifelong love of cycling, and it is true most of my friends are called David, David Argent, Dave Evenden, Rob Topfer, Lester Clifford and Alan McClennan. They have all made my life happier, more interesting and healthier. We are also lucky to have local friends, quite a few of you are here today and I really appreciate it. I hope you can all stay for morning tea.

 I promise to carry out the responsibilities of this challenging new job to the best of my skill and ability.

PRICE CJ: Thank you, Judge. This morning I am going to breach the usual judicial protocol and share an anecdote which I cannot resist sharing.

 I discovered this morning before we came in that the judge and the Chief Justice Andrew Bell had a very successful career as opening batsmen for the (Sydney Uni Veterans) cricket team. The only problem is neither of them would tell me who had the better batting average but they absolutely assured me they were as successful as Warner and Khawaja.

 I now invite you all to join me for morning tea.