

Juliet Shields died on 11 March this year. She will long be remembered for many reasons in the Northern Territory, and I take this opportunity to mention some of them.

Juliet was born in West Wyalong and grew up in Sydney.

She was educated at St Brididene Convent in Sydney and completed a law degree at the University of Sydney. She was admitted as a barrister of the Supreme Court of NSW on 6 June 1956 and, thereupon, left Australia for a three year sojourn in England and Western Europe. During this time Juliet worked as a teacher and BBC researcher. On her return to Australia she commenced work with the Commonwealth Attorney-General's department in Canberra. There she met and married John Shields.

At the time of her marriage she was

described in the press as "Canberra's only woman barrister."

In 1961 the Shields' came to Darwin for two years. Juliet continued to work for the Commonwealth Law Office under Ron Withnall. Her legal career was interrupted by her child, Alastair. Between 1963 and 1973 she raised her son and involved herself in writing short stories for publication and acting in amateur theatrical productions. She spent short periods working as a solicitor for Ward Keller & Morrison and for one Clancy (who was later to spend time at Fannie Bay). In 1973 she returned to work with the Commonwealth Attorney-General's department in the NT. It was only after she grudgingly provided a copy of her honours degree in law as evidence of her matriculation that she re-commenced work as a solicitor. This was, no doubt, one of the high points in Juliet's career as a great actress.

She moved swiftly through the ranks to become one of the first female section heads in the Commonwealth department. Juliet continued as a lawyer in the NT from those days through to the commencement of her

illness in May last year. The long period, coupled with the quality of her work, ranked Juliet Shields as one of the most senior lawyers in the Northern Territory as well as being the most senior female lawyer. She was an inaugural member of the Agents Licensing board from its establishment in 1979 and served as chairman from 1985-1988. Through the difficult first years of the Board she was instrumental, along with other members, in firmly establishing the credibility of the licensing system.

Juliet will also be remembered for her deep and ethical commitment to Torrens' principles. In the course of her career with the Government in the Northern Territory, she was at times the Crown Conveyancer and the Acting Registrar-General.

In the former capacity, which under

various titles lasted from 1975-1990, she

was the key advisor to, first, the Commonwealth Government and, second, the Northern Territory Government in land dealings. Her projects included work with the 32 square mile acquisition, the acquisition of the Ayers Rock Hotel, the Beaufort construction, the Casino, the Strehlow Collection and Cullen Bay. Not so well known was the work as an advocate before the Planning Appeals Committee in the late 1970s. As land is involved in most major projects, it is difficult to over-estimate either the significance of Juliet's involvement or the size of the knowledge that disappeared with her passing. She will also be remembered for the work with the National Trust and other community groups.

Above all, Juliet will be remembered for her ethics as a lawyer. It can only be hoped that her ethical commitment will be passed on through the many young lawyers, students and articulated clerks who spent time under her tutelage and who now occupy positions of influence in many government, judicial and legal offices in the Northern Territory and beyond.

## Juliet Shields

Obituary by Robert Bradshaw

### SA AGENCY WORK

GROPE HAMILTON, a city-based law firm, is available to undertake agency work in most litigious and non-litigious legal areas.

Contact Mark Hamilton  
ph (08) 2324767 BH or 2673772 AH,  
fax (08) 2325045

GROPE HAMILTON  
Lawyers

1st Floor, ADC Building  
83 Pirie Street  
ADELAIDE SA 5000

### ADELAIDE

Lisacek & Co, Barristers and Solicitors, WELCOME AGENCY WORK. Phone (08) 2315909. 69a Grote Street, Adelaide SA 5000

### CONFERENCES

14th Annual Conference of the Australian Society of Labor Lawyers, 22-24 May Melbourne  
Details from Conference Management Pty Ltd phone (03) 8761464, fax 8799369.

Australian Lawyers Conference  
12-17 July, Nusa Dua, Bali.  
Eileen Terrill had details but she lost them.

Biannual Family Law Conference  
September, Perth. Details from the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia.

National Conference on Juvenile Justice  
22-24 September, Adelaide  
Call for papers & expressions of interest. Contact Sally-Anne Gerull, Australian Institute of Criminology  
GPO Box 2944 Canberra.