

Obituary – Jane Stuart Mahoney

Darwin legal practitioner Jane Mahoney, and her husband Tony, died tragically in a motor vehicle accident on the Cox Peninsula Road near Darwin on the evening of Sunday 12 July 1998, when they were travelling to their home in Mandorah.

Jane was born on 7 July 1955 in Washington DC where her father was serving as a foreign service officer with the British Embassy. She was educated in Britain and Australia.

Jane obtained a Bachelor of Science and Economics (Hons) from the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth in July 1976 and subsequently completed Parts 1 and 2 of the Solicitors Qualifying Examinations and was admitted as a solicitor in England and Wales on 1 December 1980. Her Certificate of Admission was signed by the then Master of the Rolls, Lord Denning.

After qualifying, Jane practised as a solicitor in London until 1988, including a period in which she practised on her own account. She undertook a variety of work, concentrating on general litigation and matrimonial matters.

Jane and Tony moved to South Australia in late 1988 and Jane was employed with the Adelaide firm Lamshed & Moore during 1989 and 1990.

Jane commenced employment with the Department of Law (now Northern Territory Attorney-General's Department) in Darwin on August 14 1991, where she worked as a solicitor in the Litigation Division of the Solicitor for the Northern Territory. She was admitted as a legal practitioner in the Northern Territory on 4 February 1992. Eight other persons were admitted on the same day,

including two who are still in practice in Darwin: Kerrie Channells and Bill Priestly.

During her employment with the Solicitor for the Northern Territory, Jane specialised in the areas of personal injuries, particularly medical negligence, and child and family welfare. She had a close working relationship with personnel from Territory Health Services, which was her major client.

Jane also had a close relationship with her colleagues at the Solicitor for the Northern Territory. The Litigation Division of the Solicitor for the Northern Territory is a closely knit group and past and present members of that group, as well as other close friends and colleagues, are especially affected by the loss of Jane.

Given the recent policy decision of the Northern Territory government to outsource much of the legal work previously undertaken by the Solicitor for the Northern Territory, including the health law work in which Jane specialised, Jane had recently resigned from her position with the Attorney-General's Department. Her resignation was to have taken effect on 17 July 1998, though she was on recreation leave from the Department from 10 July 1998. Jane had accepted a position with Darwin firm Cridlands, where she was due to commence on 20 July 1998.

Colleagues and clients of Jane's gathered together with Jane for a harbour cruise on the evening of 10

July 1998, to celebrate her achievements at the Solicitor for the Northern Territory and to wish her well in the future. It was a happy evening and many who attended have been able to take some comfort from having spent their special time with Jane. Conversely, the proximity of this event to her untimely death has served to heighten the sense of loss felt by many.

Jane was a gentle and unassuming person with a highly developed sense of personal and professional integrity. She is sorely missed by those who knew and loved her and is a great loss to the Darwin legal fraternity, to the small community of Mandorah and to the wider community generally.

Jane is survived by her parents, Sir Curtis and Lady Keeble and her sisters, Suzanne Richardson and Sally Keeble, MP, all of whom travelled from London, together with other members of their family, to attend the funeral service for Jane and Tony, which was held at the Darwin Memorial Uniting Church on 28 July 1998. They were joined at the service by Tony's family and many friends and colleagues of the couple.

Donna Drier