

Christmas drinks and other functions

I did not have the pleasure nor the privilege of meeting Bill Herd, a senior Lecturer at the Law Faculty at Charles Darwin University, before his untimely death. I have learnt from those who knew him that he was a very special person. He will be long remembered for his many achievements and contributions to the law profession and the community. NTWLA Inc acknowledges his passing. He will be sadly missed.

The Committee farewells Shirley Rowe and welcomes Sarah Thompson and Rhyanwen Bauman as committee members.

I read with great interest recently, that "Legal history will be created next January" when Dame Brenda Hale becomes the UK's first woman Law Lord (*The Guardian*, 24 October 2003).

Dame Brenda has been a member of the UK Law Commission (1984) and was the first academic lawyer to be appointed as a High Court judge (1993). She spearheaded groundbreaking challenges to the law on children, divorce and mental health.

Dame Brenda was quoted as saying:

"There are plenty of lawyers around from whom to pick a judiciary which would be more reflective of the general population - more women, more religious and ethnic minorities ...etc. This matters because democracy matters. The judiciary may or should be independent of government and parliament but ultimately, we are the link between them and the people".

Unlike Australia, the UK, Canada and New Zealand all have women judges in their highest courts.

In my last column, I referred to the Equitable Briefing Policy (EBP) being promoted by Australian Women Lawyers (AWL). You will recall that the policy promotes non-discriminatory briefing practices in the legal profession. The long-term aim of the policy is to create a more equitable representation of women at the level of partnerships in law firms and the judiciary.

AWL have been very successful in its lobbying of support for the EBP. The EBP's successor, the "Uniform Equitable Briefing Policy", is to be adopted by the NSW Bar Council and the NSW Law Society recommending it to its internal departments for implementation in their own briefing practices.

The Law Council of Australia's "Equalising Opportunities in the Law" Committee will meet on 18 November 2003 to consider the new policy. AWL has also been instrumental in this policy being put on the agenda for the recent November meeting of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General.

At its last committee meeting, NTWLA Inc endorsed the Uniform Equitable Briefing Policy and passed a motion that I write to LSNT and ask it to put the policy on its next agenda for consideration.

On Friday 24 October 2003, NTWLA Inc held the first of its many upcoming events for the membership year - the Wine & Cheese night. It was a great night for those who were able to attend. Notably, Lyn McDade, the newest female

member of the NT Bar Association, attended, as did Rex Wild QC and Jack Karczewski QC. NTWLA Inc congratulates Lyn on her joining the Bar and wishes her well.

The Wine and Cheese night was especially successful due to the generous sponsorship of *Goundrey Fine Wines* who supplied delicious champagne, red and white wines. Frieda Evans won the door prize, which was donated by *Ten Litchfield*. The silent auction prizes included one night's stay at the *Saville Hotel* (won by Terry Lisson), travel vouchers from *Travellers World* and a dinner voucher (\$80) from the *Hanuman Restaurant* (both prizes being won by Peter Waggitt).

The NTWLA Christmas party, held on Thursday 11 December at the Department of Justice, was a great success. The NTWLA committee would like to thank *Vintage Cellars* for kindly donating a magnum of red wine and *Goundrey Fine Wines* for its ongoing support.

The NTWLA Inc Committee wishes all Law Society members and their families a very Merry Christmas.

Gabrielle Martin
PRESIDENT (1)



Gabrielle Martin and Rex Wild QC presenting Sharon Bowman (right) with the door prize at the NT Women Lawyers Christmas drinks.