

# Admissions

## to the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory

Practitioner welcome by Hon Justice Sally Thomas

Tuesday 28 July 2009



Kate Booth



Kaliopi Hourdas



Melissa Compain



James Tierney

Ladies and gentlemen, this ceremony concludes with a few words from me on behalf of the Chief Justice who, unexpectedly, is unable to join us this morning.

The welcome is also on behalf of all the Judges of this Court. Sitting with me today are Riley J, Southwood J and Olsson AJ. Angel and Mildren JJ are unable to join us here this morning. We are here to acknowledge this very special occasion and to welcome you, the newly-admitted practitioners, individually to the legal profession.

This is also a welcome to your friends and family who are here with pride and pleasure to acknowledge your achievements.

You have every right to be proud. You have spent many years of study and practical training to qualify yourselves as legal practitioners in a very honourable profession. To attain this will have involved sacrifices, not just the sacrifices on your part but sacrifices on the part of members of your family who have given their support and encouragement to you throughout the process.

Congratulations to all of you. Please enjoy this very special day.

You bring to the legal profession your training in the law but you also bring lots of other qualities. You have interesting hobbies, experiences and a background in other areas of work. All of these serve to make you well-rounded

persons, able to relate to those who you will later be called upon to assist and apply your legal skills.

On these admission days, I think all of us as Judges are completely astounded at the background and experience and the qualifications of those who are admitted to practice the law and today we have some exceptional examples. We have, of course, all been taking extensive notes about each of you and I thought I should just pick out one or two of the submissions that were made on your behalf that struck me as being most important aspects of you personally so that we can all enjoy them again.

If I start, of course, with Kate Booth and I have noted that she has majored in modern European history and laughs a lot. I am not sure if those two are connected but they are what struck me.

Kaliopi Hourdas, who has been the winner of a very important community service award and important scholarships, has worked in the retail industry and of course is a member of a very well-known Greek family.

Melissa Compain was the winner of the Australian Citizen of the Year Award and greatly to her credit has overcome serious injuries in a car accident to proceed with her legal studies.

James Tierney appears to have spent four years not knowing what to call his mother but, apart



*Christine Heron*

from that, has had a huge range of occupations including farm labouring and forestry plantation, as a journalist and obviously as an expert in nightclubs. We of course here know him best in his role as the associate to Angel J.

Christine Heron is employed by the Territory Insurance Office and I'm most impressed with the fact that she's obtained a business degree and a law degree whilst also carrying out that very difficult occupation of bringing up her children.



*Nicholas Johansen*

Nicholas Johansen has studied Japanese and volunteered at a number of positions including treasurer of the University Law School and co-president of the Young Lawyers Society.

Lisa Ball is another graduate from Charles Darwin University and we're very delighted at how many of the newly-admitted practitioners are graduates from that university and we note the comments about how she has been received as a legal practitioner and the high standard that was set in her studies. She is also a star gymnast and a journalist. I noted down that Lisa must be at least 95 years of age. However she looks extremely young to me so she had obviously packed a lot into that time.



*Lisa Ball*

Natalie Agius, who has also attained a bachelor of laws as an external student through CDU, has a great sense of adventure and blows us away with the height of her bungy jumping, her proposal to travel in a hot-air balloon and of course the time that she has spent travelling and working on cruise ships.

Thea Thomas is a member of a family both from Darwin and the Tiwi Islands is here with not only her law qualifications but with a great love of theatre and, I'm aware, has been involved in a number of productions and I just can't comprehend somebody can dance 'strip the willow' in stilettos. If you can do that, nothing will faze you.

And finally, Sarah Barnaart: I've noted the words international, international and international and in addition to that interest, of course, Sarah has a passion for the Darwin community and has involved herself in a number of voluntary positions, firstly, with the Darwin Community Legal Centre. She has also worked for the Family Law Court and is now with the Commonwealth Prosecutions Office.

Again, I congratulate each and every one of you. This is a ceremony that is conducted in Supreme Courts all round Australia. We believe the first such ceremony in Australia





Natalie Agius



Thea Thomas



Sarah Barnaart

was held in Sydney in May 1824. Since that time, admissions have been in open court which amounts to a public recognition of your right to join the profession and practise law.

Whilst it concludes one chapter in your life it is also, of course, a beginning. Your pathways may lead in very different directions. Your opportunities are limitless, whether you enter private practice, in the public service, in academia, in corporate law or the range of other avenues there are to practise your profession. Some of you may not, in fact, go on to practise law at all but may move into some other area. Whatever it may be, your training in the law will stand you in good stead.

We hope, of course, that you will stay in the Northern Territory to practise or at least to come back here after you've had experience elsewhere.

I know, from the perspective of a Judge, how important it is to our role as Judges to have lawyers appearing before us and those who instruct them upon whose integrity, diligence and expertise we can depend.

I wish now I had realised as a young practitioner how important I was in the decision-making process of courts. The practitioner who is scrupulously honest, prepares their

cases well and is able to inform the Court as to the law is absolutely invaluable.

Not only will you have the Court to consider, and this must always be your primary duty, you also have a duty to your individual clients, whoever they may be. Your clients will have a wide range and variety of problems they seek you to resolve. This may be battling the bureaucracy on their behalf, dealing with large corporation disputes, or matters of Territory or national significance, or perhaps assisting a person traumatised by a dispute with a neighbour. They are all matters that, to your clients, are important and very often dominate their lives. You have the ability to help people in all walks of life and it will bring you great satisfaction.

I encourage you to maintain your interests outside the law and to broaden your experience in other areas that may interest you. It is important for you to keep your skills as lawyers but it is probably even more important that you have time for family and friends and enjoy life to the full.

Once again, we offer you our congratulations and wish you well in whatever your future endeavours may be.

Thank you. The Court is adjourned. }