

## Bertram John Fiennes Wright MBE QC (1903-2001)

*By Malcolm Hardwick QC*

Bertram Wright, who died on 24 April 2001 aged 98, practised as a member of the NSW Bar for 46 years. He was a most courteous man, who brought high professional competence and diligence to anything he undertook. He was always generous with his time and advice.

In various fields, Wright rendered conspicuous service to the profession of the practice of the law.

The son of the Most Reverend John Charles Wright, DD, Archbishop of Sydney and Primate of Australia, he was born on 3 March 1903 and was educated at Shore, the University of Sydney (BA) and New College, Oxford (MA).

In 1928 he became a student-at-law and associate to Sir John Harvey, chief judge in Equity, until he was admitted to the New South Wales Bar on 21 November 1930. He took chambers at 170 Phillip Street until 1933, and from 1934 until the outbreak of war had chambers at 142 Phillip Street.

In 1939 he was a member of the 2nd Armoured Car Regiment and enlisted in the 2nd AIF on 13 May 1940. He served as ADC and later personal assistant to General Sir Vernon Sturdee, chief of the general staff; head of the Australian Military Mission, Washington, and later GOC, I Australian Corps, New Guinea. Wright was present when, on 6 September 1945, the chief of the Japanese forces, Rabaul, surrendered and presented his sword to General Sturdee aboard *HMS Glory*.

Wright received high praise for his service in Washington as personal assistant to the GOC, First Australian Army, and for his untiring and most diligent work, diplomacy and initiative of a high order. He was appointed MBE (Mil.) in 1945 and was demobilised on 29 July 1946 as Lieutenant Colonel.

On his return to the Bar in 1946 he had chambers in University Chambers and from 1957 on 10 Wentworth Chambers.

Wright was honorary secretary of the NSW Bar Association between 1937 and 1940, and a member of the Council of the Association 1959-1964. He took silk in 1969 and was appointed senior counsel assisting the independent inquiry into the Australian Repatriation System 1971-1975. He retired from the Bar in 1976.

Previously he had been a member from 1957 of the Court Martial Appeals Tribunal, of which he was deputy president between 1973 and 1975. He was a member of the Law Extension Committee, University of Sydney, 1964-1976 and a director of the Union Fidelity Trustee Company from 1955 to 1977.

Wright was chancellor of the Diocese of Riverina 1936-1987; a governor of The King's School, Parramatta from 1935 and honorary treasurer 1947-1962.

On retirement from the Bar he moved to Gostwyck, Uralla, NSW, where he was president of the New England Regional Art Museum Association 1978-1983.

In 1948 he married Noreen Dangar, who died in 1991. Wright is survived by one of his two daughters and her two sons.

## Hugh Walker Robson QC (1914-2001)

*By Nicolas Robson*

Hugh Robson grew up in various NSW country towns, the son of a Methodist clergyman. He was articled to Walker Gibbs & Cook (a firm partly the ancestor of the present Dunhill Madden Butler), and after interludes as the private secretary to Billy Hughes, associate to Sir Kenneth Street, and in the Army Legal Corps, he began practice at the Bar in 1947.

He specialised in equity and commercial law and also in admiralty and in crime, including the notorious case of *Roderick*, in which he came second but afterwards had great, if rueful, praise for the quality of the forensic investigations. He appeared with and against most of the famous figures of his day, including Sir Frank Kitto, Sir Garfield Barwick, Kerrigan, Shand and many others. He was a member of the Bar Council from 1950 to 1960, a period which included the decisions which led to the formation of Selborne and Wentworth Chambers. He was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1968. He served on the District Court from 1970 to 1983, spent some months in 1973 as an acting judge of the Papua New Guinea Supreme Court, and after retirement was a member of the Sentence Review Board.

He was twice married, firstly to Nancy Taggart and then to Moira Russel Stokes, who survives him.

He was a keen sportsman, playing rugby for North Sydney Boys' High in a curtain-raiser before a test match at the SCG. He could not recall whom Australia played, but certainly remembered that in his own match he scored a try and kicked some goals. He once caught a 40 pound jewfish, but grudgingly conceded that the line was rigged and set by his friend, the solicitor Gordon Robilliard. Gold is best not mentioned, but he played tennis for many years with the likes of the eminent test cricketer Johnny Taylor, Sir Norman Cowper and Wilfred Francis until, in his seventies, his gastrocnemius forced him to the bowling green. That was the end of the butcher's bill, because the chook for the super-veteran's class came home with him most Saturdays.

He had a great love of music as an organist and a singer. When on a debating tour for the Australian universities, with nuclear physicist Frederick Thoneman, he auditioned at the New York Met and was offered a