

## Anthony Peter Cook SC (1959 - 2009)

The following eulogy was delivered by Andrew Haesler SC



It is not at all surprising that Anthony joined the public defenders in 1999. It was destined. You could blame his DNA.

He was a child of 'troublemakers' and, like a number of other public defenders, he gained early experience in fighting against injustice when still at school. He learned while young that taking a stand on important matters of principle was not always popular - but always essential.

He relished the cerebral excitement of the criminal trial, the learning, the planning and the passion. He had the privilege of addressing a jury in hundreds of trials.

He chose to do good, not just because it suited his personality but because he could, and did, make a difference to people's lives.

Anthony did his job well. He excelled. He gave up a successful career based at Wardell Chambers to join the public defenders. And, if he didn't prosper as much financially, his career and the importance of the cases he took on grew and grew. His achievements received formal recognition when in 2007 he was given the title 'senior counsel.' But it was the informal recognition and the

challenges of the practise of criminal law that he relished.

He experienced the triumph of the 'not guilty' verdict and the decision 'appeal upheld.'

His efforts were appreciated.

One, of many examples, is a letter we received from the North Australian Aboriginal Legal Service, after he had gone there last year to appear in a controversial murder trial:

Thankyou for sharing Anthony with us ... the ... result was ... incredible and admirable ...(it)... was the talk of the town here in Darwin... As a poorly funded organisation, with incredibly dedicated staff, the presence of someone with Mr Cook's experience gave a boost to all our criminal lawyers.

It should come as no surprise that the attorney general asked that I convey his personal regret, and condolences. It should come as no surprise that judges have said he was one of the finest advocates ever to appear before them. Some of those judges are here today, together with his colleagues from the profession, many of whom looked to Anthony as a role model. Many, many more, have asked that I convey their profound regret that they cannot be here today.

We are all here to say farewell. More than that we are all here to say, to Will and Ed, to Anthony's family and the friends who did not really know what he did in his day job... that he did good.

He was good. He was very good.

He did good for others; even those clients who, frankly, he didn't like one bit. He took pride in taking on cases for those who others despised - and giving them a chance for justice.

He died at the peak of his powers as an advocate.

The sort of work Anthony did was hard intellectually and hard emotionally, that work, and the commitment required to excel, took its toll. Anthony did not hide that fact.

Anthony really wanted to get well.

He was doing things to make that happen: he sought treatment; he talked about the pressures of work; he was not 'out of the loop'; he exercised regularly; he was the fittest public defender; he travelled and sought new work experiences in the Solomon Islands and Darwin.

Anthony didn't isolate himself: he surrounded himself with friends he knew cared about him.

He did things he loved; things that made him happy: snorkeling with the boys at Shelley Beach; surfing; market browsing; making curries; playing chess; photography and painting with Will and Ed.

Work was not his entire life. It should never be that. Anthony's greatest love was his family. And to them - on behalf of all who worked with him - and all the people he helped in his 26 years as a lawyer:

Thank you for sharing Anthony with us.

We will not forget him and we know you will never forget him and the good he did.