

The Hon Justice Rowan Darke

Rowan Darke SC was sworn in as a judge of the Supreme Court on 16 August 2013.

The Hon Justice Rowan Darke was born and raised in Bathurst where his parents were school teachers. Darke J attended Bathurst High School where his Honour believed that he received an 'excellent education'.

Darke J graduated with a Bachelor of Economics and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Sydney in 1985. During his time at university, his Honour pursued various sporting interests including cricket and second grade rugby league.

As to rugby league, Mr John Dobson, president of the Law Society of New South Wales who spoke at his Honour's swearing in on behalf of the solicitors of New South Wales noted Darke J's agility in playing wing, centre or full-back, a true 'utility back'.

Ms Jane Needham SC, senior vice-president of the New South Wales Bar Association who spoke on behalf of the bar was informed by his Honour's then coach, now Judge Norrish SC of the District Court of New South Wales, of Darke J's skill on the wing; Darke J was 'lithe and elegant, quick on his feet and courageous ... he never questioned the coach's judgment and was definitely the soberest person in all five grades', all fine qualities for a judge.

Darke J served as associate to the Hon Justice Lockhart at a time coinciding with the long-running matter of *State Bank of New South Wales v Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia*. His Honour described Justice Lockhart as 'a gifted man who, with apparent ease, combined a top level intellect with abundant personal charm and grace'. His Honour said:

Towards the end of my time with him he suggested that I should think about going to the Bar. I had not taken any steps to find employment and the counsel I had seen in action, such as Ken Handley, appeared to do it with ease so I decided I would give it a go.

His Honour commenced practice at the New South Wales Bar in September 1986 without having practised as a solicitor. He Honour obtained a berth on the 11 Wentworth/Selborne Chambers and read with the Hon Dyson Heydon AC QC and the late Paul Donohoe QC.

In 1987 his Honour took a room on what is now the Tenth Floor of Selborne Wentworth and remained there until his Honour's appointment to the court.



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His Honour practised principally in commercial, equity, insurance and trade practices law, as well as professional negligence. Ms Jane Needham SC quoted the praise of an unnamed silk on the Tenth Floor of Selborne Wentworth chambers who said:

Your Honour's ability to attend to all chamber work within promised times, to give concise, legally precise and commercially sensible advice to solicitors and clients from behind an impossibly tidy desk and in a courteous and polite manner, has been a boon to solicitors and clients.

In court, his Honour was known to be always efficient, polite and courteous to the bench, opponents and witnesses alike. His Honour's door was also known to be open to junior members of his Honour's floor who sought his professional advice.

His Honour appeared in the Court of Appeal, Supreme Court, Federal Court and High Court, the most recent being the successful appeal before the High Court in relation to personal injuries damages in the case of *Certain Underwriters at Lloyds v Cross* in which his Honour represented the appellants.

Darke J served as a director of the South Eastern Sydney Area Health Service and chaired its audit committee. In 2001 Darke J was the Bar Association's representative on the Hon Terry Sheahan's committee for the review of workers compensation in New South Wales. In September 2011 his Honour joined the board of the Barristers Sickness and Accident Fund.

His Honour has interests in American politics and history as well as domestic politics.

His Honour's long-standing devotion to the South Sydney Rabbitohs resulted in pro bono support in the litigation and campaigning to have the Rabbitohs reinstated in the competition when they were dropped in 1999.

Towards the end of his Honour's swearing in speech, his Honour said:

I am fond of saying that 'the Bar is not for everyone'. There are undoubted stresses and strains involved. There is fierce competition. Yet it gives to each of its members an independence which is truly rare in today's world. That is something to cherish.

The Hon Justice Melissa Perry

Melissa Perry QC was sworn in as a judge of the Federal Court on 23 September 2013.

The Hon Justice Melissa Perry's paternal grandfather came to Australia from Cypress and anglicised his name from Pieris to Perry. Her Honour's father was the late Hon John Perry AO QC of the Supreme Court of South Australia, an accomplished violinist who, as a student, led the Elder Conservatorium Orchestra and went on to play at the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. There he met her Honour's mother, Jenny, who was a student pianist at the Conservatorium.

Perry J opted to follow her mother by taking up the piano, rather than the violin, and is a talented classical pianist; she shows her versatility of taste with a passionate interest in British rock music.

Perry J graduated with honours in law at the University of Adelaide in 1985. Her Honour worked as an associate to Hon Patrick Matheson a former Justice of the Supreme Court of South Australia. In 1988, she read for a Master of Laws at the University of Cambridge on a Shell Scholarship.

Her Honour was called to the bar in 1992, joining Bar Chambers in Adelaide and purchased a room. During her Honour's swearing-in speech, her Honour said:

...the words of encouragement that I received as I signed the customarily large cheque to buy my room, were that, 'You know there are many solicitors who won't brief you because you are a woman.' However, as Michael Jordan said on being inducted into the basketball hall of fame, 'Limits like fears, are often just an illusion,' - a sentiment that resonated with me...

Her Honour returned to Cambridge to complete a PhD and received the Yorke Prize in 1995 for her dissertation in public international law on state succession. Sir Elihu Lauterpacht QC was her thesis supervisor for the first year, after which her Honour worked with Professor Vaughan Lowe QC. Fiona McLeod SC, one of those who spoke at her Honour's swearing-in, quoted Professor Crawford, Whewell Professor of International Law at Cambridge, in saying that Perry J's PhD thesis was 'an excellent piece of work, first class in conception and execution.'

In 2004 her Honour was appointed queen's counsel in South Australia.

Perry J's practice was broad, with a particular interest in native title and public law. Her Honour appeared in the High Court of Australia on more than 40