

The Hon Justice Murray Aldridge

Murray Aldridge SC was sworn in as a judge of the Family Court on 13 December 2012.

His Honour was born in Wanganui, New Zealand and went to secondary school in Hamilton. Upon arriving in Australia, his Honour finished his schooling by duxing Woollooware High School where he was a renowned captain of debating and was involved in sport and dramatic productions, and worked part-time in his father's tyre business.

His Honour graduated with a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Economics from the University of Sydney. Aldridge J did not practise as a solicitor and was admitted as a barrister in 1980. He read with Robert Hulme and Greg Maidment and acquired a room in Frederick Jordan Chambers.

His Honour took silk in 1999.

His Honour practised in corporations law, banking, tax, equity, bankruptcy, family law and appellate work and appeared in many leading cases including *Commissioner of Taxation v Linter Textiles*.

His Honour was mentored, especially in bankruptcy law, by the late Paul Urquart QC. During his swearing-in speech, his Honour described the development of his practice:

After I had been at the Bar for some 18 months or so, I received a brief to present a petition in the Federal Court for the bankruptcy of a debtor. For reasons that escape me, people then and people now think that bankruptcy and insolvency is a strange, obscure and difficult subject, a bit like potions at Hogwarts.

...

Insolvency quickly became the mainstay of my practice. It was then an area where to call an argument technical was simply to praise it, and to describe it as merely technical was just to display your jealousy.

One of the first family law matters in which his Honour appeared was *Rand v Rand*, which involved multiple parties and over 30 days of hearing spread over 18 months. The litigation was complex, involving liquidators and receivers, and concerned the Family Court's power to make orders against third parties.

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His Honour's varied interests include orchid growing (his Honour is a judge of the Sutherland Shire Orchid Society), fly fishing, jam making and beer brewing (including Dusseldorf Altbier, American Pale Ale and Bohemian Pilsner). His Honour has won prizes at the Royal Easter Show for his beers and jams.

His Honour has been a member of the Advocacy Specialist Accreditation Committee of the Law Society of NSW, an instructor with the Australian Advocacy Institute, and a member of the Insolvency and Reconstruction Committee of the Law Council of Australia since 1995. Justice Aldridge also served as a member of the Bar Association's Professional Conduct Committee between 1999 and 2002.

Justin Gleeson SC, speaking at his Honour's swearing-in, said:

Your Honour's skills as a fine generalist will stand you in good stead as a judge of [this Court]...

This is true in areas of property and family estates, with increasing complexity in trust and corporate arrangements, and, indeed the relationship between the parties to the marriage and third parties. As well, we're all familiar with the fact that questions of private and international law are increasingly engaging the attention of this Court. ...it's well to recognise that for many Australians, this Court will be their first, their most important, even if sometimes reluctant, engagement with the Australian judicial system. The principles of justice and equity, mirrored through the prism of the statute which governs this Court, are [its] daily challenge...