

Her Honour Judge Elizabeth Boyle

Her Honour Judge Elizabeth Boyle was sworn-in as a judge of the Federal Circuit Court on 6 April 2016. Richard Schonnell SC spoke on behalf of the New South Wales Bar.

Judge Boyle graduated with a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Sydney in 1988. She was admitted as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of New South Wales on 20 December 1989.

Her Honour volunteered at the Inner City Legal Centre in 1985 and then worked as a solicitor with the Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales in their Family Litigation Section from 1990 to 1999. There, she was under the tutelage of the venerable Judy Ryan, now the Hon Justice Ryan of the Family Court.

Her Honour didn't practise solely in family law matters. There were criminal cases as well. In fact, quite tellingly, her Honour once told a colleague that in many instances the same clients appeared in both family and criminal lists. Speaking on behalf of the New South Wales Bar, Richard Schonnell SC said:

It was during this stage in your career that others first observed your Honour's remarkable ability to talk respectfully to people from all walks of life. One example I've been given described your *ex tempore* reduction and explanation of complex legal principles to a Vietnamese interpreter. Conversely, I'm told that your Honour has been known to mingle in New York society, and has pictures taken at a party in Lou Reed's home to prove it.

The next progression in her career came when her Honour was appointed as senior executive service registrar of the Family Court from May 1999 to June 2000. Then, after a brief interlude at Slade Manwaring, her Honour began practising at the New South Wales Bar in February 2001. She read with Chris Simpson (as he then was) and Denise Hausman. She took a room at Frederick Jordan Chambers, from which she practised until her appointment.

Her Honour appeared in a number of reported cases. There was *U v U*, a High Court matter regarding residence orders and the best interests of the child under sections 65E and 68F of the *Family Law Act 1975*. Her Honour was still only a reader but worked on the trial with Paul Brereton SC, now the Hon Justice Brereton.

Her Honour was instructed by the Legal Aid Commission (and others) for the independent children's lawyer in a number of important matters. She has presented conference papers regarding the role of independent children's lawyers – including the Law Society President's Charity CLE – with the thought provoking title of 'What do children want from their lawyer?'

Furthermore, Judge Boyle developed an even more specialist expertise in the representation of children who are transgender, making it an emerging area of practice located at the confluence of law and medicine.

In his concluding remarks, Richard Schonnell SC gave advice for those appearing before her Honour at the bar table:

Your Honour's appointment did in fact take effect from 29 February and a quick check of the court's website did show that you have already heard a number of cases. Nevertheless, I'll conclude by submitting the best advice I have gleaned from the family law bar for those who will appear before your Honour. First, there is the universal hope and expectation that your grace and patience will endure at the coalface. That said, your Honour is a devotee of fine arts – particularly theatre – so sporting metaphors will be utterly wasted in your Honour's courtroom.