

APPOINTMENTS

Her Honour Judge Brana Obradovic

Judge Brana Obradovic was sworn in as a judge of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia on 3 June 2016. Lynnette Judge spoke on behalf of the Australian and NSW bar associations.

Judge Obradovic was born in Serbia and on migrating to Australia initially lived in Wollongong, and later moved to Sydney. Although her Honour did not learn to speak English until she was 10 years old she excelled at school and studied at Sir Joseph Banks High before receiving a place at Hurlstone Agriculture High School. Her Honour graduated from the University of Technology, Sydney with a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Science in 1997, then a Master of Laws, majoring in international law, from the University of New South Wales in 2005.

Her Honour was admitted to practise as a solicitor of the Supreme Court in February 1998, and practised first with Gordon Cavanagh Solicitors. Her Honour was called to the New South Wales Bar in August 1998 reading with Margaret Cleary, now the Hon Justice Cleary of the Family Court of Australia. Her Honour was a member of 5 Wentworth Chambers, and later purchased a room at Lachlan Macquarie Chambers Parramatta.

As a junior barrister, her Honour had a diverse practice, in areas including workplace law, family, licensing law, industrial law, commercial law and equity law as well as crime, wills and estates and common law / personal injury matters.

Soon after coming to the bar her Honour was led by George Palmer QC (as his Honour was then) as junior counsel for the second respondent in the significant High Court cross-vesting case, *Re: Wakim; Ex parte McNally*.

Ms Judge observed that:

Your Honour brings with you to the Bench considerable experience in Family Law along with experience over many years in many other jurisdictions. I doubt that there is a jurisdiction in which Your Honour has not appeared.

Her Honour's courage and determination in forging a career at the bar in the early years was recognised by many who knew her. Ms Judge stated that Ian Neil SC was happy to be quoted directly saying:

'[Her Honour] is a remarkably brave person. She is humble but determined; kind, generous, thoughtful and empathetic. She is just the sort of person the bar should have and she is an ideal appointment for the Federal Circuit Court'.

On moving to Lachlan Macquarie Chambers in Parramatta her Honour added to her already enviable practice and was

appearing regularly in the Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court in Parramatta and Sydney, and enthusiastically embraced circuit work regularly in Dubbo and Orange.

Her Honour is popularly regarded as a fine lawyer, and a skilled and courteous advocate. Ms Judge observed:

You are meticulous in your approach to your work which you undertake in a well organised fashion. It is inconceivable that Your Honour would ever walk into a Court room unprepared and I am sure that will not change. Your briefs and folders are kept in careful and precise order not a page out of place or out of alignment - your hole punching is of marksmanship quality.

Her Honour is known for her athletic ability, having a brown belt in karate.

It was noted that her Honour's emotional and intellectual awareness of the importance of family law would be fitting for the family law matters in the court and with which her Honour will start her judicial career.

Ms Judge observed:

You are genuinely aware of the impact that sad outcomes in life can impose on people. A number of bereaved or troubled colleagues and employees have been made to feel a little stronger through you inviting them to join you in coffee or a meal. There is no doubt that you will have genuine and constant regard for the humanity of those who appear before you.

Commonwealth Attorney-General George Brandis, speaking on behalf of the Australian Government stated that the details of her Honour's life and career make her an exemplar of the migrant success story in Australia and hers is an inspiring story to others who have come from far away to make their lives in Australia.

Her Honour observed that one of the hardest skills to perfect in the profession is to listen, not just to the words being said, but also to what is actually being said. Her Honour stated that if, when practitioners ask, 'What is Her Honour like?' and the answer comes back, 'fair but firm,' she will know she is doing her job well.

Her Honour noted that:

The cases that come before this Court, in particular family law cases, are hard. They are hard for a number of reasons. The facts are complicated, often very difficult to prove. The law is far from simple and involves all sorts of considerations, which those who do not practise in the area do not truly appreciate.