

“Having been advised that taking up a law degree would be too much to expect of her, Angela rolled up her sleeves and got on with the job”

Profile of



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The influences

Growing up in the lead smelter town of Port Pirie in South Australia in the 1950's, the young Angela Stacey could not have imagined what life held in store for her. Angela's father Kingsley commenced work at the smelter as a metallurgist rising to become the assistant manager of the smelter. He admired oratorical skill and often sat in court just to listen. He would sit young Angela down in front of the radio to listen to the late Sir Robert Menzies giving public addresses. The smelter in Port Pirie was the common employer in this egalitarian town and nobody thought themselves any more important than anyone else. This attitude has influenced Angela through her life.

The “past life”

After completing her education as a boarder at Walford, Angela thought she would study Social Work but discovered she was too young to enter the course so instead commenced work as a library assistant at the State Library in Adelaide. After becoming a finalist in the Miss South Australia Quest in 1958, Angela was bestowed with the title of Miss

Autumn Leaves at the 1959 Aldgate Festival where she attracted the attention of the media leading to an audition with Channel Seven. Her good looks and charming personality showed her to be a television “natural” and she worked with Channel Seven from 1959 to 1966 in everything from the “weather” to children's programs, “personality interviews” and variety and quiz shows. Having worked in the United States promoting an art collection, Angela declined a potentially lucrative career in Public Relations and returned to Adelaide to marry a lawyer and become a law clerk whilst she raised her daughter Julia. Having been advised that taking up a law degree would be too much to expect of her, Angela rolled up her sleeves and got on with the job.

The lawyer

Little had Angela realised that the early calls, long hours and “live to air” television would become her preparation for a 30-year legal career assisting severely brain-injured plaintiffs to gain compensation that would give them medical support for life. Angela developed a reputation as a hard-working and compassionate advocate for plaintiffs since her

admission in 1977 and she has run her own practice since 1988 gaining the respect of her peers and the South Australian Motor Accident Commission in achieving mediated outcomes for the seriously injured.

A memorable example of a direct approach to negotiation occurred after Angela had visited a severely brain damaged client at his yabbie farm. The client had lost his licence but insisted on taking Angela around his farm on a terrifying ride on his golf buggy. To Angela's delight, the insurer's representative and its solicitor were subjected to the same trip before the matter settled and the looks on their faces made it all worthwhile.

Angela's seven day per week working life as a lawyer has meant time management is the key to her successful practice. Angela's daughter Julia now works as a solicitor in her firm after presenting her with a grandson. In her second year as President of the South Australian Branch of the Australian Plaintiff Lawyer's Association and a member of the National Board, Angela typifies the dedication to the goals of our organisation and is an inspiration especially to women lawyers. ■