

Bows Silk Ceremony

12 August 2014

Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory

Chief Justice Murrell

The Court acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land and pays its respects to their elders past and present.

Mr Attorney, other dignitaries, members of the legal profession, family and friends of Mr White – welcome to this special occasion.

Mr White, the Court warmly congratulates you on your appointment as Senior Counsel.

Your appointment is a public acknowledgement of your professional eminence.

It reflects your achievement in three areas.

- First, you are a learned, skilled and experienced advocate.
- Second, you have the personal qualities that characterise leaders within the profession; the honesty, integrity and independence that is essential to upholding the rule of law.
- Finally, you have made – and you continue to make - an important contribution to the Australian legal community and to the ACT community in general.

After graduating from ANU in 1981, you worked as a commercial litigator with the leading Sydney firm of Dawson Waldron.

In 1985 your legal career took a sea change when you accepted a position with the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions. Over the past three decades you have worked as a prosecutor, undertaking almost every type of criminal work that is available to a prosecutor.

In 2008, the ACT Office of Public Prosecutions was fortunate to secure you as their Director. In that role, you have conducted complex Supreme Court trials, including murder trials, and you have argued many appeals in the Court of Appeal.

You are a fearless and passionate advocate. When sufficiently riled, you have even been known to engage in the traditional art of sledging at the bar table.

As to your personal qualities, little needs to be said. You are a serious, modest person with an academic bent. You are a quiet achiever.

You have contributed to the profession through advocacy training and through your membership of many committees and associations.

But your major contribution has been through your role as ACT Director of Public Prosecutions.

In that role, you are a loyal leader and a much loved mentor to the young, talented and enthusiastic lawyers at your Office. You always back your troops on the ground. You are a feminist who supports and promotes women within your Office.

You are acutely conscious that your Office is both critical to the proper administration of the criminal justice system and representative of the people of the ACT.

You are steadfastly independent, taking brave and unpopular decisions when you consider them to be necessary.

A truly independent DPP is essential to any healthy legal community. Indeed, it is essential to any strong democracy.

Consequently, the Court is particularly pleased that you have been publicly recognised by this appointment.

Your elevation to Senior Counsel not only reflects your standing but also attests to the strength of the justice system in the ACT.

The Court will now adjourn.