Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5597

Brown, Sally

(1950 -)

Born	19500101, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Occupation	Academic, Barrister, Chairperson, Judge, Lawyer, Magistrate, Solicitor

Summary

Sally Brown was at the forefront of women advancing in the Victorian judiciary, as one of the first female magistrates appointed in Victoria in 1985. She was appointed Chief Magistrate in 1990, and then a Judge of the Family Court of Australia in 1993. She has served on a number of boards, including as Chair of the Australian Institute of Criminology.

Details

After time as a solicitor, tertiary lecturer and barrister, Sally Brown was appointed a magistrate in Victoria in 1985; in 1990 she was appointed Chief Magistrate, the first woman to head a Victorian Court. Between November 1993 and June 2010 she was a judge of the Family Court of Australia and for much of that time was the Judge Administrator for the Southern Region, which included Tasmania and South Australia.

Brown was instrumental in the development and delivery of judicial education in Australia, particularly education relating to gender and culture, and the incidence and impact of family violence. She has maintained a long-standing interest in juvenile justice, child protection and children's rights. Other interests, pursued through a range of organizations, relate to support of the marginalised and disenfranchised, including the homeless and prisoners after release, and maintenance of the rule of law.

In 2003 she was appointed to the Victorian Honour Roll of Women and in 2006 was made a member of the Order of Australia. She has been a member or chair of the board of numerous organizations including the Alfred Hospital, the Australian Institute of Criminology, the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration, the Australian Drug and Alcohol Foundation, the International Commission of Jurists (Victorian Chapter), the National Judicial College and the Australian Community Support Organisation.

Events

2003 - 2003
Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

Published resources

Resource
Women Barristers in Victoria: Then and Now, The Victorian Bar, 2007,
https://www.vicbar.com.au/wba/

Site Exhibition
Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens, Trailblazing Women Lawyers Project Team, 2016,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection
Sally Brown interviewed by Ruth Campbell in the Law in Australian society oral history project [sound recording]

Author Details
Sally Brown (with Nikki Henningham)

Created 6 April 2016
Last modified 4 August 2025

Digital resources



Title: Sally Brown
Type: Image
Date: 3 May, 2023