

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5744

Wolfe, Patricia (Patsy)

Occupation Barrister, Chief Judge, Commissioner, Judge, Lawyer, Solicitor

Summary

Her Honour Patricia (Patsy) Wolfe served as Chief Judge of the District Court of Queensland between 1999 and 2014. She was the first woman to be appointed to the role. In 2014 she received the Order of Australia for her 'distinguished service to the judiciary, to the law through legal education reform and as a mentor and role model for women'.

Patsy Wolfe came to law as a mature age student and mother, after first pursuing careers in medicine and journalism. She graduated LLB with honours from the University of Queensland in 1978 and was admitted to the Bar the same year. In 1979, she joined the Faculty of Law as a senior tutor and then went on to complete a Masters Degree in 1983. While senior tutor, she met Margaret White and Quentin Bryce and formed supportive and enduring friendships with them both.

Before being appointed to the District Court in 1995, Wolfe served as Deputy Commissioner of the Fitzgerald Inquiry Into Official Corruption (1988-89) and as a part-time Commissioner on the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1993-95).

She is well remembered for her forthright comments made when she was chair of the Queensland Women's Consultative Committee in 1992. When challenged as to why Queensland women needed such a committee, when there was no equivalent body for men, her response was direct and uncompromising. Men already had a powerful organisation, she said. 'It's called Cabinet, where men outnumber women sixteen to two... That's why we need council as a direct line to the Premier.'

Events

1974 - 1974

Bachelor of Arts, University of Queensland

1978 - 1978

Admitted as a Barrister of the Supreme Court of Queensland

1978 - 1978

Bachelor of Laws (Honours), University of Queensland

1978 - 1980

Senior Tutor, University of Queensland Law School

1981 - 1982

In-house, Feez Ruthning Solicitors

1983 - 1983

Master of Laws, University of Queensland

1988 - 1989

Deputy Commissioner, Commission of Inquiry into Official Corruption

1990 - 1990

Chair, Review into Land Policy and Administration

1992 - 1994

Chair, Queensland Women's Consultative Council

1983 - 1995

Practised at the Bar in Queensland

1993 - 1995

Part-time Commissioner, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

1991 - 1997

Member, Visiting Committee Griffith University Law School

1992 - 1997

Members, National Institute Law Ethics and Public Affairs

1986 - 1999

Member, Council of Stuartholme School

1999 - 2002

Member, Key Centre Ethics Law Justice and Governance

2003 - 2003

Centenary Medal

2003 - 2003

Hon DUniv (Griffith)

1989 - 2003

Member, Council of Griffith University

2014 - 2014

Officer of the Order of Australia

1995 - 2014

Judge, District Court of Queensland

1999 - 2014

Chief Judge, District Court of Queensland

1999 - 2014

Judge, Planning and Environment Court

Published resources

Book Section

Patricia Wolfe, Gregory, Helen, 2005

Site Exhibition

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

Resource Section

Law, Kerwin, Hollie and Rubenstein, Kim, 2014,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0624b.htm>

Author Details

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