Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5779

Carter, Heather

Occupation Judge, Lawyer

Summary

Justice Carter began her law career as a solicitor in 1972 and then transferred her interest to the bar in 1978 where she specialised in family law and de facto relationships.

She was invited to lecture at the Leo Cussen Institute in 1979/1980 and again in 1985/1986 and was a member of the Family Law section of the Law Council of Australia in 1985.

In 1989/90 Justice Carter was the secretary of the Victorian Family Law Bar Association.

While practicing in WA in the early 1990s, Justice Carter was appointed deputy registrar and magistrate of the Family Court of Western Australia.

Justice Carter said that it is not easy being a judge in the Family Court – apart from the wide range of legal knowledge required the cases are highly emotional and one is rarely able to please both parties.

“When delivering judgments, I often think of the story about Owen Dixon who said that the most important person in the court is the litigant who is going to lose. That person must leave the Court satisfied with the system, satisfied that his counsel and his case had fair treatment and every chance.”

“I may be one of the few judges who have had singing protesters outside this court building and posters about my judgments put up in shops but I have done my best in every case to be mindful of the litigant who is going to lose,” Justice Carter said. “As the cases before the Family Court become more complex, I and the other judges will miss the experience and wisdom that Justice Carter has acquired and has always been willing to share,”

Chief Justice Bryant said.

“The Court wishes Justice Carter a long and happy retirement with her family and thanks her for her contribution over the years.”

Published resources

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

Author Details
Larissa Halonkin

Created 17 August 2016
Last modified 1 November 2016