

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5897

Robinson, Ann Clare

(1943 - 2002)

Born	19430101
Died	20021231
Occupation	Judge, Lawyer, Skier, Solicitor, Sportswoman

Summary

Ann Robinson was Chief Judge of the Youth Court of South Australia and was appointed a judge of the Family Court of Australia in 1998.

Details

Margaret Ann Clare Robinson nee Colquhoun spent most of her professional life in South Australia, but she ranks as one of the University of Melbourne’s most distinguished law graduates. She took her LLB in 1967 and joined the firm of Gillott, Moir and Winneke, where she was to become a partner in 1970. Following her marriage she left in 1971 for South Australia.

Her obituary paints the picture of a person with a zest for life and considerable energy:

Her studies at law school were something that Ann fitted in between a hectic life devoted to skiing and social pursuits. She was the Melbourne University downhill skiing champion. She was then among the top five women skiers in Australia.^[1]

In Adelaide Ann Robinson and her husband, an agricultural scientist, had two daughters. Rather than placing them in childcare, she took them to her office at Finlaysons, one of Adelaide’s largest and leading commercial law firms, managing to look after them between clients.

After many years of successful practice with Finlaysons and later at Robinson & Mason, the firm she established with Janine Mason, she left in 1997 to take up appointment as Chief Judge of the Youth Court in South Australia’s District Court. In 1998 she was appointed a justice of the Family Court of Australia. As a family lawyer she was noted for her skill in negotiating custody litigation to the benefit of the children and both parents.

Ann Robinson led a busy life outside her profession, chairing the state’s Classification of Publications Board (in her own words the ‘Porn Board’) from 1980 to 1986 and serving on the Gaming Supervisory Authority from 1995 to 1997 and the Board of Child and Youth Health from 1996 to 1997. She was a member of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra Board for five years. She was also a member of the Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem, an international and ecumenical Christian Order of chivalry that aims to sustain and defend the Christian faith, to promote and maintain the principles of Christian chivalry, to work for Christian unity and to follow the teachings of Christ. She was an active member of the Judicial Officers’ Aboriginal Awareness Committee, spending time on Aboriginal lands and with Aboriginal women.

^[1] Bruce Debele. ‘Justice Ann Robinson (20/02/1943-19/06/2002)’. *Law Institute Journal*. v. 76 no. 8(2002): 35.

Published resources

Book

40 Years 40 Women: Biographies of University of Melbourne Women, Published to Commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the International Year of Women, Flesch, Juliet, 2015,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/4040/>

Site Exhibition

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

Author Details

Juliet Flesch

Created 17 August 2016

Last modified 8 August 2017