

The Hon Justice Anna Katzmann

On 2 February 2010 Anna Katzmann SC was sworn in as a judge of the Federal Court of Australia at a ceremonial sitting in Sydney.

Her Honour attended Clovelly Primary School, Woollahra Demonstration School for fifth and sixth class and then attended Sydney Girls' High School. Her Honour studied law at the University of New South Wales, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) and Bachelor of Laws, and immediately commenced practice at the New South Wales Bar. While at the bar Katzmann J had also been chair of the Mental Health Tribunal of Cumberland Hospital, an acting commissioner of the New South Wales Independent Commission against Corruption, a council member of the Academy of Forensic Science, from 1997 to 1999 a part time Legal Aid commissioner, a founding member of the Women's Legal Centre and an Executive member of the Women's Lawyers Association.

Her Honour was a member of the Bar Council continuously from 1994, and prior to her election as president in late 2007, had served as honorary secretary, honorary treasurer, junior vice-president and then senior vice-president. Her Honour had been a trustee of the Bar Association's Indigenous Barristers' Trust and trustee of the Jessie Street Trust. Reflecting her parents' passion for music, her Honour had been an enthusiastic member of the Bar Choral Society over many years.

Ian Govey spoke on behalf of the Australian Government. Joe Catanzariti spoke on behalf of the Law Council of Australia. The president of the Bar Association, Tom Bathurst QC spoke on behalf of the Australian Bar Association and the New South Wales Bar. Mary Macken spoke on behalf of the solicitors of NSW. Katzmann J responded to the speeches.

Mr Govey noted her Honour's commitment to the mental health needs of lawyers, recently confirmed with her Honour's appointment as a director of the Tristan Jepsom Memorial Foundation.

Mr Catanzariti referred also to her Honour's reputation as a fiercely committed and formidable advocate:

These traits were noticed at a young age. Patrick White refers to your Honour as a schoolgirl addressing a meeting at the town hall, opposing the demolition of Sydney Girls' High to build an Olympic stadium, I think. Despite your youth, White described your Honour as being completely 'nerveless'.

Your Honour has since assured us that despite White's magisterial descriptive powers, this was a most inappropriate description. However, I take it that you were nonetheless persuasive as ever. Colleagues also describe personal qualities which have made your Honour successful in just about everything you have embarked upon; qualities which will, no



doubt, hold you in good stead as you embark on the new and very challenging chapter of your legal career.

Mr Catanzariti also referred to her Honour's meticulous preparation and work ethic:

... opponents were always jealous of the way of you settling your sails so that even in light winds you outstripped them...

Even the most obscure point was researched and eliminated or developed in a very thorough and challenging way. As one close colleague mentioned, 'It was frankly infuriating at times but that was her way'.

Your Honour's chronologies are legend. You had a trademarked version which you would email to others who were briefing the case. Let me say that anyone appearing before your Honour better have a good chronology in the Anna Katzmann 'three column' style with appropriate font and spacing.

The president said that throughout her career at the bar her Honour:

... demonstrated the qualities of integrity, courage and depth of legal knowledge which are the characteristic of all outstanding barristers. Your Honour rapidly established a

thriving practice and was justly appointed senior counsel in 1997. Your Honour practised primarily in the common law area, but did a great deal of industrial law and administrative law; two of the growth areas, of course, in this Court.

Unlike many other members of the Bar whose interests do not extend beyond their next brief or perhaps the next cheque, your Honour's extracurricular activities were both extensive and varied. Your Honour throughout your career was a tireless supporter of equal opportunity for male and female barristers. You were voted Woman Lawyer of the Year in 2002, and it was only because a person could only receive that award once that you did not establish a 'Federer' or perhaps I should say 'Serena Williams' like record in receiving it in all the years subsequent to that.

The president also referred to Katzmann J's opportunity, as president of the Bar Association, to ventilate her Honour's acting talents at the numerous swearing-ins at which she spoke:

You set a standard of oratory which will be difficult for your successors to match, much less exceed. It was appropriate that your last brief was to prosecute Galileo in a mock trial of the University of New South Wales. ... As a member of the [Bar Council], and particularly as president, your Honour worked tirelessly in support of the rule of law, human rights and the welfare of the members of the association.

Your Honour will be particularly remembered for your tireless efficacy in support of a charter of human rights, the efforts you made to advance the position of women at the Bar and perhaps most significantly the way you caused the Bar to confront the reality of depression amongst its members and for putting in place facilities to assist members who had the misfortune of suffering such illness to be treated and otherwise assisted.

There are many practitioners who would not be able to carry on practice in the way they are doing so, but for your Honour's efforts in this area.

Katzmann J referred to having been sent a letter, by one of her new brother judges on the announcement of her appointment, welcoming her to the asylum, and quoted what was reportedly said by the Italian prime minister to a British journalists from *The Spectator* magazine:

To be a Judge... 'You need to be mentally disturbed. You need psychic disturbances. If they do that job', he added, 'it is because they are anthropologically different from the rest of the human race'.

Her Honour referred to the women who came before her:

both at the Bar and on the Bench, many of whom were true pioneers. The efforts of the Honourable Mary Gaudron QC, then Solicitor-General for New South Wales, to ensure equitable briefing practices at the State Crown helped many women of my vintage at the Bar carve out successful careers. Janet Coombs forced us to confront the alienating environment of the male-dominated bar common room and helped so many of us feel that the Bar was a place for both men and women.

Her Honour contrasted her background to that of her predecessor as Bar Association president in New South Wales, Slatery J:

... who I am sure as a baby wielded a gavel rather than a rattle, there was little in my background that pointed to a career in the law, let alone a commission as a judge. When I was born my parents, who, as you have heard, met in a choir, received a telegram from their fellow choristers which read, prophetically, "Singers welcome prospective alto."

At school, as you have also heard, my passions were for music and drama. ... Neither of my parents was a lawyer. ... Although they were not lawyers, they had a deep sense of right and wrong and a strong commitment to justice. Their values and experiences profoundly influenced my attitudes.

Her Honour concluded:

After 30 years of self-employment I don't relish the prospect of conforming to bureaucratic strictures. I also confess that I feel a little like Dante entering the gates of Hell as, midway along the journey of my life, I find myself in a strange place, having wandered off from the straight path. But I do look forward to the challenges in my new role. I shall try to conduct myself as a judge in the way I most admired in some of the judges before whom I appeared. If at any time I forget myself or I forget the pressures under which practitioners are required to work, I expect my many friends at the Bar to remind me. I shall also do my best to avoid the Heydonian sins of torpid languor and drowsy procrastination.