

## Pat Worthy

**A**PLA members probably do not know that our Chief Executive Officer, Jane Staley, is a seasoned chorister, and one day it is possible she will form the APLA choir. If she does, my colleague, Pat Worthy, will be a certain starter as she has a passion for singing. At the present time Pat is a member of the well-known Canberra singing group, "Sophisticated Swing" and can be seen at many venues around Canberra on a regular basis.

Pat's commitment to her singing is matched by her determination to succeed in life, and her desire to help those who are less privileged than most of us. Pat's determination to fight for the rights of others is understandable when one looks at her background. Pat grew up in Canberra in the 1950s and freely admits that her family assumed she would leave school and commence work as a secretary. After undergoing training she joined the public service, but when married at a young age, the public service required her to resign. Therefore, some 40 years ago, she made her first job application to work as a legal secretary in Canberra. This was the commencement of a long association with the law.

Pat worked for a number of senior practitioners in the ACT and also worked as a judge's associate. With all that practical background, it is not surprising that she decided she would like to take a further step and pursue qualifications as a lawyer. That, however, was the beginning of a long battle with the academic establishment in Canberra

who refused to admit her to the Law Faculty because her earlier academic results were not quite as high as some of the undergraduates applying. Pat's extensive knowledge of the law and her employment in the profession were ignored. After battling for a number of years, completing an Arts Degree and seeking transfer into law, she was finally accepted at ANU.

Needless to say, Pat successfully completed her degree and was admitted to practice in January 1995. Prior to that time she had been working as a Managing Clerk in a prominent Canberra law firm doing personal injury work. I was thrilled when she agreed to join Snedden Hall & Gallop in August 1995, and since that time she has become a partner of the firm.

Pat has achieved success in her work, as well as raising three beautiful daughters as a single parent for many years. She remains devoted to her children, and indeed her grandchildren.

Her determination to fight for the rights of others, and her skills in the personal injury field, made Pat an ideal candidate for APLA. She became involved in the ACT Branch and is currently the ACT Branch Secretary. Two years ago the APLA executive were keen to try and ignite some activity from the public liability special interest group (SIG). At that time little appeared to be



happening but it was the view of the executive that this represented an area of importance. A convener of the SIG was needed and I recommended that Pat be approached.

Little did I know that over the next two years the area of public liability would explode. It is fair to say that the SIG has been an essential contributor to the campaign by APLA to preserve the rights of those injured as a result of public liability accidents. Instead of complaining, Pat has put her shoulder to the wheel and has been a regular contributor in the drafting of articles, press releases, and in coordinating numerous meetings.

As if that isn't enough, Pat is also a councillor on the ACT Law Society.

Whether it's singing with Sophisticated Swing, or exchanging emails with legal reporters from the *Canberra Times*, Pat always exhibits enthusiasm and a zest for life. I am proud to call her my partner, and fellow member of APLA. **PL**