
APPOINTMENTS

Richard Conti QC

On 15 August Richard Conti QC was appointed as a judge of the Federal Court. He was admitted as a solicitor in 1960 and became a partner in the firm of Arthur Pritchard & Co. until 1967. He was admitted to the Bar in July 1967 and joined the eleventh floor of Wentworth Chambers, where he remained until his appointment to the Bench. He took silk in November 1977.

Since the outset of his practice, he took on an enormous workload, which spanned a broad spectrum including tax, trade practices, all matters commercial, intellectual property, corporations law, administrative. His diverse practice took him to the Privy Council and all courts in Australia.

He was seen by many as the archetypal barrister, with a profound knowledge of the law, great cross-examining skills, an acute sense of tactics, absolute integrity and unfailing courtesy. He was respected for the great support given to the junior Bar. He mentored a large number of barristers, taking them on board soon after they came to the Bar, encouraging, supporting and promoting their careers. He sought to impart to them an approach to the law from first principles, by advising them in one of many 'Contiisms': 'Don't try to learn all the law. Just know where to look for it.' He also tried to instill in them a fundamental credo which has stood him in such good stead in remaining on favourable terms with his opponents: 'Barristers are briefed to fight their client's cause, not to fight each other.'

He was one of the Bar Association appointments to the Legal Profession Disciplinary Tribunal and sat on the Board of Counsels Chambers from 1997 until the day before his appointment.

Stephen Norrish QC

On 3 October 2000, Stephen Norrish QC was appointed as a judge of the New South Wales District Court. He was admitted as a solicitor in 1974 and worked for two Aboriginal legal services, until coming to the Bar in 1980 as a public defender. He was deputy senior public defender in 1987, when he took silk. In 1988 he became senior counsel assisting the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and also conducted a report for the International Commission of Jurists in 1990 on the impact of the criminal justice system upon Aborigines in north-west New South Wales.

He returned to the Bar in 1990 and rapidly became a leading criminal silk, although he only appeared for the defence.

His contribution to the work of the New South Wales Bar Association included being a member of the Bar's Aboriginal Education Committee in 1992, the Criminal Law Sub-Committees in 1993 and chairing the Bar's Legal Aid Committee in 1998, together with long service on a Professional Conduct Committee.

Roderick Howie QC

On 11 October 2000, Roderick Howie QC was appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. His Honour was admitted as a solicitor in 1974 and went to Hickson, Lakeman & Holcombe. Between 1976 and 1980 he worked in the Public Solicitors Office, before coming to the Bar as a Public Defender in June 1980. In November 1986 he took silk.

Between 1984 and 1987 he was Director of the Criminal Law Review Division, in the NSW Attorney General's Department. During 1987 to 1992 he occupied the post of Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions and in May 1993 he became Crown Advocate, serving in that capacity until 1995. It was during this time that he began his long and dedicated involvement in the drafting of the Model Criminal Code as Chairman of the Model Criminal Code Officers Committee (MCCOC). His Chairmanship has witnessed the completion of the bulk of the Code, which has received widespread recognition in the US, Canada and the United Kingdom.

On 15 May 1996 Howie QC was appointed as a District Court Judge and served as an Acting Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales from September to December of 1997.

Michael Finnane QC

On 20 October 2000 Michael Finnane QC was appointed as a judge of the New South Wales District Court. His Honour was admitted to the Bar in February 1969 and took silk in October 1982.

His Honour had a diverse practice. As a silk, he was counsel assisting in many important inquiries such as the Ananda Marga and Kalazich inquiries. He was counsel for the Police Service in the Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service, and he was senior counsel for the Department of Transport in the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Glenbrook rail accident.

He gave his time to many worthy causes. He was involved in the advancement of the Aboriginal community. He provided much assistance to the Bar Association Readers Course and to advocacy training programs in and outside Australia. He was an experienced Army legal officer, retiring with the rank of colonel in 1998 and at that time also holding the appointment of a judge advocate and Defence Force magistrate.

He was an acting judge of the District Court on two occasions, of the Supreme Court on one occasion, and was a member of the Legal Services Division of the Administrative Decisions Tribunal.