

The Hon Justice Michael Wigney

Michael Wigney SC was sworn in as a judge of the Federal Court of Australia on 9 September 2013.

The Hon Justice Michael Wigney grew up in a sporting family, his mother Gloria having twice represented Australia in the Olympic Games, winning a bronze medal at the 1958 Commonwealth Games, and his father, Brian, having played competitive tennis until age 78.

Justice Wigney attended Davidson High in Frenchs Forest and played cricket and rugby, travelling a number of times to New Zealand with the school rugby team.

His Honour graduated with a Bachelor of Economics in 1985 and a Bachelor of Laws in 1988 and following his admission commenced work at Clayton Utz. In 1989, his Honour moved to the Office of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, initially as a legal officer and later as a principal legal officer in the fraud section.

His Honour was called to the bar in 1993 and read on the Eleventh Floor, Wentworth Selborne Chambers and in 1990 moved to Third Floor, Selborne Chambers. In that year, his Honour also completed a Master of Laws at the University of Sydney.

At that time, the Third Floor of Selborne Chambers had recently been vacated by the Office of the Public Defenders and accommodated mainly licensees. His Honour, during his swearing-in speech, described the 'rag-tag' bunch on the Third Floor of Selborne Chambers as all getting along so well and having so much fun that they stayed together, moving, en masse, to a floor they set up across the road at 3 St James Hall. This was in 1998, when his Honour helped establish that floor, led by Ian Temby AO QC, and where Wigney J spent the rest of his career as counsel.

Justice Wigney took silk in 2007.

His Honour was said to have acted in almost every high-profile insider trading case in the last 15 years, as well as a range of other complex matters involving companies and securities offences, taxation contraventions, extradition hearings, prosecutions for drug-related offences under the Customs Act, and for the ACCC in relation to restrictive trade practices and consumer protection matters.

His Honour also appeared in a number of cases arising out of Project Wickenby and was counsel assisting in a number of the major commissions of inquiry over the last decade, including the 2002 Human Rights Commission Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention and the 2005 Cole Inquiry into the UN Oil for Food Program. In 2009 his Honour assisted at the inquest into the deaths of four people in a collision between a ferry and the pleasure craft *Merinda* on Sydney Harbour, and in 2011 his Honour assisted at the inquest into the death of Mullumbimby student Jai Morcom. More recently, in 2012 his Honour assisted Gail Furness SC's commission of inquiry for the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority into Sydney's Star Casino.

Phillip Boulten SC, who spoke at his Honour's swearing-in, said:

In the finest traditions of the cab-rank principle, your Honour accepted briefs for the prosecution and the defence in complex matters relating to white-collar crime. Rene Rivkin was one of the business identities whose solicitors managed to beat ASIC in the race to secure your services. On the other hand, Ray Williams and Rodney Adler were unlucky enough to be prosecuted by you.

His Honour was known to be courteous, even-tempered, persuasive and highly composed in court.

His Honour is the father of four children, three of whom are triplets, and is an avid and skilled surfer, cyclist and tennis player.

His Honour concluded his swearing-in speech with the following:

When the former attorney rang me with the news some weeks ago, he said to me, 'Thank you for agreeing to serve the people of the Commonwealth.' Those words very much resonated with me. My response was and is, 'Mr Attorney, the people of the Commonwealth have given me the gift of a quality public education and many years of free tertiary education at one of Australia's most esteemed universities. It's my absolute pleasure to be able to give something back.'