

### Her Honour Judge Jennie Anne Girdham SC

Her Honour Judge Girdham SC was sworn in as a judge of the District Court on 24 August 2015. Attorney General Gabrielle Upton spoke on behalf of the New South Wales Bar.

Judge Girdham grew up in Tasmania. Her Honour graduated from the University of Tasmania before beginning work as a civil litigation lawyer in Hobart. Her Honour became well known in the close-knit Tasmanian legal circles, not only for her readily apparent legal skills but also for her bright and engaging personality.

After several years of post-admission work her Honour moved to London for what was initially a working holiday but stayed for several years working, first, as a complaints lawyer with the Law Society of England and Wales, and later becoming a prosecutor with the Crown Prosecution Service in London. Her Honour's work as a prosecutor in London resulted in meeting some colourful characters and having some interesting experiences in the Old Bailey, which Ms Upton noted gave her Honour a keen empathy with those caught up in the criminal justice system.

Her Honour later relocated to Australia, moving to Western Australia to work for the Western Australian DPP. After seven years working in Western Australia on difficult and high profile matters including the Easton Affair, her Honour moved to Sydney in March 2002 taking up an appointment as a New South Wales Crown Prosecutor.

Ms Upton noted her Honour's courageous and spirited advocacy, including the occasion when her Honour received applause after a trial from the jury that had witnessed her vigorous cross-examination.

From 2004 her Honour worked at the Sydney Crown Chambers undertaking appellate work in the High Court, the Court of Criminal Appeal and Court of Appeal. Her Honour has appeared in some of the most complex criminal appeals including *Carroll v The Queen* and *Keli Lane v The Queen*. Her Honour has led many appeals in the court of Criminal Appeal often serving as a contradictor. She was appointed senior counsel in 2012.

Her Honour has continuously served as a member of Bar Council.

Ms Upton said:

Your Honour's colleagues at the DPP, Crown Prosecutor and Public Defender have told me that if there was a dictionary definition for 'down-to-earth' that would be one word: 'Jennie'. You have always been inclusive and you have taken the time to talk to your colleagues, especially junior lawyers to ensure they feel part of the team and that their input is valued.

You have been described as someone who is generous, humble, courageous, downright wonderful and intellectually superior without being superior in attitude or approach. I am told the DPP and Crown Prosecutor will miss your finely honed whistling skills and anticipate the District Court being the next beneficiary of your passion for interior design.

Her Honour acknowledged the strong dedicated leadership which had mentored and supported her at the DPP and in Crown Prosecutors' Chambers. She pointed to what she perceived overall as change for the better in the NSW justice system during her professional involvement with it, particularly in accessibility and responsiveness to the needs of victims, with of course, always more remaining to be done.

Judge Girdham will dedicate most of her Honour's time to the conduct of child sexual assault matters before the court.