

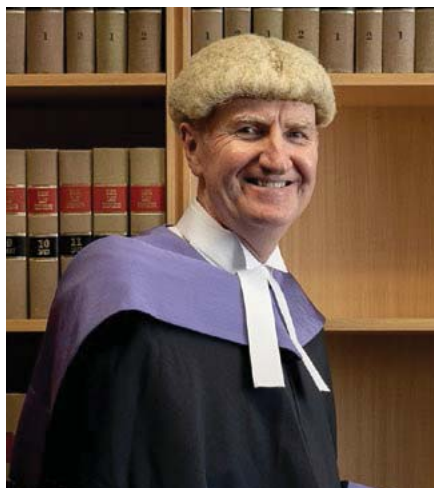
Swearing-in of his Honour Judge William Fitzsimmons to the NSW District Court



Warwick Reynolds
Ninth Floor Windeyer Chambers

His Honour, Judge William Fitzsimmons, was one of seven siblings born, raised, and educated in southern Sydney. He attended Marist Brothers College at Kogarah where he excelled in debating and developed a keen interest in rugby which later led him to becoming a referee in the game. While at school his Honour determined to join the NSW Police Force and initially saw that as his career path, however, his skills as a debater encouraged his Honour to enrol in a law course and, therefore, on leaving school in 1984, his Honour enrolled in a Bachelor of Laws at what was then the New South Wales Institute of Technology (now UTS University). At about the same time as he enrolled at UTS his Honour sought admission to the NSW Police Force and, while waiting on acceptance into the police force, he obtained work as a registration clerk at a firm of solicitors then styled as H Wilshire Webb Son and Doyle.

On acceptance into the police force, his Honour commenced general duties police work at Darlinghurst and Kings Cross followed by a short period as a Police Prosecutor. Eventually, his Honour was drawn back to the practice of law, and he resigned his commission as a police officer and returned to work at Wilshire Webb (as the firm was then known). In his capacity as a paralegal at Wilshire Webb, his Honour was fortunate to work mainly in the general insurance division of the firm handling many fraudulent claims on behalf of GIO Insurance Limited. While working at the firm he was introduced to James Bennett



(now Judge Bennett of the District Court) who was then the preferred counsel for the firm. His Honour learned much from Judge Bennett, particularly the need for meticulous preparation of cases.

In 1989 his Honour completed his degree and was called to the NSW Bar in February 1990. In his first year at the Bar, and while reading with the then James Bennett, his Honour had chambers on 13 Selborne where he also met and was influenced by Ian Harrison and David Davies (as their Honours then were). During his first year at the Bar, his Honour's practice comprised mainly interlocutory applications and several criminal trials some of which involved significant offences. While his Honour enjoyed appearing in criminal trials, towards the end of his first year at the Bar he was briefed in his first civil trial and that marked a significant change in his Honour's practice, for quickly he became one of the preferred counsels for most insurers that wrote insurance policies in this State. His Honour developed a large third party and public liability practice both in New South Wales and, later, in the Australian Capital Territory.

In 1991 his Honour left 13 Selborne Chambers and acquired chambers on 9 Windeyer Chambers where he remained until his appointment to the District Court bench on 28 July 2022. His Honour, who

became affectionately known as Fitz, rapidly gained expertise in motor vehicle law and in 2003 was appointed a CARS assessor under the Motor Accidents Compensation Act 1990 and remained an assessor until the State Government made legislative changes to the scheme in 2017. In addition, his Honour, giving freely of his time and keen to contribute to the profession, became a lecturer in the Bar Practice Course as well as a member of the Bar Association's Common Law Committee from 2010 to 2019 and, a member of the Law Council's Personal Injuries and Compensation Committee.

While a member of 9 Windeyer Chambers, his Honour mentored many readers before he took silk in 2019. Several of those readers joined 9 Windeyer Chambers at the end of their pupillage with his Honour. Notwithstanding the workload of his busy practice and his other commitments, his Honour was always willing to provide his fellow floor members with any assistance he could to a problem they were experiencing in one of their own briefs.

As a junior barrister, his Honour had appeared in the Court of Appeal on many occasions but, on taking silk in 2019, he quickly developed an appellate practice both in NSW and in the ACT. As senior counsel, his Honour was briefed in major claims on behalf of plaintiffs and insurers. Many of his Honour's cases have been reported in various law reports.

Aside from his professional career, his Honour is happily married to Sue, and they have three boys who have learned from his Honour that the key to success is through hard work and dedication to the task at hand. His Honour enjoys water skiing, travel, the occasional sky dive, theatre, fine food and many forms of exercise. He is a keen rugby follower and has refereed the game at various levels. He is most affable in any social environment.

Given his Honour's skills set, his intelligence and his dedication to hard work, he will undoubtedly make a valuable contribution to the District Court bench. **BN**