

Kevin Murray QC

1930-1991

by Jon Tippett

The Major-General is dead. On Easter Sunday cancer finally ended a life that had never languished in the living.

Kevin Murray QC specialised in criminal law.

His courtroom triumphs will long be remembered as replete with eloquent, aggressive and witty advocacy.

His love for the Northern Territory was sparked during the time of his representation of Mr Jack Harry Noble who, in 1980, stood charged with conspiracy.

R v Hoar and Noble (1981) 34 ALR 357 became a celebrated case of its day.

Afterwards, he returned to the Northern Territory regularly as an advocate and to stay with friends.

In many ways, Kevin Murray epitomised the tough, fearless advocate. Those who appeared against him remember their experiences with a tinge of discomfort.

His uncanny habit was to take over the running of the courtroom.

Judges found it necessary, from time to time, to remind Mr Murray of the many good reasons why the function of the bench was to undertake

that task. Kevin accepted there were many such reasons but was inclined to deny that the adjective "good" applied to any of them.

The flurried activity of junior counsel and instructing solicitors did, on occasion, lead to frustration being exhibited by the Major-General. At such times he would stand steadfast in the face of adversity, look to the heavens and proclaim: "I am surrounded by fools!"

Not everyone agreed.

Unrelenting though he was in his approach to hard work, the admiration of his peers particularly lay in his

capacity to prepare a brief whilst running to Court.

Hapless police officers found, while being cross-examined by Kevin, that no matter how often they corrected him their names were often mispronounced, often in a number of imaginative combinations.

Murray turned mispronunciation into an art.



As with any man of his great stature, he drew unto himself some controversy.

But his vision of the world was guided by deep generosity, laughter and a profound belief in the dignity of ordinary men.

For those strengths he will always be remembered.

If one could imagine the day of judgement and the Major-General being brought to account, one might hear him reply: "What do you expect? I was surrounded by fools!"

Photo courtesy of the Sydney Morning Herald.



CRIME

NT-Indonesia Criminal Law Conference

June 30 to July 5, Sanur Beach, Bali. Interested practitioners should contact Cheryl at Australian Airlines on 823326.

Registration is approximately \$350.00.

Speakers include Chief Justice Asche, Justice Nader, Len Flanagan QC, Jim Glissan QC, Terry O'Gorman and Associate Professor Ned Aughterson.

Further information is available from:

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National Criminal Code

The NT Criminal Lawyers Association is circularising the profession in relation to a proposal for a national criminal code. The response of practitioners is encouraged. All firms should have the circulated material. Contact a senior partner near you for further details, or Geoff Barbaro on 818322.