

# SHEILA McCLEMANS: AN INSPIRING LAWYER

At the time of writing this monthly report it brings to mind that I have only one month left as President for NTWLA. It certainly has been a privilege serving as your president, a task made easier by members of the committee. It is important all members consider their nominations for the next president and committee. In particular, I advise that I will not be taking on another term as president. Some other office bearers and committee members are prepared to continue and details will be distributed with the formal written confirmation of the Annual General Meeting.

The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 27 September 2001 at 5.30pm, with the venue to be confirmed. Notices will be sent to all members with confirmation of the details. For those members who will not be able to attend forms for the appointment of a proxy will also be distributed. Due to the increased membership it is proposed that after the meeting there will be some refreshments served. The committee considered it an ideal opportunity for new members and long term members to get together. It will also be an opportunity for all members to convey their thoughts and ideas to the incoming committee.

**A Book Review — *Sheila* by Lloyd Davies (Desert Pea Press 2000)**

The book *Sheila* by Lloyd Davies has been in my possession for some months now to write a review. I have carted it with me around the countryside with good intentions to get it started. Of course, it was left to the last minute to commence but once started it was very easy and enjoyable to read.

The book is a biography of Sheila McClemons, who was admitted to practice in Western Australia in 1933 and set up Western Australia's first all-female law firm with Molly Kingston.

Sheila's other credits included: Wartime

Director of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service; National President of the Australian Federation of University Women; Secretary of the WA Law Society; and foundation member of WA Legal Aid Commission.

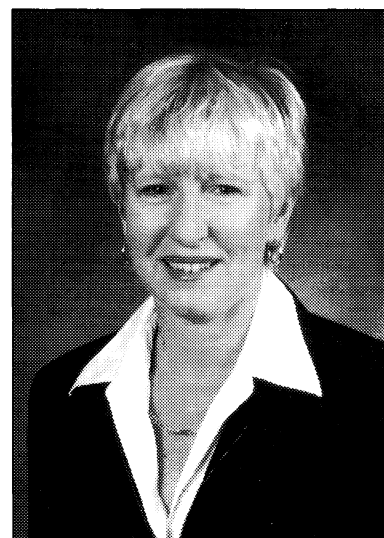
Of her achievements, Sheila believed her greatest was being involved in the foundation of the WA Legal Aid Commission. Even after going back into private practice, Sheila maintained her involvement with Legal Aid, freely giving her own time, working for the underprivileged.

Whilst at university Sheila was involved in various sports including hockey, tennis and swimming. She excelled in swimming and diving. It seems that her involvement in sport stemmed from the fact that there was no university common room and the playing fields and swimming pool were the common rooms of the day.

It is interesting that the book is written (dare I say) by a gentleman who was born a generation after Sheila McClemons. The author, Lloyd Davies, was a man of his time who, in his practice as a barrister, focussed on civil liberties and working for the underprivileged.

The book contains some interesting extracts from newspapers concerning the skills of female barristers which give an indication of the difficulties encountered by Sheila McClemons and other female advocates of the time, particularly in being taken seriously in the legal profession.

Like me, you no doubt do not like hearing how much easier things are today and how much we take for granted. This book has gentle reminders throughout of just how fortunate is our lot in life, whether from the days of our study or to current practice. Imagine attending the library, settling down with the appropriate text only to find that sections or sections of pages have been removed. So much for the last minute cramming or preparation for examinations. Obviously, photocopiers were yet to be introduced.



Jacqueline Presbury, NTWLA President

If work is all getting too hard, if you need some inspiration, if you are just starting out in your career, nearing the end or thinking early retirement, either male or female, I commend the book to you.

*Sheila* has been donated to the Jane Mahoney Memorial Library at the Supreme Court Library by the Law Society of the Northern Territory.

## Jane Mahoney Memorial Library

Jane Mahoney's father, Sir Curtis Keeble, has provided a generous donation to add to the library. If you have any suggestions for titles for the library please contact:

Jacqueline Presbury 8943 0423 or Frieda Evans, Supreme Court Library on 8999 6583

## Bouquets

Congratulations to Amy Williamson, Beth Wild, Marion Wilson, Inta Tumulus and Sylvia Tomazos, who were all admitted to practice on 7 August 2001.

**The NT Women  
Lawyers Association  
Annual General  
Meeting is  
scheduled for  
Thursday 27  
September 2001 at  
5.30pm.**