

# ENTERING THE PROFESSION

Admission to the legal profession is a special occasion which launches a legal career. Families and friends gather, addresses are given, and photos taken of wigs and robes with colleagues in attendance. At the admission hearing held in Darwin on 9 January 2001 Justice Angel welcomed Emily Caldwell and imparted some encouraging words of wisdom. An edited version of the judge's address is reprinted here:

It is always a great day when someone gets admitted. That's a milestone in your career. It's the end of your studies and the beginning of your life in what some of us like to think is an honourable profession.

I'd been a young practitioner, I suppose, about a fortnight when the senior partner of the firm for which I was working beckoned me into his office and he said "Are you in the law for the money?" and I said I didn't quite know why I was there. I'd graduated at the time and I was young and shaky at the knees, and he said to me: "If you want to make money, go over there", pointing at the window and through the window was the Adelaide Stock Exchange.

"You'll never make money in the law but," he said, "you'll have a good time. You'll meet lots of interesting people. You'll travel. You'll have some intellectual things to think about and to enjoy and you will live comfortably. Don't ever worry about money, worry about the work you do. If you do good work, clients will come. They'll pay anyway because they'll be happy with what you do. You'll have a good life."

And so for me, at least, that's proved true and I hope it proves true for you.

Any legal profession worth its salt is free and independent of external influences and in particular, the influence of executive government. Free thinking lawyers; that is, lawyers worth their salt, distrust those who hold the levers of power. They're suspicious of the good



NT Legal Aid's Matthew Bonson was admitted in November 2000 supported by a large crowd of friends and family.

intentions of bureaucrats and of the enlightened. They strive for an open society, the sort of open society envisaged by Professor Sir Karl Popper, and you'll also remember the great words of Lord Radcliffe that it's the plain duty of every lawyer to keep his or her feet on the ground; so you won't get too carried away, ever.

You'll remain non-attached to things that don't count and you'll fulfil your

duty to your clients. You will at all times act honestly. It needs hardly for me to repeat, as has been said so many times in this court, it's the plain duty of a lawyer to be honest, honest with him or herself, honest with his clients, honest with his fellow practitioners and, of course, honest with the court at all times.

The only other thing I wish to mention to you is remember to defend your profession. The profession

of law is under constant attack from politicians, from the press and all sorts of people and without a good independent strong legal profession, our society would be much worse than it is, so defend it with all your might. The court wishes you success and satisfaction in your chosen profession.

A photo of Emily Caldwell on her admission day can be found in *Balance's People in the Law* on page 18.

## JUSTICE DEBELLE SPEAKER FOR OLY

The Hon. Justice Debelle from the South Australian Supreme Court will present the address at the Opening of the Legal Year luncheons in Alice Springs and Darwin on the topic: *Reflections on the Millennium and the Centenary of Federation*.

Justice Debelle was first appointed to the bench in October 1990. Prior to his appointment he was mainly engaged in commercial litigation in the Supreme Court of South Australia, the Federal Court of Australia and the High Court of Australia.

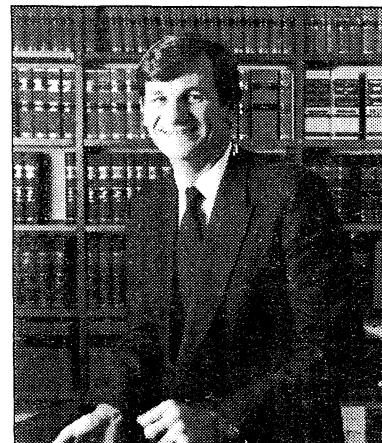
Justice Debelle has had a long and active involvement in the Law Society of South Australia, holding the post of Vice-President (1987-89), Treasurer (1986-87) and Council member (1982-86). He was also Vice President of the Law Council of Australia between 1989-1990.

In a profile in *Bulletin*, the Law Society of South Australia journal (December 1999), Justice Debelle cites his career highlights as two hearings in the Privy

Council in *Lady Becker v City of Marion* as well as numerous appearances in the High Court.

"My constant companions are my wife, *The Oxford Book of English Verse* (Quiller Couch edition) and the poetry of Seamus Heaney," Justice Debelle told *Bulletin*.

He also enjoys watching rugby union, swimming, reading, travel and listening to all kinds of music.



Justice Bruce Malcolm Debelle