

Celebration of the Jane Mahoney Collection

On Friday 30 July 2004 NTWLA held drinks in the Supreme Court Library to celebrate the recent additions made to the Jane Mahoney Collection.

Jane was a well-respected member of the NT Legal Profession. Her life ended tragically in a motor vehicle accident on the Cox Peninsula Road near Darwin on the evening of Sunday 12 July 1998 as she and her husband, Tony, were travelling home to Mandorah. Jane's parents, Sir John and Lady Keeble, forward an annual gift to NTWLA for additions to the Collection.

The Jane Mahoney Collection is located to the left of the entrance in the Supreme Court Library, adjacent to the newspaper racks. The intention of the Collection is to foster knowledge in the Northern Territory Legal Profession and enable practitioners to read more widely.

I was able to locate information from the NTWLA files about Jane, and in particular, a piece written by Donna Dreier in November 1999. I presented the collected information at the drinks and I provide an excerpt from that speech here.

Jane was born in Washington DC, America, on 7 July 1955. She was educated in Britain and Australia, ending her schooling at Cheltenham Ladies College in Britain, where she held the responsible position of head of her house, Glenlee.

Jane obtained a Bachelor of Science and Economics (Hons) from the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth in July 1976 and subsequently completed Parts 1 and 2 of the Solicitors Qualifying Examination and was admitted as a solicitor in England and Wales on 1 December 1980. Her Certificate of Admission was signed by the then Master of the Rolls, Lord Denning.

She did her articles in London, and worked for several law firms before she took the brave step of setting up her own law practice, with her father (Sir Curtis Keeble) as secretary and office boy. She undertook a variety of work, concentrating on general litigation and matrimonial matters. She loved the law and was very good at it.

Jane and Tony moved to South Australia in late 1988 and Jane was employed with the Adelaide firm Lamshed & Moore during 1989 and 1990.

Jane commenced employment with Department of Law (now the Department of Justice) in Darwin on 14 August 1991, where she worked as a solicitor in the Litigation Division of the Solicitor for the Northern Territory. She was admitted as a legal practitioner in the Northern Territory on 4 February 1992.

During her employment with the Solicitor for the Northern Territory, Jane specialised in the areas of personal injuries, particularly medical negligence, and child and family welfare. She had a close working relationship with personnel from Territory Health Services.

Given the decision of the Northern Territory government to outsource much of the legal work previously undertaken by the Solicitor for the Northern Territory, including the health law work in which Jane specialised, Jane resigned from her position with the Attorney-General's Department. Her resignation was to have taken effect on 17 July 1998. Jane had accepted a position with Darwin firm Cridlands, where she was due to commence on 20 July 1998.

Colleagues and clients of Jane's gathered together with Jane for a harbour cruise on the evening of 10 July 1998, to celebrate her achievements at the Solicitor for the Northern Territory and to wish her well in the future. It was a happy evening and many who attended were able to take some comfort from having spent this special time with Jane. Conversely, the proximity of this event to her untimely death served to heighten the sense of loss felt by many.

Jane was a gentle and unassuming person with a highly developed sense of personal and professional integrity.



NTWLA President, Gabrielle Martin

She was sorely missed by those who knew and loved her. She was a great loss to the Darwin legal fraternity, to the small community of Mandorah and to the wider community generally.

This event was very well received with almost thirty people in attendance. Several people in the law who knew Jane were specially invited. Peter Tiffin, David Lisson and Greg Macdonald joined us to toast Jane's memory.

This last year has gone so quickly. The Committee and I have enjoyed organising and hosting the events for women in the profession in Darwin and Alice Springs. I wish to thank the members of the Committee for all their support and hard work over the year.

The 2003/2004 Committee were Frieda Evans (Treasurer), Jodi Mather (Secretary), Heather Ross, Artemis Kaltourmidis, Rhyanwen Bauman, Sharon Krause and Sarah Thompson.

I would also like to thank the NTWLA Patron, Judge Sally Thomas for her support over the year and her generosity in hosting the Patron's drinks, both here and in Alice Springs.

Last, but not least, a very warm thank you to Melanie Little SM and Helen Nicholas for their assistance with the inaugural Patron's Drinks in Alice Springs.

The Annual General Meeting and drinks is set for Friday 3 September 2004 at 4.30pm. The venue is the CJC room on the ground floor of the Department of Justice.①