

Hon. Leslie Trevor Olsson

AO MBE K CSJ RFD ED

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Hon. Leslie Trevor Olsson AO MBE

*Hon. Leslie Trevor Olsson AO
MBE K CSJ RFD ED
28 June 1984 to 30 July 2001*

*Justice Supreme Court of South
Australia
28 June 1984 to 31 July 2001.*

*Auxiliary Judge, Supreme Court of
South Australia
since October 2001*

*Acting Judge, Supreme Court of
the Northern Territory
since 2004*

*Auxiliary Judge, Supreme Court of
Western Australia
2001-2002*

Born: 31 July 1931

Justice Olsson can probably claim to be Australia's longest serving current judicial officer, having been in almost continual service in various jurisdictions since being appointed a Master of the South Australian Supreme Court in May 1963. Among a string of other professional activities, he also became a Colonel in the Australian Army Reserve, was Chair of Childhood Services Council from 1969 to 1984, and served on the Council of the University of Adelaide from 1985 to 1997.

Trevor Olsson was born in Toorak Gardens and is one of four children. His father was a partner in a firm known then as Johnstone Olsson & Bleby. The other partners were Percy Johnstone and Gordon

Bleby.

In 1948 Trevor began his law degree at The University of Adelaide. Articles were the practical training until the late 1970s and Trevor took his with his father. There was only one full-time lecturer at the University, Professor Campbell – who incidentally did not have a law degree. Many subjects were taught by senior practitioners according to their area of expertise in practice. Arthur Pickering taught Evidence and Procedure, Edgar Stephens taught Equity and John Bray taught Roman Law.

Trevor Olsson was admitted in December 1952. Not long after, Gordon Bleby left the firm to join Baker McEwin in order to expand his court work. Trevor took on the advocacy work for the firm, began briefing and junioring Sam Jacobs, another future judge, who was a partner in another firm.

Parallel to his legal career, Trevor Olsson spent weekends in the Army Reserve, and was slowly rising up the ranks. He did a lot of teaching and on one occasion visited Hawaii to bring back knowledge to Australia from the United States.

His life jumped forward a few notches in the early 1960s. He was awarded an MBE for his services to the Army in 1962, he was appointed a Deputy Master of the Supreme Court in 1963, and he married Marilyn Evans in 1964.

The Supreme Court was under Chief Justice Sir Mellis Napier. Trevor Olsson had a good relationship with Sir Mellis, as he knew him also from Government House. There he served as an honorary military aide and Sir Mellis was often filling in as Acting Governor.

In 1969 Trevor was appointed to the Industrial Court as Deputy President, again working with Gordon Bleby, now President. He was also appointed Chair of the Child Services Council and now had a third career running parallel to the legal and military ones. The election of the Whitlam government allowed the expansion of social services and, under Trevor's leadership, its annual budget grew from a few hundred thousand dollars to \$16 million by the time he was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1984.

He was not only active in the Court as a judge but developing the Court's transition to computerisation. Faced with the bewildering new technology, he completed a certificate in micro-computing to better understand it. He chaired the Judicial Research Information System (JURIS) from around 1990.

He and Marilyn have two adult children, and the firm still bears the Olsson name as Mellor Olsson. He is currently an Acting Judge with the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory, and an Auxiliary Judge with both the South Australian Supreme Court and the Industrial Relations Court. }