



Vale Pat Loftus

2 February 1945 – 15 May 2015

It was with sadness that I heard of Pat's passing.

Pat originally came from Adelaide and as many would recall he was the principal of Loftus and Cameron in Carpentaria house, Cavenagh Street. Pat had been a Crown Prosecutor in the then Department of Law before establishing the firm.

I joined the firm in 1986 and Loftus and Cameron had a firm grip on the criminal law in Darwin. As well as being most capable, Pat was an affable person and attracted clients with ease so the firm was busy. I remember arraignment days at that time when the list would be shared by 'Loftus and Cameron' and Legal Aid. There was little work for any other firm.

Loftus and Cameron prospered and had branches in Katherine and Alice Springs. Pat treated his staff kindly and was generous with advice. We would share pleasure in our victories and laugh at our occasional defeats. A very young Brendan Ryan prosecuted a speeding offence on one occasion and lost because he forgot to prove the relevant speed limit. Pat chided him for that in a most good natured way.

Pat managed to convey to people his love for the Territory. I remember that he said to me after I decided to leave Sydney and join him "You won't regret coming to the Territory". He was quite right. For example, Michael Wheelan was employed in the Katherine office and is still living there. Many young practitioners who worked for him went on to successful careers. The list is long.

Shane Stone worked in the Alice Springs office for several years and became Chief Minister. Several became Magistrates: Greg Cavanagh, Richard Wallace, Bruce McCormack and Colin Roberts in W.A. Brendan Ryan went on to establish a Queensland Criminal Law practice with thirteen branches and Tim Hoyle became Deputy Director of the NSW DPP.

In 1987 Pat was pre-selected by the then CLP for the seat of Koolpinyah. He showed me the glossy brochure he had printed for presentation at the CLP pre-selection interview. It had big pictures of Pat and much information of his achievements, including service in the Reserve Army Legal Corps. In that election he ran against Noel Pagam-Purick and was unsuccessful. I remember seeing him standing in the office one morning looking quite uncomfortable. He had been bitten by a dog during his 'door knocking' and found sitting difficult for a few days.

At that stage he lived on a rural block at Bees Creek. I recall attending several lunches there including a memorable Christmas lunch with my wife's parents, and was warned not to go to the creek because of the crocodiles. It was there I met his delightful daughters Alison and Suzie. His wife Lizzie was charming and intelligent. My family and I both enjoyed their company greatly.

The good times did not last and the staff headed in their own directions. Pat himself sold the practice and practiced at the NT Bar for a period before becoming a Crown Prosecutor in Hong Kong for twenty years. His talents were recognised and he acted against the Triads.

Whilst in Hong Kong Lizzie was struck by a bus and seriously injured. She never really recovered and died at a young age. Later in life he married Peggy whom I have had the pleasure of meeting on one of Pat's frequent Darwin visits. Again, a most pleasant and intelligent woman. Pat would regularly visit Darwin and see his old friends. I have a picture of him with us at the Mindil Beach Markets which was taken in May 2009.

Goodbye old friend. My best boss. You gave me the best time in law I have ever had.

John Adams