

Brian Cassells

1 February 1948 to 15 November 2017

Glen Dooley

Crown Prosecutor

Director of Public Prosecutions

Brian Cassells was a lawyer for forty-five years. First admitted in Queensland on 20 June 1972 as barrister, he was admitted in PNG in November 1974, then in the Territory on 1 June 1987. He retired due to ill-health in June 2017. He spent five years in PNG as a prosecutor then started up his own practice O'Bryen Cassells & Co on the Sunshine Coast, Qld. In May 1982; the firm merged into Blackwell, Appleyard and Thompsons in November 1984. Brian then worked for Morris Fletcher and Cross in Brisbane which led to him working for that firm in Darwin in 1987.

Brian's thirty-year career in the Territory established him as a friend to many. He went to the NT Bar at William Forster Chambers in 1989 and maintained a barrister practising certificate until 2003. From 2003 to 2008 he worked for NAALAS/ NAAJA. He resumed life at the Bar in 2008, this time at Edmund Barton Chambers. In April 2011 Brian joined NAAJA in its Katherine office through to June 2012. In March 2013, he set up as a barrister in Katherine through to his retirement. Based in Katherine, Brian attracted many briefs in the

East Kimberley, mainly in the WA District Court sitting at Kununurra.

I worked with Brian in his 2003-08 stint with NAALAS/ NAAJA and I got to enjoy the friendship of a genuine, jovial, humble and talented criminal lawyer. He was an absolute boon for NAALAS/ NAAJA, bringing his considerable experience to the benefit of our clients and the younger lawyers he worked with. Brian had that knack of finding the heart of a case then swaying a jury, often as a result of his compassionate understanding of his client's predicament married to his natural, easy going advocacy style. Brian's run of 'not guilty' verdicts rivalled the success of his treasured Queenslanders in State of Origin. He was free with his wise advice to younger practitioners and a constant source of encouragement to them. One of the true giants of criminal law practice in Australia, David Ross QC, rated Brian highly as an advocate. Brian was most appreciative of the work of the support staff at the ALS, lifting their confidence and helping many onto long and fruitful careers both at ALS and in other organisations. As is the modern

way, the Facebook postings after he passed away were instructive. From a wide range of people, most reflected on the joy he had brought to lives, no finer accolades.

Brian eschewed the standard legal ambition and loved the practice of law in a pure sense. His presence as a barrister living and working in more remote places like Katherine and Kununurra in his later years was remarkable and unlikely to be seen again.

Brian's later years were spent with his loving wife Nancy and his trusty hounds. Brian was father to Alicia, Bernadette and Michael and granddad to Maggie.

RIP BC.

