

# Unveiling of artwork by Therese Ritchie

## NORTHERN TERRITORY WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (NTWLA)

### Celebrating the career of Sally Gearin, the first female barrister at the NT Bar

On 13 July 2018 the Committee of NTWLA was pleased to join with William Forster Chambers to host a night to celebrate the career of Sally Gearin with the unveiling by the Honourable Vicki O'Halloran AM, Administrator of the NT of two photographic artworks by Darwin artist Therese Ritchie.

Sally is a woman of significance to the Territory, to William Forster Chambers, to NT women lawyers and to our community generally for many reasons. Notably she was the first woman to come to the bar in the NT in 1990 and further when she did so she was openly lesbian. Sally

has been actively involved in promoting women's rights including in the establishment of the first women's refuge in Darwin in the late 80s.

The significance of Sally's achievements and how she got there is made more remarkable having been the first woman amongst men and having emerged through the prevailing conservative views in society about sexuality throughout her career.

Receiving a scholarship to attend ANU to study law in 1967, Sally was one of only four women and 300 men studying law. For those of us of my generation or younger who did not live in the 60s it is easy to be unaware of just how much 1960s Australia was a far cry in terms of equality to where we are today. Talking about her sexuality Sally explains that the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual existed in earlier versions and those versions included homosexuality as a mental disorder













**Book Reviews** This is a reprint of *Compendium Medicinale* 1650 and 1655. The original title reads *Compendium Medicinale* by the *Medicinalium* Faculty of the *Universitas* of *Medicina* in *Medicina*.



Association, Australian Women Lawyers Association, a founding editor of the NT Law Reports and President of the NT Chapter of the International Commission of Jurists where she assisted with others in the establishment of the first Legal Aid office in Dili.

Sally practiced as a barrister for 20 years and in recent years has been a presiding member on a number of tribunals including for mandatory alcohol treatment and as a member of NTCAT.

Sally says in terms of what she has realised or is most important to her: being first is going to be hard but it can be done; vulnerable women were always important and in her eyes her most important work was around domestic violence services, using the advocating skills she had to