



# Tom Goudkamp

By Richard Faulks

**T**hough he was born in Amsterdam, Tom would probably admit that his Dutch is a bit rusty. That is hardly surprising when one learns that he came to Australia at the age of two.

Between the ages of two and five he lived in Sydney, moving from there to the Central Coast of NSW and later to Murwillumbah when he was fifteen, where he attended Murwillumbah High School.

Humility is one of Tom's great characteristics. He readily downplays his academic prowess. He is quoted as saying, 'If my school marks had been better I would have been a teacher. But I couldn't even get a teacher's scholarship so I applied for something different at every university and ANU was where I got accepted.' We in Canberra consider Tom to be one of ours in many ways. He attended the ANU Law School and then did his articles with a local law firm.

Those of us who know him well appreciate Tom as a down-to-earth fellow who understands the plight of the everyday person in the street. Like many of us, he needed to support himself while he was at university so, during his holidays, he had a variety of jobs, including working on an oil rig off the Timor coast, erecting shelves at the National Library, landscape gardening and, indeed, guarding political prisoners.

After moving to Sydney, however, Tom gradually built his reputation as one of its leading tort lawyers. He has a strong empathy with the seriously injured and underprivileged and

has been involved in many significant personal injury cases. Many will remember his role as the solicitor for Mrs Whitaker in the landmark decision of *Rogers v Whitaker*.

His commitment goes beyond his own practice. He has made a substantial contribution to NSW Law Society committees, government committees, and as the chair of the Personal Injury Advisory Committee. He is also the joint author of the *Personal Injury Law Manual*.

Perhaps Tom's greatest contribution to the profession and to those in need has been his involvement with APLA. He has been a strong spokesperson in NSW and nationally, contributing not only at the NSW branch level but also on the National Council and Executive. He is sure to make a strong impact as our National President.

Those of us who know him well appreciate Tom's knowledge and expertise but, more importantly, know him as a caring and committed person. When not playing golf and tennis, or travelling around the world seeing his international clients, he is the sort of person you would like to share a beer with at the pub. ■

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