

The Inaugural WA Lee Equity Lecture  
Thursday 2 November 2000  
6.00pm

QUT Gardens Point Campus, Brisbane

As a teacher, Tony Lee was more than commonly oracular, and there was nothing Delphic about his utterances. His capacity clearly to synthesize difficult propositions was quite remarkable. His students greatly admired his lecturing capacity: Tony's lectures were stimulating, actually enjoyable and comparatively very well attended.

My contemporary Justice John Byrne, having recently seen the movie "The Dish", reminded me of 16 July 1969 which you will immediately recall was the day of the momentous Apollo 11 moon landing. We eager students duly assembled that day for Mr Lee's succession lecture. He surprised us rather by immediately offering to cancel the lecture, so that we could disperse to watch the imminent moon landing. But ever fair and equitable, he proposed first that we should vote on the issue. If, as I strongly suspect, Tony personally preferred to watch the historic event on television rather than give a lecture, voting was objectively a risky course to propose: could he be sure his devoted students would pass up an hour of his inspiring tuition? Well maybe in 1969 he was not quite the self-confident Tony Lee we see today. We in fact churlish and ungrateful boys and girls chose to pursue our secular interest and *did* vote unanimously to watch man on the moon!

I have spoken of Tony Lee's pedagogic approach as bearing the character of the oracular, and implicitly a moment ago, the sacred. Well of course that goes a little too far, although this evening I will I trust be excused a degree of hyperbole. The perfectly accurate epithet for Tony Lee the lecturer, the teacher, is "inspirational". Having inspired countless students, fellow lecturers, jurists, thinkers in general, now he has inspired this fine law school to establish an annual equity lecture in his name, "The WA Lee Equity Lecture", which I am most honoured to launch.

As I have said, this is to be an annual event. It has been sponsored on this occasion by a number of well motivated organisations. They are Queensland Community Foundation, the Queensland Law Society, the Bar Association of Queensland, LBC Information Services, Domaine Chandon Australia, and the QUT Faculties of Business and Law. May I say a little of Queensland Community Foundation. It is a public charitable trust, a uniquely Queensland initiative intended to foster philanthropy a beneficial thrust not previously properly explored in this State. The Foundation is but three years old, yet has attracted substantial financial support and thereby already benefited a large number of charities. Its objective is to do so on a permanent basis. Managed by the Public Trustee of Queensland,

with investment facilitated by the Queensland Investment Corporation, and governed by a distinguished board of volunteers, the Foundation is endowed with a degree of security which will be attractive to those wishing assuredly to direct their financial support to worthy causes on a long term basis. I commend it to you.

It is right, tonight, that I briefly rehearse Tony Lee's career. Born in Wales in 1930, he was educated at the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Carmarthen. He graduated from Manchester University in 1949, Bachelor of Arts with first class honours in English literature. Having qualified as a solicitor in England in 1954, he practised privately for a time and then in various public positions in England and Wales, until appointed in 1965 as Lecturer in Law at the University of Queensland. The following year he was promoted to Senior Lecturer and then in 1973 he was appointed Reader in Law. In 1975-6 he was Acting Dean and Dean of the Faculty of Law, and in 1988 he was elected to a visiting fellowship at Wolfson College, Cambridge. He retired from the University of Queensland in 1989, and the following year was appointed Robinson Cox Visiting Professor at the University of Western Australia. He was Adjunct Professor of Law at Bond University in 1990 and 1991, and Visiting Professor of Law at this University in 1991, and Adjunct Professor of Law for the following two years. He served on the Law Faculty Board, and as Chair of the Post Graduate Studies Committee. From 1990 to 1996, he was a part-time Commissioner of the Queensland Law Reform Commission.

Tony Lee has published two most notable works on succession law and the law of trusts. His lengthy work, *Principles of the Law of Trusts*, authored jointly with Professor Ford, and now in its 4th edition, is a particularly outstanding work regularly cited by judges and academics in Australia, New Zealand and Canada. In addition, there is his *Manual of Queensland Succession Law*, first published in 1975 and also now in its 4th edition. He has published many articles in both national and international refereed journals, including the *Law Quarterly Review*, the *Conveyancer*, the *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* and the *Australian Law Journal*.

As emerges from what I have said already, Tony Lee has not only been an active scholar, but also an active law reformer within his important area of expertise. He was the driving force behind the reform of both trustee law and succession law in Queensland, his work leading to the enactment of a new *Trusts Act* in 1971, and a new *Succession Act* a decade later. As a result of that work, he was also called upon to assist in the reform of the law of wills in Victoria which resulted in a new *Wills Act* in 1996.

Tony Lee's impact on the development of various areas of law, considered in many aspects to be recondite, has, in short, been monumental. He is remembered fondly by many members of the legal profession whom he taught during his lengthy period as a member of the staff of the University of Queensland from 1965 to 1989. We recall him as a most stimulating and interesting lecturer, but identify him above all as someone who not only taught students the law, but also displayed himself an

outstanding capacity to think about the law and challenge the adequacy of established legal frameworks. That is no doubt a reflection of his interest in both the academic study of the law, and its reform. I am absolutely delighted to launch this series in his name, and honoured now to invite our distinguished speaker to the lectern.