



NEW SOUTH WALES
BAR ASSOCIATION

VALE THE HON STEPHEN THACKRAY

STATEMENT BY THE NEW SOUTH WALES BAR ASSOCIATION'S FAMILY LAW COMMITTEE

3 April 2020

It is with great sorrow that the New South Wales Bar mourns the passing of the Honourable Stephen Thackray, and with gratitude that we pay tribute to his remarkable life and legacy of service to the Australian community.

Throughout his career, Stephen was a fearless advocate for the administration of justice.

As former Chief Judge of the Family Court of Western Australia and Head of the Appeal Division of the Family Court of Australia, Stephen's passion, quiet determination, sharp intelligence and professionalism were an inspiration to all who had the privilege of knowing, working with or appearing before him.

Stephen was one of the first accredited family law specialists in Western Australia. As a practitioner, he served as President of the Family Law Practitioners Association of Western Australia in 1994 and 1995, before being appointed Principal Registrar of the Family Court of Western Australia in 1997. He subsequently served as an acting Judge of that Court in 1999 and 2003, before accepting a permanent appointment in 2004.

Stephen was assigned to the Appeal Division of the Family Court of Australia in 2006 and subsequently served with distinction as the administrative manager or 'head' of the Appeal Division. At the time of his retirement in 2018, Stephen was the longest-serving member of the Appeal Division. He led by example, never shirking from difficult cases, and modelling collegiality.

Stephen was highly regarded and very much admired as a person of the utmost integrity, humility, authenticity and compassion.

He treated every person to cross his path with respect, from the most junior lawyers or court staff to the most senior members of the judiciary, and that respect was mutual. His empathy, courtesy and sense of humour did not go unnoticed, and was greatly appreciated.

He was without doubt a leader of the judiciary and the legal profession. A formidable jurist and intellect, a generous mentor and a great friend. His counsel and wisdom were often sought, and always kindly and selflessly provided.

Many members of the NSW family law bar were beneficiaries of Stephen's leadership, knowledge and friendship. He will be sorely missed.

Our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with Stephen's family – his wife Janet, children Amanda and James, and daughter-in-law Leandri – as well as his friends and colleagues at this difficult time.

As we recognise and celebrate the memory of a great Australian, after a lifetime of tireless service may he rest in peace.