

Another Tribute to Tony Lee*

The Hon Chief Justice Paul de Jersey AC

It is an easy task to speak tonight in honour of Tony Lee. He carries his academic scholarship with urbanity, and its generous application has produced real community benefit – within my own experience Tony’s courageous redirection of the Viertel Trust in particular, to which I will return.

To so many of us here, Tony was the absolutely marvellous lecturer, inspirational as only a few were at the University of Queensland Law School in the 1960s. Though even advertent to the lesser lights must not be allowed to dim perceptions of the contrastingly brilliant contribution of the guest we honour.

May I again recount my favourite Lee anecdote, Tony’s invitation to the Succession Law lecture class on the day man landed on the moon. Some years ago, my contemporary John Byrne, having then only recently seen the movie ‘The Dish’, reminded me of 16 July 1969, the day of the 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 rather 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!

The Lee variety of legal scholarship, presented in an easy, compelling, but not ‘compulsory’ environment ... we were not required to attend a lecture on 16 July 1969, although I venture that Tony Lee’s lectures were the best attended in the UQ Law School of the 1960s.

I left the Law School with my fondest feelings reserved for Succession Law. I cannot recall my marks, but Tony presented the course in a captivating way, and I think wills and estate cases are those which I still, after 42 years in the profession, find the most interesting.

Tonight’s recognition reflects Tony Lee’s enduring international significance, evident in the eminent fellow members he joins.

The stellar array of presenters at his eponymous Equity Lecture presented annually in Queensland also corroborates that State-wide, national and international reach.

* Dinner in Honour of Mr Tony Lee Receiving Honorary Membership of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners Worldwide. Customs House, Brisbane, 17 April 2013.

This is a preview. Not all pages are shown.