

Peter Michael Seery 6 February 1933 – 22 October 2000 *By His Honour Judge Peter Dent QC*

Peter Michael Seery was admitted to the New South Wales Bar on 1 July 1967, in fulfilment of a burning ambition to be a barrister. He carried to its ranks great personal qualifications of honesty, integrity and deep compassion for his fellow man.

He was tutored by Ernie Knoblanche QC and by him trained to be a barrister's barrister. He eschewed the fast turnover approach of many of his contemporaries and insisted upon mastering his client's case at the first opportunity and pursuing that case wisely and vigorously, to secure for every client the best result that could be achieved in the circumstances.

Seery avoided specialisation because of his personal belief that counsel should be able to acquit themselves competently in every jurisdiction and with that talent he was of enormous assistance, in particular, to country solicitors and clients on the circuits where he appeared. Once Seery accepted a brief it was rapidly put in order and thereafter it stayed in order until finally disposed of.



Peter Seery

Peter suffered more than his fair share of life's adversities and bore them manfully. When others brought their problems to him, and many did, he counselled them with wisdom and kindness.

Irish-Australian to the core, he was gifted with a splendid sense of humour and a laugh that could be heard blocks away.

He served with distinction as an acting judge of the District Court of New South Wales and as an arbitrator. He retired from active practice in 2000, to be sadly taken

from this life too swiftly thereafter, to the great sorrow of his widow Moira and their children, who's comfort and welfare had been Peter's first priority throughout his life.

Should I in future encounter a child frightened by the sounds of thunder, I will explain that 'It's nothing to worry about, it's only Peter Seery laughing in heaven'. His colleagues in Wentworth, University and Henry Parkes Chambers will understand that well.

FEATURES

The Barristers' Benevolent Association

By a member of Bar Council

Every year there are barristers who encounter personal misfortune or require some form of assistance in order to overcome a problem. At least once a year a barrister or a member of their family suffers a catastrophe.

Sudden deaths, serious illness, accident, refusal of indemnity by an insurer, mental illness, cancers, suicides, HIV/AIDS, alcoholism, families of deceased members who have some need and serious financial misfortune are all problems which have been addressed by the Barristers' Benevolent Association over the last few years.

In each case, the barrister, former barrister or family member has been provided with assistance. The Association can respond to calls for assistance without formality and without delays. There are no formal applications, forms, waiting periods, means tests or other predetermined administrative requirements.

There have been times when assistance has been provided on the same day as information about a problem became known.

The assistance given is generally financial, but it is not limited to money. Arrangements have been made for legal assistance, for independent psychiatric assessment, for negotiating housing, negotiating with banks, preparing financial position statements, or dealing with other aspects of members' financial problems and intervening with creditors where that becomes necessary.

Every aspect of the operation of the Benevolent Association, from the donations made to the Association, notification that a member is in difficulty, or assessing and providing assistance, is an expression of the collegiate nature of the life of a group of independent individuals collectively operating as the Bar.