

The Hon Justice Jacqueline Gleeson

Jacqueline Gleeson SC was sworn in as a judge of the Federal Court of Australia on 22 April 2014.

Her Honour is the eldest of four siblings and the daughter of the former chief justice of New South Wales and then of Australia, the Honourable Murray Gleeson AC QC. Nevertheless, as Jane Needham SC who spoke at her Honour's swearing-in reminded, her Honour's success in the law was not to be taken for granted:

Justice Gleeson, it would be easy only to speak about your lineage in the profession of law and the seeming inevitability that your Honour would follow in the footsteps of your esteemed father, the honourable Murray Gleeson, but to do so would overlook the struggle and austerity of your first years as a junior barrister.

It would gloss over the diligence and determination required to reach the pinnacle of the profession, to be judged by your peers as being learned in the law and granted the rank of senior counsel and then to be appointed to the Federal Court of Australia.

Her Honour's mother Robyn stayed at home to raise her children and during her Honour's swearing-in speech, her Honour said: 'My wellbeing and development was my mother's job and she can justly take credit for any success of mine.'

Of her father, her Honour said:

My father and I are the only lawyers in the family. Occasionally my siblings wonder about my admiration of him. His self-discipline is the virtue that I admire most and which I hope most to emulate in my new role.

Her Honour attended high school at Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College where she excelled at debating and public speaking, participated in tennis and swimming and was a member of the school choir and of the school newspaper's editorial committee and was awarded prizes in French, economics and mathematics. In 1983 her Honour was dux of the school. Her Honour attended the University of Sydney where she completed a Bachelor of Arts in 1986 and a Bachelor of Laws in 1989. Her Honour worked as an associate to the Honourable Justice Trevor Morling of the Federal Court and as a solicitor for the firm of Bush Burke & Company before being called to the New South Wales Bar in September 1991.

Her Honour read with Michael Slattery and Stephen Rares (as their honours were then) as well as with Cliff Hoeben and Malcolm Oakes SC. Her Honour appeared as junior counsel in many leading cases, led by eminent then members of the bar including Chief Justice James Allsop and Justice Arthur Emmett. Her Honour purchased a room on 11 Wentworth Chambers and worked with many of the leading barristers on that and other floors. She practised in many fields, including

construction law and professional disciplinary proceedings.

Her Honour had been practising at the bar for nine years when she was briefed to appear for Mr Alan Jones at the Australian Broadcasting Authority's cash for comment inquiry. This appearance led to her Honour being approached with the offer of the role of general counsel at the ABA, which she accepted, allowing her to pursue her interests in public law and broadcasting law. In 2003 her Honour was offered a position as senior executive lawyer for the Australian Government Solicitor in 2003 where she advised and acted for regulatory agencies, including APRA, the Tax Agents Board, the Companies, Auditors and Liquidators Disciplinary Board, the ABA and the Office of Film and Literature Classification.

In 2005 her Honour completed a Master of Laws focusing on administrative, regulatory and trade practices law.

Her Honour returned to the bar in 2007 and eventually bought chambers on 7 Selborne. Her practice included administrative law, competition and consumer law, professional liability and disciplinary proceedings and taxation. Her Honour was briefed in a number of very significant matters, including the Canberra bushfires litigation in the Supreme Court of the ACT and more recently appeared as counsel for the New South Wales Government at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuses. Her Honour took silk in 2012.

Her Honour served as a member of a professional conduct committee and as a member of the Bar Council for four years.

Her Honour noted that she was the fourth member of 7 Selborne to join the Federal Court after Justices Foster, Hely and Jacobson. Her Honour concluded her swearing-in speech with the following words:

I have a profound respect for the rule of law as a bed rock of our society and economy. I look forward to discharging my role as a judge to the best of my ability and hopefully, a little better.

Commonwealth attorney-general, Senator the Hon George Brandis QC, had no doubts about that ability:

You have been described by your colleagues as dedicated to your work, your clients and your briefs and possessing all the qualities of a highly accomplished member of our profession. Your reputation is as one who applies yourself to your work with intelligence and perseverance. Though these skills and attributes will be missed by the bar, they are the qualities which will be most welcome by your new colleagues on the bench. ... You have been, if I may so, a role model in your field and you will continue to be so.