30 July 2009

Supreme Court Justice Farewelled

Retiring Supreme Court Judge, the Honourable Justice Sally Thomas AM was today farewelled during a special sitting of the Supreme Court.

Addressing the court, Attorney-General, Delia Lawrie, said Justice Thomas had an outstanding and distinguished career spanning 23 years, characterised with many first achievements.

“Justice Thomas has been a trailblazer for women in the legal profession in the Northern Territory,” Ms Lawrie said.

“She arrived in the Territory in 1978 to take up the position of Magistrate – the Territory’s first female Magistrate and went on to become the Territory’s first female Acting Chief Magistrate and then Chief Magistrate in 1986.

“Justice Thomas was also the first female appointed to the bench of the Supreme Court in 1992.”

Ms Lawrie said Justice Thomas’s achievements weren’t limited to the legal profession.

“She was one of the first members of the Northern Territory University’s council and in 1993 was appointed as an Honorary Colonel in the Australian Army Cadet Corps Northern Region – the first female not in a vice regal position to hold such an appointment,” she said.

“Justice Thomas has served as Chair of the NT Legal Aid Commission, been a council member of the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration and been regional Chair of the Northern Territory branch of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust.”

Ms Lawrie said Justice Thomas has been patron of a number of organisations including NT Women Lawyers Association, Cancer Council NT, the NT
Chapter of the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect and the NT AIDS Council.

In 2000 Justice Thomas was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for service to the community, particularly through the NT Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship Committee, to tertiary education and the law.

“I wish to thank Justice Thomas for her outstanding service not only as a judicial officer but also for her extensive service to the Territory community.”

Ms Lawrie announced the appointment of Judith Kelly SC to the Supreme Court bench last week.