



VICTORIAN BAR

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## WELCOME

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### ADDRESS AT THE WELCOME TO THEIR HONOURS JUDGES ALICE CARTER AND ANNA BOYMAL BY MINAL VOHRA SC

May it please the Court

I appear on behalf of the Australian Bar Association, the Victorian Bar and the Family Law Bar Association to welcome your Honours as judges of the Federal Circuit Court.

I also acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we meet, the Peoples of the Kulin Nation, and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Representing now as I do Australia's barristers, I will speak about both of your Honours' stellar and successful careers as Counsel.

I will start if I may with Judge Carter, the judicially senior by 4 days.

Your Honour came to the Bar in 2006 and read with Dan Sweeney. You had at that time already acquired significant experience as a specialist family lawyer having worked for 10 years as a solicitor at Hogg & Reid.

As has been stated in the Attorney General's speech, Your Honour started off your family law career after university as a research Associate for Justice Kay, then a very learned and formidable judge to appear before. Your Honour somehow found the courage to not only work for Justice Kay but also, with your Honour's characteristic warmth and friendliness, to win him over as one of your Honour's biggest fans.

The Attorney General's speech mentioned the description Justice Kay gave of you as a true Renaissance woman. I have, through my sources, a copy of the original reference he provided to you when you left your position as his research Associate. It is dated 31 March 1995 and is headed "To Whom it May Concern – Re: Alice Carter". Now remember, Justice Kay was a judge of the Court of Appeal and therefore his judgments are always correct and binding upon the rest of us. On 31 March 1995 he therefore held in judgment of your Honour as follows, and I quote:

Alice has been my Research Assistant for the past 12 months. The negative aspect of employing Alice is that you will spend the rest of your life searching for a replacement who can match her talents. Alice evokes memories of the Renaissance. Leonardo could do almost anything- so can Alice. Michaelangelo could do many things very well – so can Alice. Among the talents she demonstrated were:-

Thorough research skills

Sensible and easy to read writing skills

Sharp and insightful analytical skills

Fearless but appropriately respectful advocacy

Computer literacy

Secretarial skills – accurate and fast touch typist

Exceptional ability to relate to co-workers

Ability to master and juggle a heavy work load

Punctuality



Broad and ongoing interest in matters theatrical.

He goes onto say:

One night Alice accompanied my family to the theatre. We bumped into some friends of her parents outside the Arts Centre. When she introduced me to this family friend as her employer the friend commented how lucky I was to have Alice work for me. He was right. (end quote)

Your Honour has in the 24 years since that reference was written, only proven Justice Kay was as always, correct. Your Honour continues to display the talents and abilities so accurately described by him.

As an advocate your Honour was incredibly hard working, insightful and forensic. Your Honour developed a particular expertise in Hague Convention International Abduction matters and was probably the only barrister in Victoria who understands that other Convention on parental responsibility and the protection of children.

When representing a client, your Honour combined detailed preparation, proper advice and exceptional advocacy with empathy and a valued understanding of their circumstances. Your Honour is the proud owner of a grey pashmina shawl given to you by a grateful client. She called it your cloak of respect and dignity and she gave it to you at the end of her trial because she said, you when representing her, had for the first time in a long time, cloaked her with respect and dignity. You also won her case.

Your Honour is the devoted partner of Kritz and the loving mother of the delightful Ollie and Hattie. You are a valued and admired colleague who brightened up even the most difficult of days with your humour and your grace.

Judge Boymal will be an equally missed colleague and a great gain for the Australian people now as a judge.

Your Honour has had around 36 years' experience in the family law jurisdiction. Indeed your Honour's family law career is just 7 years shy of the existence of the Family Law Act itself. After articles and some years in private practice you became a Deputy Registrar of the Family Court and remained in that role for 5 years.

After this time your Honour came to the Bar in 1992 and read with Bruce Geddes QC. You had a long and distinguished career as Counsel. This is evidenced by the fact that your Honour's first appearance in a reported case was in the 1993 matter of Kossatz and Kossatz before Justice Mullane. Mr Bartfeld as he was then, of mere Counsel, appeared on behalf of the Wife and your Honour was led the late Noel Ackman QC instructed by Nedovic & Co.

Your last reported appearance prior to your appointment, was as Counsel for the Independent Children's Lawyer before Justice Cronin in a judgment handed down as recently 19 February 2019. This was a difficult case concerning allegations of abuse and psychiatric illness, which impacted upon parenting, and your Honour appeared as Counsel for the Independent Children's Lawyer.

Your Honour has developed a significant expertise in appearing in complex parenting matters as Counsel for the Independent Children's Lawyer. Your Honour's experience, insight and advocacy in this role has been invaluable in numerous cases to assist the Court to determine the correct outcome.

Your Honour is considered a particular mentor for the younger members of the profession and is always prepared to share your wisdom and discuss with junior



barristers the problems they may face. Indeed your Honour's generous giving of time and advice and your genuine interest in others is a hallmark of your Honour's career.

There were a few years when you temporarily left the Bar and returned to the Family Court as a Registrar and then again spent a short time in private practice as a solicitor in partnership with Kerry Townsend. When Ms Townsend fell ill, your Honour was one of her strongest supporters, literally physically caring for her throughout her very serious illness.

Your Honour's gregarious nature and hospitality away from work is also well known. You and your partner Brett have a close and enduring relationship. You have an open door policy at your home and a table groaning with food for your beloved boys and their friends. They have expressed their immense love for you and pride in your achievements.

Your Honour has of course coped with very difficult personal circumstances. Even throughout that time and since, when representing parties and in particular children in Court, your Honour has maintained your focus on assisting others, on the highest professional standards and a commitment to effective and independent advocacy.

Both of your Honour's, now given your first names known as the judicial A Team, are very welcome appointments and will be highly respected judges. Your appointments are the Bar's loss but the Court's gain.

May it please the Court