His Honour Judge William Desmond Thomas WARD RFD, ED, QC, LLB

(27/10/1920 – 06/10/2012)

Twenty years ago at the sittings of the District Court of New South Wales at Taree on 4 September 1992 farewell remarks were addressed to His Honour Judge W D T WARD at the close of his final sittings on circuit. Mr P Barnett on behalf of the Crown and the community thanked Him Honour for his contributions in fifty years of the law and in the last twenty years he had adorned the Bench. A week later on 11 September 1992 on his return to Sydney, Mr F S McAlary QC addressed His Honour reminding him of his first case in Taree in 1942, and of his long association with the Eleventh Floor, Wentworth Chambers! He recalled His Honour's occupation of the Bench since January 1973 where he had been, “a strong judge, maintaining the integrity of the court, and showing an unfailing courtesy” and where “litigants have all left with the feeling that their case had been fully heard and properly assessed...the quintessence of judicial requirement.” When questioned many years ago by his leader as to his ambition, His Honour replied, “I want to be a District Court Judge, nothing more and nothing less!” He was not to regret that decision!

Having read law at Sydney University and admitted to the Bar in 1942, one might have thought this was now the end of an illustrious career for Ward J after so outstanding a half century of service! Indeed, he had, inter alia, been a leading silk in the Licensing Tribunal, and Judge of the District Court of New South Wales from 1973-1992; Deputy-Chairman of the Medical Disciplinary Tribunal, 1982; Judge of the Transport Appeal Court, 1981; Deputy-President of the Police Tribunal; as well as having been in 1971 an Acting Justice of the Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea as it then was! He took silk in 1971, while his latest challenge after retiring had been Chairman of the Parole Board, formerly known as the Offenders' Review Board from 1992-1997. Furthermore, he had become a Colonel in the Citizens' Military Force in 1972, awarded the Reserve Forces and Efficiency Decorations; and devoted himself to the work of Legacy in caring for those broken by war and their dependants – all this after war service himself with the 2\textsuperscript{nd} AIF from 1941-1946 in Papua New Guinea.

In 1971 His Honour visited Papua New Guinea as an Acting Supreme Court Judge with his wife, Antoinette, and their young children travelling the length and breadth of the country on circuit with neither the benefit of air conditioning nor court reporting services! Seventy years ago he had been one of those modest archetypal war heroes of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} AIF then fighting the Japanese in the ‘forgotten war’ on Bougainville; and among the first to convince the world that the invincible Bushido warrior was not as insuperable as we believed! Having set a worthy example of courage and hard work throughout; sadly this old soldier, fiercely loyal to family and friends, had to suffer the terrible loss of Antoinette in a motor accident later in New South Wales! He immediately assumed full care of his young family becoming an excellent curry cook as revealed by his daughter, Jane, in a beautiful eulogy for her father at his Memorial Service; and on one occasion entertaining the whole of an Indian touring XI as guests at home!