

THE HONOURABLE RICHARD KELSHAM FULLAGAR

The Honourable Richard Kelsham Fullagar, LL.M., QC Chairman of the Legal Profession Tribunal since 1997, died on 19 November 2001, aged 75. He had served as a judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria from 1975 to 1994. His father, Sir Wilfred Fullagar, had rendered five years' similar service from 1945 until his appointment as a Judge of the High Court of Australia. Of Sir Wilfred's work on that Court, Sir Owen Dixon said, "he combined with a remarkable erudition great resources of scholarship. His judgments commanded the admiration of lawyers not only for their penetration, their soundness and their correctness, but for the exposition of legal principles in an almost unequalled English style." In the case of "Dick" Fullagar, the fine qualities of the father passed on to the son in very generous measure.

His education, at Scotch and Geelong College and the University of Melbourne was interrupted by naval service in 1945/46 during which he was commissioned as a Sub-Lieutenant. He returned to his studies in 1946 and, after the final Honours examination, he graduated Master of Laws. Signing the Bar Roll in 1949, he developed a thriving practice, excelling in the areas of equity and property law. Soon, however, the specialty of intellectual property came to dominate his work. Thereafter, there were few, if any, major patent cases in which he did not appear. They took him on occasions to the Privy Council, to the United States and to Singapore. He frequently appeared in the High Court. The taking of Silk followed in 1964. There was also devoted service rendered to the Bar Council, including a term as Vice-Chairman.

Upon his retirement from this Court his Honour accepted appointments as Chairman of the Solicitors' Board and, in 1997, of the Legal Profession Tribunal. Characteristically, he treated these appointments as full-time jobs.

As a member of this Court his was characterised by much industry — indeed he habitually strove for perfection in all that he did. Profound scholarship and a facility with language combined to produce model judgments. His humour and amiability as a colleague will be greatly missed.

He is survived by his widow June, whom he married in 1953, his three children, Richard, Jenny and Sally, and seven grandchildren.

JHP