FORD ON SHOW AT 90

Not everyone has their 90th birthday marked with an exhibition at their old university.
Not everyone is Harold Ford.

The former Melbourne Law School academic, a leading figure in Australian corporate law for several decades, has had his considerable legacy documented in a display on the ground floor of the University of Melbourne’s law school building.

The Harold Ford Professor of Commercial Law at Melbourne Law School, Professor Ian Ramsay, said the professionally-curated display was a way of celebrating Mr Ford’s birthday and acknowledging his achievements as a teacher and a scholar.

“His legacy has been profound,” Professor Ramsay told the LIJ. “Harold developed expertise and was so influential in at least two important areas of law.

“He is perhaps best known for corporate law work but he was also a pioneer in the area of trusts law. To combine those two as he did was very, very rare.

“Many people still use his works. Ford’s Principles of Corporations Law is in its 14th edition and is going on for 40 years, which is remarkable.”

Mr Ford told the LIJ it was “a bit overwhelming” to have his birthday acknowledged in such a way.

He said he still occasionally read judgments on the internet and perused the business pages of the major newspapers but didn’t follow law reform “as closely as I used to”.

“I first went into a law firm in 1937 and things were much quieter then,” he quipped.

The display is not the first time that Mr Ford’s achievements have been acknowledged.

For his 80th birthday, the school organised a conference with speakers from academia and the judiciary. The proceedings were published as a book with the foreword written by High Court Justice Kenneth Hayne, a former student of Mr Ford.

For more information on the display and Mr Ford’s legacy see http://cclsr.law.unimelb.edu.au/go/news/index.cfm. The display, which opened in October, will close this month.

A WEEK TO REMEMBER

Hundreds of suburban and bush lawyers have united for a week of debate, networking and good times.

The annual Regional and Suburban Lawyers Week, held 4-10 October, saw events held in the eastern, southern and western suburbs of Melbourne, Geelong, Gippsland, Bendigo, the Western District, Mornington and the Wimmera.

These included tenpin bowling, “Trivial pursuits in suits”, a young lawyers lunch and the “Old Smarts v Upstarts” barefoot lawn bowls competition.

A “Dine in the Vines” evening was held at a Traralgon vineyard, while the Office of Public Prosecutions hosted a sold-out “Cocktails with Counsel” evening in Geelong.

LIV Regional & Suburban Young Lawyers Committee chair Kim McFarlane said the week allowed young lawyers to network and tell war stories about their experiences.

Topics discussed included appearing in the Magistrates’ Court, available support services for clients, handling difficult clients, plea making and the benefits of practising in regional Victoria.

 “[The week] also enables the young lawyers to create new friendships whilst finding peer support,” Ms McFarlane said.

Dine in the Vines, for example, presented an invaluable opportunity for young lawyers to discuss issues with members of the local judiciary.

LIV Young Lawyers’ Section president Julie Fraser said other topics discussed included the importance of networking and mentoring.

She said the often disparate experiences that graduates had in different firms before achieving full qualification, and the role that the new practical legal training program has played in addressing the issue, were also keenly discussed.

For more information about the YLS, or country and suburban law associations, see under “Membership” on the LIV website www.liv.asn.au.

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE: Victoria Legal Aid’s Abirama S and Angelique Renieris chat with Magistrate Clive Alsop at the Dine in the Vines evening at Traralgon.

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ICONIC: Harold Ford’s many achievements have been documented in a new display at the University of Melbourne.