



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

THURSDAY, 29 JANUARY, 1981

NEW APPOINTMENTS MADE TO HIGH COURT

The Right Honourable Sir Harry Talbot Gibbs has been appointed as the Chief Justice of Australia.

The new Justice to take Sir Harry's place on the High Court will be Mr. Justice Francis Gerard Brennan, 52, a Judge of the Federal Court of Australia.

Sir Harry, 62, the present senior Justice of the High Court, will take up his appointment on February 12, the day after the present Chief Justice, Sir Garfield Barwick, retires.

Sir Harry Gibbs, who has been on the High Court Bench for over ten years, is one of Australia's outstanding jurists.

He has the respect of the legal profession throughout Australia and of the Governments in Australia. He has served on the Benches of three of the highest courts for almost 20 years.

Sir Harry has acted as Chief Justice on many occasions during the absence of Sir Garfield Barwick.

Sir Harry was born in Sydney, educated at the Ipswich Grammar School and the University of Queensland from where he graduated as a Bachelor of Arts with first class honours and a Master of Laws with first class honours.

He was admitted to the Queensland Bar in 1939, was appointed a Queen's Counsel in 1957 and a Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 1961. During his term on the Supreme Court in Queensland he was Chairman of the Committee of Inquiry into the Expansion of the Sugar Industry and was the Royal Commissioner who inquired into the Queensland Police activities associated with the National Hotel.

Sir Harry became the Judge of the Federal Court of Bankruptcy and a Judge of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory in 1967 and in 1970 he was appointed to the High Court.

He served with the AMF and the AIF from 1939 to 1945 and was mentioned in despatches.

He is married with one son and three daughters.

The new Justice, Mr. Justice Brennan, will bring with him to the High Court a comprehensive knowledge of the common law, of constitutional law and a specialised knowledge of administrative law.

As the first President of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, Mr. Justice Brennan pioneered the procedures and working of the Tribunal. He was appointed to the Federal Court at its inception and for the last year has sat exclusively on Federal Court work.

Mr. Justice Brennan was born in Rockhampton, and educated at the Christian Brothers College, Rockhampton and Downlands College, Toowoomba. He graduated as a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Queensland and was admitted to the Queensland Bar in 1951. He was appointed a Queen's Counsel in 1965.

Mr. Justice Brennan is a former President of the National Union of Australian University Students, former President of the Queensland Bar Association and the Australian Bar Association.

He served as a part-time member of the Australian Law Reform Commission before his appointment as President of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

He is married with three sons and four daughters.

Mr. Justice Brennan will take up his appointment on February 12.