

Thursday, 13 October 2011

Former Supreme Court justice dies

FORMER SA Supreme Court justice Samuel Joshua (Sam) Jacobs AO QC died peacefully at his Adelaide home yesterday (Tuesday October 11) after a long illness. He was 90 years old.

Jacobs was a member of the SA Supreme Court from 1973 until his compulsory retirement at the end of 1990, when he turned 70.

A few months later, he was appointed Royal Commissioner into the debt crisis that had overtaken the then State Bank of South Australia in early 1991. He produced two reports, in 1992 and 1993.

For the third and final report, later in 1993, the then John Mansfield QC, who had been counsel assisting the Royal Commission, took over as royal commissioner. (Justice John Mansfield has been a Federal Court judge since 1996.)

Jacobs began practising law in 1946, after completing studies and training interrupted by war service in the army.

He took silk in 1965, still working from within his long-time legal firm, which is no longer possible. He was president of the Law Society from 1971 until his appointment to the Supreme Court.

From the early 1950s, he had various involvements in voluntary work in support of education, including 32 years as a member of the council of the University of Adelaide. He was a deputy chancellor of that university from 1984 until 1993.

In 1982 he was made an officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for services to law and education. He received honorary doctorates from the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia.

Sam Jacobs was an active freemason and a past Grandmaster of Freemasons in SA and NT.

He is survived by his two sisters, and by three sons, one daughter, five grandchildren and three great-grandsons. His wife Mary died in 2007.

His funeral is expected to take place next week.

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