



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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THIRD#ABORIGINAL BARRISTER*

Mr Robert Bellear, of Sydney, who is the subject of our cover picture, is the third Australian Aboriginal to become a fully qualified, university-educated barrister and, appropriately, was admitted to the New South Wales Bar on National Aborigines Day, July 13th, this year.

Mr Bellear holds the degree of B.Juris.LLB. of the University of New South Wales, where he studied for five years. Earlier he had studied at Sydney Technical College to complete a matriculation certificate, qualifying him to undertake university studies.

His wife, whom he married in 1966, is the former Miss Kay Williams, a Victorian. Mr and Mrs Bellear adopted three black children and fostered another three - two black teenagers and one white child - during his seven-year period of study.

Mr Bellear was born at Murrumburrah, New South Wales, on June 27th, 1944, the second eldest in a family of nine children. When he was half-way through the fifth year of high school studies, he joined the Royal Australian Navy. During nine years of service in the Navy, he became a trade-fitter and turner, boiler-maker and deep-sea diver. He left the Navy in 1968, because of his attitude towards Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.

Mr Bellear has been active in the Aboriginal movement for the past ten years and has held executive positions in organizations like the Aboriginal legal and medical services. He started a \$3 million Aboriginal housing company in Redfern, an inner Sydney suburb with a large Aboriginal population, which now houses 60 Aboriginal families. He and his wife started the Aboriginal Children's Service.

Mr Bellear was the first Aborigine to be appointed to membership of the Corrective Services Advisory Council in New South Wales. He is the first Aboriginal chairman of the ALP Aboriginal Policy Committee in New South Wales and a member of the Federal ALP Aboriginal Policy Committee. He was for many years involved in a service for Aborigines, based on the Catholic Presbytery, Redfern.

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Adapted from *The Catholic Leader*, No.3521, July 15, 1979.

#The first Aboriginal barrister, Miss Pat O'Shane, Sydney, was featured in this journal Vol.4:2,1976. The second, Mr Michael Dodson, was admitted to the Bar in Victoria on 1st March, 1979.