

## WAITE ARBORETUM HISTORY WALK FACT SHEET: S. JACOBS 1920 - 2011

(Arboretum seats, memorial seats, history features)

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# SAM JACOBS 1920 – 2011



- 1. NAME - DOB – DOD:** Sam JACOBS 1920 – 11 October 2011
  - **Seat location:** from the labyrinth walk west. The seat is on the eastern side of the watercourse and north of the Meliesa Judge “Waterbirds” sculpture. The seat is facing west.
  - **Nearby tree species:** #56 *Corymbia variegata* (F. Muell.) L. Johnson & K. Hill MYRTACEAE, N.S.W., Q.L.D. 1949
- 2. QUALIFICATIONS:** LLB, D. Univ. (Adel.)



Photos: Terry Langham #56 *Corymbia variegata* (F. Muell.) L. Johnson & K. Hill MYRTACEAE, N.S.W. Q.L.D. 1949



### 3. AREA OF RESEARCH, INTEREST OR INFLUENCE IN THE WAITE ARBORETUM:

*“In October we noted the death of The Honourable Samuel Jacobs AO, QC, LLB, D. Univ. (Adel.) – Chief Justice of South Australia, highly esteemed Deputy Chancellor and member of the University of Adelaide Council and inaugural Patron of the Friends of the Waite Arboretum.*

*Sam’s high stature within the University and his staunch defence of Peter Waite’s bequest were invaluable in 2000 when part of the Arboretum was under threat of alienation for a building site.*

*Donations in his memory to both the FWA and the Friends of the Waite Conservation Reserve were gratefully” (Gardner, 2012, p.2).*

### 4. FURTHER INFORMATION – SOME WORDS OF HUMOUR, INTERESTING FACTS, ETC:

Extracts / questions from John Emerson on 23 May 2009 interview transcript from Oral Histories Interview on Honourable Samuel Joshua Jacobs AO QC

*“ This is an interview with the Honourable Samuel Joshua Jacobs, AO, QC, LLB, Doctor of the University from Adelaide and Doctor of the University from University of South Australia. The date is 23 May 2009. The Honourable Sam Jacobs was born on 6 December 1920 at home in Glenelg. He rose through the legal profession, and was appointed Queen’s Counsel in 1965 and a Supreme Court Judge from 1973 to 1990. He presided over the Royal Commission into the collapse of the State Bank over the years 1991 to 1993. He was the President of the Law Society of South Australia from 1972 to 1973. Apart from his contribution to administration of justice, he served education on the Council of the University of Adelaide where he was Deputy Chancellor from 1984 to 1992 and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Governors of Scotch College from 1970 to 1987. Sam Jacobs also saw active service as an officer in World War II, from 1940 to 1944.*

*I was born at Glenelg in 1920 and spent my boyhood in a happy family background. The family moved to a house in Unley Park. I was enrolled at Scotch College when I was eight years old and I stayed there until 1938 and my last year at school when I was, in fact, Captain of the school.*

...

*He lectured himself in the elements of law and legal history and in torts and in contract, but all the other subjects were taught by members of the legal profession. Do you want me to name them? ...*

*Yes, that would be very interesting.*

*Was there an age limit, for example, when they were looking for men to go off on active service?*

*I believe even some of the lawyers who were lecturing, like Ralph Hague, had gone away too.*

*When you were first admitted, was that when you joined Brown Rymill & Stevens?*

*How did he treat Counsel? Did you notice any difference between the way he treated Junior Counsel and Senior Counsel?*

*Yes. That was Mr Justice Abbott who was a bit of a bully and often gave Counsel and witnesses a bad time. Indeed, I once appealed against a judgement of Abbott on the basis that he’d descended into the arena and overstepped the limits of judicial propriety.*

There was a meeting around 1958 that the Law Society held, about the potential division of the profession. Do you remember that?

Where did you first meet Bob Fisher, do you remember? Was that before you were even a lawyer?

My first encounter with the High Court was in 1950, as junior to Mr Ross Casey as he then was, in a patent case brought against the South Australian Brush Company who had produced a product called the 'Sweepiest Broom'.

Did you win in that case? You won in that case in 1950 against Barwick?

Did you do criminal cases when you were at the Bar yourself?

What do you remember about Harry Alderman? ...

How well did you know Dr Bray when you were appointed? ...

What was the experience when you were appointed a Judge and you arrive at work the first day?

I think I was in full possession of my faculties at the age of 70 and not all judges are. Some of us, as it were, last longer than others. I hope I'm still in possession of my faculties now that I'm 88. ...

Yes, it's 25 Grenfell. ...

I think one last thing I think we should discuss is Scotch College. I think you had a lot to do with Scotch. ...

No, I don't think we've spoken much about Scotch. ...

And last but not least, did you want to talk briefly about your family? I believe you met your wife when you were as young as 17 years old.

I've had a very happy family personal life. My wife and I were married for 62 years at the time of her death. I met her when we were both at school. I'm not even sure that it was love at first sight, which I don't really believe in. I was introduced to her at a meeting of a combined school sports event on the Adelaide Oval. I do remember when our eyes met there seemed to be some sort of a message. That was in 1937.

Then in 1938 our relationship became somewhat closer because she was Head Prefect of what was then PGC, now Seymour, and I was Head Prefect of Scotch College. We had more to do with each other, social functions, school dances and interschool debates and so on. We became very fond of each other. There was one occasion I can remember, when we were playing against King's School, or King's College as it then was, out at Kensington. I was Captain of the school cricket team and we had been dismissed for about 130 and they were 6 for 124. I was bowling my funny slow leg breaks and I was about to take myself off because I didn't want the winning runs to be hit off me, being a very selfish Captain, and then Mary arrived to watch the cricket. So I thought, well I'll give myself one more over seeing she's come to watch me. I took four wickets in that over and we won the match. And I thought to myself, well if this person can have that sort of influence on my behaviour then she must be meant for me.

Our relationship developed thereafter. I think she was a little worried when we both went to university that I might be playing the field with new female acquaintances but she need not have worried about that. Of course, after one year at the university I went off to the war. We did discuss getting married but I was only 19 in fact at the time, and I had no money and I thought it was unwise to get married and perhaps leave her as a young widow.

I said, we'll wait and things will turn out, as indeed they did. We eventually married in 1946 and lived happily ever after with four children. Now, of course, there's grandchildren and three great grandchildren. It was a long and happy marriage. Indeed on our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, our

daughter said to us, well you two must have got it right or you're too jolly lazy to do anything about it. And I said, well we got it right – and we did. I was very fortunate to have a long and happy marriage. ...

*This concludes the interview”.*

## 5. PHOTOS:



Photos: Terry Langham

## 6. REFERENCES:

Emerson, J. 2009 *Oral Histories Interview, Honourable Samuel Joshua Jacobs AO QC*, The Law Society of South Australia 2016 [Online, accessed 20 May 2016] URL:

Gardner, J. 2012, *Friends of the Waite Arboretum Inc.* Newsletter No. 70 Summer p.2

