

Media Watch

John Anderson (BA '78, MA '80)

John Anderson may not have been a political animal from birth, but it seems he won't be leaving politics behind in a hurry.

Although he began taking leadership roles in the National Party only in 1984, Mr Anderson was thrust into the limelight in July when he became Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the Party after Tim Fischer's sudden resignation.

Mr Anderson came from a family property at Mullaley in north western NSW. He returned to the farm after University, but by 1984, he was sufficiently involved in politics to become Chairman of the Tambar Springs branch of the National Party. He entered Federal politics in 1989, when he was elected as Federal member for Gwydir, and since then his ministerial appointments have included Primary Industries and Energy, Transport and Regional Development, and Transport and Regional Services.

At a news conference following his appointment as Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Anderson said his objective was to make the Nationals the "party of excellence" in finding the best future for rural and remote Australia.



Virginia Bell (LLB '77) Margaret Beazley (LLB '74) Carolyn Simpson (BA '71)

Three Sydney University graduates set a legal precedent when they joined the first all-female bench to sit in an Australian court this April.

Justices Virginia Bell, Margaret Beazley and Carolyn Simpson threw out an appeal from a convicted computer hacker who had, out of "sheer maliciousness", been posting offensive messages on Ausnet's homepage.

Justice Beazley, who commented to the *Daily Telegraph* that the day was a "very practical demonstration of the part that women play in the law", was previously a commercial equity and criminal lawyer. Justice Bell was appointed to the Supreme Court in March, and Justice Simpson, a former schoolteacher turned Queen's Counsellor, was the judge responsible for sentencing notorious gangland murderer Neddy Smith.

The three women were clearly pleased to make history. According to the Women Lawyers Association of NSW, there has never been an all-female bench in England or New Zealand.

The first all-female bench to sit in an Australian court (from left):

Justice Carolyn Simpson,
Justice Margaret Beazley,
Judge of Appeal, and
Justice Virginia Bell.



Photo: George Fetting/SMH

Nick Farr-Jones (LLB '86)

Since his graduation from the University of Sydney, Nick Farr-Jones has been on a journey of epic proportions. A ten-year legal career ran contemporaneously with his time in the Australian Rugby Union Team, including his legendary Wallaby captainship from 1988 to 1992.

In 1994, Farr-Jones left for four years in France with the Société Générale Bank. He still works with Société Générale in Australia.

Other strings to the Farr-Jones bow include an AM for services to Rugby, an anecdotal book about Rugby called *Nicks and Cuts* written with fellow graduate Steve Cutler, membership of the University's Senate, and a recent appointment as attaché to the New Zealand National Paralympic Committee.

This year, the Rugby legend, who described himself in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as "a pretty normal person who has been in the right place at the right time", teamed up with Kathryn Greiner to run against fellow alumni Frank Sartor (BE(Chem) '76) and Lucy Hughes Turnbull (LLB '82) in the recent Sydney City Council elections. Although the team was not successful in challenging Sartor's hold, Farr-Jones has won a seat on council for the next four years.

Julia Leigh (BA '94 LLB '94)

The only Australian on the British *Observer on Sunday's* list of "top twenty writers to watch for in the new millennium", Julia Leigh has made an impressive debut on the international literary scene with her novel *The Hunter*.

She has been shortlisted for the 1999 *Age* Book of the Year Awards, and appeared at the Melbourne Writer's Festival in August. "I wouldn't have even dreamed of it all two or three years ago," she told the *Sunday Telegraph*.



Leigh says that her time at University, when she edited *Honi Soit*, informed her development as a writer. She was admitted to the Supreme Court of NSW, but has opted for a life of novel writing and legal work for the Australian Society of Authors, advising on contracts and copyright.

The Hunter is the shadowy story of a lone man obsessed with tracking down the last Tasmanian tiger: "a creature of mythic proportions".

Leigh described the act of writing as an intense and lonely experience. Her prose is sparse and reverberates with the loneliness of the Tasmanian landscape.

"I've always loved the wilderness, but think we should avoid over-sentimentalising it," she says.

Photo: Brendan Esposito/SMH