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## QC sworn in as new president for Queensland Court of Appeal

10 April 2017 **Melissa Coade** 3 comments

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**A leading Queen's Counsel has taken the reins from Justice Margaret McMurdo as president of the Queensland Court of Appeal.**

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Walter Sofronoff QC was sworn in as the new president of the Court of Appeal last Thursday, 6 April.

His appointment follows the **retirement of Justice Margaret McMurdo** (<https://www.lawyersweekly.com.au/wig-chamber/19984-exemplary-queensland-wig-to-retire>) AC, who served in the position for near 19 years.

Justice Sofronoff was called to the bar in 1977 and took silk in 1988. He served as the solicitor-general of Queensland for nine years, between 2005 and 2014.

The end of his tenure as solicitor-general was characterised by a fractious relationship with the state government of the day, headed by former premier Campbell Newman. After resigning

from the state role, the barrister took Jarrod Bleijie to task, when the then-attorney-general made false remarks suggesting nepotism was at play among the ranks of the judiciary.

In naming the barrister as the state's next Court of Appeal president, Queensland Attorney-General Yvette D'Ath described Walter Sofronoff as a most respected legal practitioner.

"This is a significant appointment for Queensland, the second highest position in the state's justice system," Mrs D'Ath said.

"It requires someone with exceptional skills and legal qualifications, who is highly regarded by the entire legal profession.

"Walter Sofronoff is that person. He has a brilliant legal mind, and a person of exceptional character and integrity," she said.

Some of the notable roles he has held over the course of his legal career include leading the Grantham Floods Inquiry as commission and undertaking a review of the state's parole system.

President of the Queensland Law Society, Christine Smyth, said that Justice Sofronoff was one of Queensland's finest legal minds and an ideal replacement for Justice McMurdo.

Prior to the barrister's appointment last week, Ms Smyth described him as one of Australia's most eminent and respected lawyers.

"Mr Sofronoff has worked at the highest levels of litigation – both criminal and civil – including countless appearances before the High Court of Australia," Ms Smyth said.

"We wholly support his appointment and anticipate he will be fiercely independent and lead the court with distinction," she said.

Ms Smyth spoke at the new president's swearing in ceremony last week.



L-R: Christine Smyth, Justice Margaret McMurdo AC, Justice Walter Sofronoff and Queensland Attorney-General Yvette D'Ath. *Image courtesy Queensland Law Society.*

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