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PREPARED & PRESENTED BY: G.H. Cumming

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**Wor. Bro. Rt. Hon. Sir HARRY TALBOT GIBBS,
PC, GCMG, AC, KCB, BA, LL.M, Hon LLD, Hon D.Univ (Griffith).
CHIEF JUSTICE of AUSTRALIA
(1917-2005)**

Sir Harry Gibbs was one of the leading Jurists in Australia's history and had a distinguished career at the Queensland bar.

He was a judge for some 27 years, in both the state and commonwealth spheres, the last seven of which he was chief justice.

After attending Ipswich Grammar School, Queensland's oldest GPS school, young Bill - as he was always known to family and friends - enrolled in arts at the University of Queensland and it was there that he shone academically. In 1937 he achieved first-class honours in English literature and two years later first-class honours in law.

He was also president of the students' union and, momentarily, a member of the University's women's club, after a prank in which he argued that the rules stated, "That all qualified students were ipso facto members of the women's club." The rules were immediately amended and Bill and his pals gracefully withdrew.

In May 1939, Gibbs was admitted as a barrister to the Supreme Court of Queensland and read with a senior barrister. He barely had time to practice when war was declared. He enlisted on 2 September 1939, the day after the German invasion of Poland, and was appointed to HQ First Military District, Northern Command, responsible for mobilisation.

He was promoted quickly to temporary captain and after the fall of Singapore in 1942 he transferred to the AIF and became deputy assistant adjutant-general in the Queensland Lines of Communication Area. In late 1943 he was posted to New Guinea as a staff captain. He was mentioned in dispatches. In November 1944 he was promoted to major and returned to Australia and the Research and Civil Affairs HQ where he was involved in drawing up postwar plans for a united government of Papua and New Guinea.

In the same month he married Muriel Dunn, a fellow Queenslander and law student.

His return to the Brisbane bar was challenging. He lost his first case in the local magistrates court. The reliance on lofty case law that left the magistrate unpersuaded was soon appreciated by solicitors and judges in other courts and by the end of 1946 his reputation and practice had grown considerably.

