



No discrimination – just lousy wages. 50-year legal landmark for Mary-Lynne.

Of the 320 students starting at Sydney University Law School in 1964 Mary-Lynne Taylor was one of just eight women.

Having started at the University two years earlier studying arts she switched to the Law School – which was then housed in a condemned building in Phillip Street.

Her first legal job as an articled clerk in 1965 saw her working at 77 Castlereagh Street, the now location of Bartier Perry. But unable to survive on six pounds a week – a third of the minimum wage at the time – she left after a year.

Not that you'll get any complaints as Mary-Lynne marks her 50th year in the law this month – making her one of the longest serving female lawyers working in commercial law in Australia.

She went on to join the Crown Solicitor's office, graduating in Law in 1968, admitted as a non-practising barrister in 1969 and undertaking her articles in 1970 at Legal Aid in Wollongong.

After getting a job at Dawson Waldron (now Ashurst) in the early seventies, Mary-Lynne was one of a small team working for client Sydney City Council in closing down brothels, gambling dens and battling some colourful developers.

"I enjoyed environment and planning law, but found I had a passion for helping people. I've always wanted to be a solicitor and not a barrister or judge for that reason – I love working with my colleagues," she said.

"Technology has made the job easier and faster. While legal workplaces were often closed enclaves of Sydney society or old school ties, they have now become far more interesting and diverse places to work."

"I was lucky to not face any gender discrimination in my career," said Mary-Lynne. "Certainly, though more needs to be done right across the profession to recognise that while women now represent 50% of most law firms, that's not reflected in partner numbers."

"During my time the law has also turned more from a profession into a business but the courtesy and understanding between legal professionals remain and that's really important."

Bartier Perry CEO Riana Steyn said "Mary-Lynne's expert knowledge is generously shared with all across Bartier Perry. She does it with flair, patience and humour. Particularly Mary-Lynne teaches our people not just about the law but how to build strong and lasting networks and

how to help people along the way. She is a master teacher to us all and not just to Bartier Perry but to our clients and to university students and many government bodies. After 50 years of being in the law Mary-Lynne's enthusiasm and energy doesn't seem to have waned and that has a contagious effect for all who know her."

Mary-Lynne's advice to law students today is to add another interest to their law degree by studying another subject and to otherwise, "go for it."

Along with continuing her role as Special Counsel at Bartier Perry, her own career has come full circle in being appointed Adjunct Professor by Sydney University for her work within the Urban and Regional planning section of the Faculty of Architecture.