

## Lifestyle

### Groom family practice and mum, Gillian, joins 'the firm'

SINCE she was a young girl talking with her barrister father, Gillian Groom had been fascinated by the law.

MICHELLE PAINE

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#### Lifestyle

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Gillian Groom

SINCE she was a young girl talking with her barrister father, Gillian Groom had been fascinated by the law. As she worked as an occupational therapist, the law often came up.

At home she talked about it with her lawyer husband, former premier Ray Groom.

Mrs Groom watched five of her six children graduate in law. Then she took her chance.

On Tuesday she will receive her law degree from the University of Tasmania, three weeks before turning 70.

"It was never going away and I was going to do this come hell or high water but I wasn't prepared to be on campus with my children, it wouldn't be fair to them. Once [youngest son] Ben had walked off site, I put in my application," Mrs Groom said.

Her dad told her that being a lawyer as a woman meant she might end up "stuck in a back room and not getting the sort of work you deserve".

"He said 'things will change'."

Mrs Groom left home in Burnie at age 16 to study occupational therapy at the University of Melbourne.

She loved her career and felt her experience was an asset to study.

"I thought I would be isolated at university and I was prepared for that. But I've got so many lovely friends. I think I was the eldest but nobody ever pointed it out."

Mrs Groom said she would wind up her occupational therapy private practice, do her legal practice diploma and be admitted.

"I hope to be able to help in policy in health and ageing. I want to give back. I like being an advocate for people."

She thought husband Ray was "quietly chuffed".

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