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Murdoch family three from three at School of Law

In the more than three decades since the University of Notre Dame Australia opened its doors, few have been part of its fabric quite like the Murdoch family.

“It’s been hard to explain the connection of warmth and familiarity,” said Peter Murdoch, a current law student who enrolled on recommendation of his wife Linda and at one point shared classes with his son, also named Peter.

“And it is not hard to see from whom I get my inspiration – my incredibly humble wife and our amazing son.”

The Murdoch’s remarkable connection to Notre Dame and the School of Law began with Linda, who graduated in 2005 as dux of the Juris Doctor course and the winner of the Deacon’s Prize in Law.

What followed was a brilliant career that saw her rise to Senior Associate to Chief Justice of Victoria’s Supreme Court Hon Marilyn Warren AC KC, a senior leader in Legal Aid Victoria, a Director at the Legal Services Board and legal advisor to the WA Legislative Council, among other roles.

Linda was delighted, but not surprised, when both her husband and her son followed in her footsteps and enrolled in a Bachelor of Laws at Notre Dame’s Fremantle campus in 2016.

“They are both well suited to law – dedicated, committed and most of all, decent and honourable people,” Linda said. “And I adore them.”

When his son fell ill, Peter the father took some time away from his studies to “be dad, rather than a classmate”, supporting him until he graduated last year with seven law prizes under his belt.

This included The Law Society of Western Australia Prize (First Prize) in Legal Process and Statutory Interpretation for 2016, which he shares with his dad.

The younger Peter was recently admitted as a lawyer and works for philanthropic organisation Minderoo Foundation, where he holds a reputation for kindness, empathy and a willingness to work hard.

“I found studying law to be incredibly enriching and so it’s lovely being able to connect with mum and dad through an additional set of shared experiences and interests,” he said.

“To me, the rule of law is one of the most critical and significant aspects of our society. I’m immensely proud of mum and dad’s public service careers and their involvement in administering law and policy through the public service.”

As someone who will “never die wondering” - having worked as an actor, business owner and expert witness in digital forensics, to name a few things – Peter the father picked up his studies again last year.

He was drawn to Notre Dame by the quality of teaching and focus on pastoral care experienced by Linda, and he came to love the intimate atmosphere in Fremantle and guidance and dedication of his lecturers.

“It is very hard to put into words the feeling I had when first at Notre Dame,” Peter said.

“The commitment of my lecturers to assist and guide reflects their dedication and professionalism to legal education. They are a wonderful group of professionals and without exception, live the University’s objects and values in all they do.”

With two accomplished lawyers and a dedicated student in the tight knit family, law talk regularly creeps into the Murdoch family’s dinner conversations, particularly at exam time – but they wouldn’t have it any other way.

Notre Dame’s National Head of the School of Business and Law, Professor Michael Quinlan, said the Murdoch family’s commitment to the law, and their service to the community, was inspirational.

“Peter and Linda, and their son Peter, have embraced the opportunities that come from a university education and are all contributing to the good of the community,” he said. “This is a family of which Notre Dame can be very proud.”

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