



"Tikkun olam means to heal the world, or to make this world a better place. It's an obligation that I live by."

David Knoll AM

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became determined to work against discrimination, racism and anti-semitism, concluding that studying law was his best course.

In David's first year studying law, UNSW Professor Tony Blackshield took him aside to remind him that "pigeon holes are for pigeons", encouraging him to think beyond conventional legal categories, and to have a global perspective.

Although David's expansive attitude proved ideal for work in the international law arena, he decided to go to the Bar in his late thirties to spend less time on planes and more time with his family.

As he built his Sydney practice, he also took on senior leadership positions within Australia's Jewish community, promoting mutual respect and friendship among Christians, Muslims and Jews. This work was recognised in his appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia in 2010.

David says his personal philosophy is simple: "*Tikkun olam* means to heal the world, or to make this world a better place. It's an obligation that I live by."

Then, says David, "he slapped me on the back and laughed at the audacity of Australia" to send a Jewish lawyer to negotiate with an Islamic state. He said: "Your country has real chutzpah." And, Australia became the first country in the world to seal a finance agreement with the mullahs.

David, now a Sydney barrister, has never shied away from speaking up firmly, but astutely.

The son of Holocaust survivors from Hungary, he says, "I just did what every child of refugees did – I studied hard". Having been teased as a "Jew boy" or "refo kid" when he excelled at school, he

In the early 1990s, the governor of Iran's central bank leaned over at an official banquet to chide the Australian lawyer sitting at his side. The Iranian was holding a "Jewish activists' blacklist" file and inquired whether the lawyer had ordered a vegetarian meal "so that we don't realise you are kosher?"

He was surprised that David Knoll, then representing Australia's Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (EFIC) and a high profile member of Australia's Jewish community didn't even raise a sweat.