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Parents instilled sense of service

By DITHOMAS

SHANE Stone says it wasn't until he was elected chief minister of the Northern Territory in 1995 that he moved out of both his father's and his mother's shadows.

"Right up until then I would have people from Albury-Wodonga come to Parliament House, Darwin, asking alternatively for Les's boy and then Pam's boy," he said.

"That said both Pam and Les Stone, who have been widely recognised as icons of civic duty were outstanding role models for their children. To this day I attribute my whole sense of service to their example."

Mr Stone was today made a Companion (AC) of the Order of Australia, not only for his role in politics but also for furthering the nation's ties with the Asia-Pacific region and to the oil and gas industry.

These days the former Wodonga boy, who served as federal president of the Liberal Party until last year, enjoys nothing better than a weekend's barramundi fishing, with thongs,



● Shane Stone gives his president's address last year.

Stubbies and T-shirts the order of the day.

Mr Stone was born at Bendigo in 1950 where his father was principal of a one-teacher school.

As his father's career progressed the family found itself at Chiltern, Pakenham and then Wodonga where he went to Wodonga High.

"I didn't distinguish myself at school. I really struggled. Academic excellence came at university," he said.

After periods at Duntroon and teachers college, Mr Stone returned to teach in the area in 1972.

He also began his involvement in politics, joining the then Country Party and standing for preselection for North East Province, losing to Bill Baxter.

"I decided to run for Wodonga council against by father's strident opposition and was soundly beaten by Les Boyes for my trouble," he said.

Following his move to Melbourne in 1974, Mr Stone joined the Liberal Party and was encouraged to study law.

He established a practice in 1986 in Alice Springs and served two terms as president of the CLP before winning the seat of Port Darwin in 1990.

He was Australia's first minister for Asian relations and trade and also held the education portfolio before his election as chief minister in 1995.

Mr Stone has worked to build trade links between the Northern Territory and the Asia-Pacific area and was involved as a consultant to contract talks with China in the oil and gas fields.

He was awarded the national medal of Indonesia in 2000.

Outside of politics, he continues to be a board member of the Australian Children's Television Foundation.

"I am still very proudly a Wodonga boy," Mr Stone said.

"I learned a lot and was defined by my many experiences there.

"The Stone family and Wodonga are inextricably intertwined to this day."