

The Hon Bryan Alan Beaumont AO QC

The honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon The Hon Bryan Alan Beaumont AO QC by the Chancellor the Hon Justice Kim Santow at the graduation ceremony held at 2.00pm on 1 April 2005.

Citation

Chancellor, Bryan Beaumont has had a long and distinguished connection with the University of Sydney and must be ranked amongst the foremost of our alumni. He is an Officer of the Order of Australia, distinguished Judge, Court administrator, legal educator and outstanding servant to Australia.

Bryan Beaumont was educated at Sydney Boys' High School and at the University of Sydney where he graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Laws with Honours in 1961. Whilst at Law School he was generally known as "the Chief" because of an uncanny ability to predict examination questions. This ability may have contributed to his being awarded the Pitt Cobett Prize for Constitutional Law and the Sir John Peden Memorial Prize for Constitutional and Private Law.

After serving as Associate to Justice Macfarlan of the Supreme Court, Bryan Beaumont was admitted to the NSW Bar in 1965 where he read with William Deane, later to become a Justice of the High Court and Governor-General of Australia. Bryan Beaumont soon developed an expertise in constitutional and commercial matters and regularly appeared before the High Court of Australia and the Privy Council in London, as well as frequently before the Federal Court of Australia following that Court's establishment in 1976.

In 1978, in recognition of his outstanding advocacy and analytical skills, he was appointed a Queen's Counsel.

Between 1973 and 1975 Bryan Beaumont served as a Consultant to the Government of Papua-New Guinea and advised on major judicial and constitutional projects in anticipation of independence. This consultative rôle marked the beginning of a long association by him with various countries in the South Pacific.

He also continued a long interest in legal education and for some years was a Part-time Lecturer in both Constitutional and Commercial Law at the Sydney University Law School.

In 1981, in recognition of his expertise in constitutional law, Bryan Beaumont was appointed, jointly with Professor Leslie Zines, to chair the Royal Commission into the Tasmanian Constitution, leading to the streamlining of the functions of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament of that State.

In 1983 Bryan Beaumont was appointed a Justice of the Federal Court of Australia, a Judge of the Australian Capital Territory and a Presidential Member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. When he retired from the Federal Court on 10 February 2005, he was the most senior and longest serving Justice of that Court, and indeed of any Federal Court.

As a Judge of the Federal Court, His Honour made major contributions to the development of Australian law. Whilst it is impossible to list all of the significant judgments delivered by him in his long judicial career, it is relevant to note some of the more important decisions which added to the jurisprudence of the Federal Court.

In *Apple Computer Inc v Computer Edge Pty Ltd* he developed the law relating to computer technology. In *Trade Practices Commission v Arnotts Ltd* he extensively recast Australian competition law and in *Commissioner of Taxation v Spotless Services Ltd* the law relating to tax avoidance. Of particular note is his judgment in *Western Australia v Ward* which is acclaimed as a seminal work in native title law.

In 1989, Justice Beaumont was appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court of Norfolk Island, becoming its Chief Justice in 1993, a position in which he continued to serve until late 2004. At other times, Justice Beaumont served as a Judge of the Tonga Court of Appeal, the Fijian Supreme Court and Supreme Court of Vanuatu where, for a period of time, he served as Acting Chief-Justice. This involvement in the administration of justice in the Pacific Region led to his appointment as representative of Australia and New Zealand on the Committee for South Pacific judicial training and the administration of the Pacific Judicial Education Programme. He served as Convenor of the Australian & New Zealand Chief Justices Council Sub-Committee on reform of appellate procedures.

Justice Beaumont's active interest in judicial administration extended to participation in various committees relating to judicial administration in Australia. From 1986 to 1992 he was a member of the Council of the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration and chaired that Council from 1990 to 1992. Amongst his achievements was a review of the operation of the Federal Court which led to legislation establishing a

separate administration for the Court.

In 1995, Justice Beaumont was elected as a Distinguished Foreign Member of the American Law Institute and was invited by that Institute to advise on projects relating to procedures in commercial litigation, a joint project with the United Nations. On two separate occasions he was also a Visiting Fellow at Wolfson College in the University of Cambridge.

Amongst these vast interests, he continued to take a keen interest in the affairs of the University of Sydney, serving as Patron of the Sydney University Women's College Foundation and also as a Member of the Council of that College. He served on the Council of the Governors of Ascham School, as well as being a Trustee of the Ensemble Theatre Foundation.

On 26 January 2005 Bryan Beaumont was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for service to the judiciary, the administration of the Court, the establishment of legal education facilities and judicial infrastructure in the Pacific region, and for services to the Australian community in general.

I have the honour to present the Honourable Bryan Alan Beaumont, Officer of the Order of Australia and Queen's Counsel, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa) and I invite you to confer it upon him.