

Mr Owen Harries

The degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*) was conferred upon Owen Harries at the Faculty of Arts graduation ceremony held at 11.30am on 9 April 2010.



The Chair of the Academic Board and Fellow of Senate, Professor Peter McCallum conferring the honorary degree upon Mr Harries, *photo, copyright, Memento Photography.*

Citation

Professor McCallum, I have the honour to present Owen Harries for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*).

As an essayist, editor, academic and diplomat, Owen Harries has been a leading contributor to the intellectual life of Australia and the United States for more than fifty years. His writings constitute a remarkable analysis of politics and international relations. He is widely praised as a prolific writer and compelling conversationalist whose long journey from Wales to Sydney has brought him global eminence as an elder statesman of international relations.

His success and influence stem from the same source – realism, a foreign policy school of thought he first learned in the 1950s and then thoroughly absorbed while teaching at university, serving in government and editing a magazine. He was founder and editor of *The National Interest*, a Washington-based foreign policy quarterly, which he turned into one of America's most influential political publications. Over the years, he published famous essays and authors including Francis Fukuyama, Samuel Huntington, Henry Kissinger, Fareed Zakaria and his long-time friend and publisher Irving Kristol. According to *The Bulletin*, during his editorship from 1985 to 2001 he was “known as probably the most famous Australian in Washington”.

Before that, he served the Australian government in several senior posts, including head of policy planning in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, senior adviser to Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser and Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock and Australian Ambassador to UNESCO in Paris. During this period, he was widely credited for principally drafting the nation's foreign policy in the post-Vietnam period as well as shaping and articulating the conservative and liberal ideas which formed the philosophical basis of the then Liberal government.

He was educated at Oxford University where his tutor was political theorist John Plamenatz and lecturer was philosopher Isaiah Berlin. After he spent two years in the Royal Air Force, he and his wife moved to Sydney in 1955 when he became a senior lecturer at the University of Sydney and later an associate professor of politics at the University of New South Wales. He also served as senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation in Washington DC. And he is currently a visiting fellow at the Lowy Institute for International Policy and was, until recently, a senior fellow at the Centre for Independent Studies.

For much of his career, he has been a major player in policy debates, especially US-Australia relations. While being among the strongest supporters of the alliance, he has not shied away from criticism of the US.

In the 1960s, he was a prominent supporter of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Four decades later, he was a trenchant critic of the Iraq War, the leading intellectual architects of that war, and Australia's involvement in it. In the heat of the Iraq debate, he delivered the ABC's Boyer Lectures, which have been published under the title, *Benign or Imperial? Reflections on American Hegemony*.

He has long been a leading figure in the political and intellectual world: a lapsed British socialist who became a leading Australian conservative, a member of the Australian Association for Cultural Freedom, a group that produced *Quadrant* magazine, on whose editorial board he sat. Over the years, he has edited and contributed to several books on culture, politics and international relations. He has also been a regular contributor to several newspapers around the world, including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The Times*, as well as magazines *Commentary*, *Foreign Affairs*, *National Review* and *New Republic*.

Professor McCallum, I present Owen Harries for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*), and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.