

The Hon Associate Justice John Kennedy McLaughlin

The title of honorary Fellow of the University was conferred upon the Hon Associate Justice John Kennedy McLaughlin at the Faculty of Law graduation ceremony held at 11.30am on 27 November 2009.

Citation

Deputy Chancellor, I have much pleasure in presenting the Honourable John Kennedy McLaughlin to receive the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.

Associate Justice McLaughlin, of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, will attain the statutory age of retirement from the Bench in 2010. His career has been one of great public service extending beyond the law. It is fitting that he is to be recognized by the award of an Honorary Fellowship of this University.

His Honour, in this very month of November 2009, celebrates, not merely the fiftieth anniversary of his election to the University's Standing Committee of Convocation (now the Alumni Council), but 50 years of continuous service to that body, as a representative of the Faculty of Arts, in which he had been ever diligent in attendance at meetings and other functions involving the Standing Committee, and a wise participant in the formulation of its policies and activities. He was President of the Standing Committee in 1972 and 1973.

A graduate in Arts and Law of the University, he attained, in 1973, its then rare degree of Master of Laws (with First Class Honours) for his thesis "The Magistracy in New South Wales, 1788-1850", which stands as a seminal work of authority on the subject. He continued his academic contribution, being at various times a tutor in Law at St Paul's College; part-time Lecturer in Law at the University's Law School; and Associate Lecture in Legal and Constitutional History, UTS.

He was admitted to the New South Wales Bar in 1961 and established a large practice on the Equity side of the Supreme Court, in recognition of which specialization he was appointed a Master of the Court in 1989. He held that office until elevation as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court in 2005. He has served on a number of Supreme Court Committees, including those on Education, and the Court's Heritage of which latter he is currently Secretary. He has been a member of the Attorney-General's Trustees Advisory Committee for over 15 years.

Although pressed by his professional and judicial duties, he has been generous in making time for extra-mural activities that reflect credit on The University of Sydney. Beyond the Standing Committee of Convocation (or Alumni Council), they include the Sydney University Union Foundation, of which he was a Councillor for some years from its inception. He was also President of the Society of Australian Genealogists for four years, and continues as a Fellow and Honorary Member; and a Councillor of the Royal Australian Historical Society. He has given notable service to the Australian Dictionary of Biography of which he has been a member of the New South Wales Working Party for over 12 years, and has contributed numerous articles published in the Dictionary. This year he received the high distinction of being created a Knight of the Order of St Gregory the Great.

Not only have his interests been of public benefit through the promotion of education and the furtherance of public understanding of Australian History, law and culture, but also, and above all, through his remarkably long service on the University's Alumni Council (and its predecessor) which is unprecedented and is unlikely ever to be equalled.

Deputy Chancellor, I present the Honourable John Kennedy McLaughlin, the personification of one who through "conspicuous continuous involvement" has so ably supported "the interests and welfare of the University", to become an Honorary Fellow of the University, and I invite you to confer that award upon him.