

Laurie Oakes

The honorary degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred upon Laurie Oakes by the Chancellor, Ms Belinda Hutchinson AM at a special honorary award ceremony in celebration of excellence in journalism in Australia at 5.00pm on 5 August 2017.

Citation

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present Laurie Oakes to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa).

Laurie is one of Australia's foremost political commentators and has had a distinguished career in journalism that spans more than 50 years.

Laurie knew he wanted to be a journalist as soon as he walked into the office of student newspaper *Honi Soit* on his first day of study at the University of Sydney. While undertaking a Bachelors of Arts degree, he became the editor of that newspaper, before graduating in 1964.

Laurie joined *The Daily Mirror*, and became their state political roundsman. By the age of 25, Laurie was *The Melbourne Sun-Pictorial's* Canberra bureau chief. While reporting for this paper, Laurie also provided political commentaries for the Seven Network's *Willesee at Seven* television program.

In 1978, he started to self-publish his own political journal, *The Laurie Oakes Report*. The following year he joined Channel 10, where he stayed for five years before becoming Political Editor for the Nine Network. In that role he covered politics for Nine News, as well as programs such as Sunday and the Today Show.

Laurie wrote a weekly column for *The Bulletin* magazine until it ceased publication in January 2008, and currently writes a column published each Saturday in News Corp tabloids around the country. Over the years he has written for a variety of other publications including The Age, and has provided political reports and commentaries to a number of radio stations.

Laurie is renowned for his probing interviews and Canberra-shaking scoops, among them the travel rorts saga that ended the careers of three ministers and government staffers in 1997. His incisive political commentary and news-breaking ability has earned him the respect of peers and politicians alike.

Laurie has also authored and co-authored a number of books about Australian politics, including a quartet covering Gough Whitlam's prime ministership. His most recent book, *Remarkable Times*, is a collection of his columns plus other material covering the political upheavals in Federal parliament between 2010 and 2013.

Laurie Oakes has numerous media awards for his services to journalism. In 1998 he won the Walkley Award for Journalistic Leadership, and in 2001 he received the Walkey Award for Best TV News Reporting. In 2008, he shared the Melbourne Press Club Lifetime Achievement Award with Michelle Grattan. In 2010, he received the Gold Walkley and the Graham Perkin Journalist of the Year award following his breaking coverage of that year's federal election. In 2011 he was inducted into the Logies Hall of Fame, and in 2014 he was inducted into the Victorian Media Hall of Fame.

As I am sure you are all aware, Laurie has just this week announced his retirement. So on behalf of the University and everyone in this room, congratulations on an outstanding career. You will be missed by your colleagues and peers, and maybe our politicians! We wish you all the best in your retirement.

Chancellor, I present Laurie Oakes for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa), and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.