

## Michael Kirby citation

*Faculty of the Professions; Faculty of Sciences*  
*Wednesday 13 September 2017, 2.00pm*

Ms Presser, it gives me great pleasure to present to you Michael Donald Kirby.

The Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University is being awarded to the Honourable Michael Kirby for his exceptional service in Law, in human rights and in other public advocacy. Michael Kirby is an international jurist, former High Court judge and educator; renowned for his contribution in many areas including alternative dispute resolution, LGBTIQ rights, animal welfare, the arts, HIV / AIDS and the global right to health.

Michael Kirby graduated from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Economics and Master of Laws. During his time at university he was President of the Students' Representative Council, President of the Sydney University Union and, in 1965, elected Honorary Life Member of the National Union of Australian University Students.

He was admitted to the New South Wales Bar in 1967 and was elected a member of the Bar Association of NSW in 1974. At just 36, Michael Kirby was appointed Deputy President of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, the youngest person ever appointed to a federal judicial office. In 1983 he was appointed judge of the Federal Court and, in 1984, became President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal. He was also President of the Court of Appeal of the Solomon Islands in 1995/1996. In 1996 he was appointed Justice of the High Court of Australia. When he retired in 2009, he was Australia's longest-serving judge.

During this long and distinguished legal career, Michael Kirby demonstrated a passionate commitment to law reform, becoming the inaugural Chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission in 1975.

He has undertaken many activities for the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the OECD and other organisations, including roles as Commissioner of the World Health Organisation's inaugural Global Commission on AIDS, and as the UN's Special Representative for Human Rights in Cambodia.

He has also taken an active role in education, serving on three University governing bodies and being appointed Honorary Visiting Professor of 12 universities.

Michael Kirby's role in human rights has been recognised with the Australian Human Rights Medal in 1990 and being named Laureate of the UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education in 1998, as well as the Gruber Prize for Justice and, in 2011, the inaugural Australian Privacy Medal.

In conclusion, the Honourable Michael Kirby has been, and continues to be, a strong advocate for the most powerless members of society. He is a pioneer in many fields and has dedicated his long career to public service, working tirelessly in many areas concerning human dignity. This lifelong commitment to others merits our great admiration and gratitude.

Ms Presser, it is with much pleasure that I present to you, for conferral of the Degree of Doctor of the University (honoris causa), the Honourable Michael Kirby, Companion of the Order of Australia, Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Economics, Master of Laws.