

## **MR GERALD GLEESON**

### **Citation for the conferral of a Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*)**

Mr Chancellor, I present to you Gerald Gleeson for admission to the Degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*).

Gerald Gleeson AC, has made an outstanding contribution to public life in New South Wales during the past 35 years, evidenced by the many facets in which he has chosen to involve himself and by the impressive array of positions to which he has been appointed.

He was born in 1928 and grew up in the Sydney suburb of Five Dock. He attended All Hallows Convent in his primary years and later won a bursary to the Christian Brothers High School at Lewisham. His family, however, chose to enrol him at St Patrick's College, Strathfield. He showed talent in sport, especially football, and later during his University years played fullback for the first grade Drummoyne Rugby Union side.

From early in his life, he showed that he was talented academically. When 15 years of age, he won a teacher's scholarship to Sydney University from whence he gained a Bachelor of Science degree. Later, he completed a Bachelor of Education degree at Melbourne University as well as a Master of Education degree at Sydney University.

Upon graduating, he became a Public School teacher in NSW and halfway through his first year married Frances Carlton. In 1951, he became a lecturer at the Royal Australian Navy College at Flinders in Victoria and in 1953 he joined the New South Wales Department of Technical Education. He became Head Teacher of Chemistry in the Department's School of General Studies in 1958 but in the early 1960's turned his back on teaching to become an Inspector with the Public Service Board of NSW. So impressive was his performance that by 1968 he had become the Board's Deputy Chief Inspector. In 1969, he was appointed Assistant Director to the Department of Technical Education. After a short period with that Department, he returned to the Public Service Board as one of its four full-time Members, with a particular responsibility for all sectors of education within NSW. He retained that position for seven years. During that period he was also appointed a part-time member of the Higher Education Board and served in that capacity from 1970 to 1976. In both capacities he played a significant role in restructuring the State Higher Education system and was regarded by many during that period as the most influential person on higher education in the State.

During that period, the Mitchell College of Advanced Education and Riverina College of Advanced Education were established. He was Chairman of the sub-committee established to incorporate the Wagga Wagga Agricultural College into Riverina College, previously having played an important role in resiting Riverina College to a site adjacent to the Wagga Wagga Agricultural College.

During this period of his career, Higher Education in New South Wales went through rapid development and change. Teachers' Colleges became incorporated into

Colleges of Advanced Education by Acts of the NSW Parliament. Mr Gleeson was much involved in the decision making process resulting in unprecedented growth in higher education opportunities in this State.

His reputation as being tough, hard working and highly capable, along with his impressive qualifications and experience, were key factors leading to his appointment in 1977 as Under Secretary and Head of the Premier's Department. The new Premier wanted a Department that would provide him with advice and options and began searching for a new permanent head who could provide this. Mr Gleeson's outstanding record as an administrator, his finely tuned political acumen and New South Wales Public Service background, made him an obvious choice. He held the position as Head as the NSW Premier's Department, with Mr Neville Wran as Premier, until 1988 when he retired.

Mr Gleeson has had an abiding interest in public administration and has held the position of national President of the Royal Institute of Public Administration. His broader interests encompass an active role in the arts; he was Trustee for a number of years of both the Powerhouse Museum and the New South Wales Art Gallery and is credited as being the driving force behind the establishment of the Sydney College of the Arts where he was Chairman of the college planning committee. He was also a member of the finance committee of the Sydney Opera House as well as Chairman of the Sydney Entertainment Centre Company from 1984- 1990.

In 1985 he was appointed Chairman of the New South Wales Council of the Australian Bicentennial Authority and contributed greatly to the success of the celebrations in New South Wales. He is presently a member of the Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal.

In the Corporate world, Mr Gleeson is currently a Director of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and Amalgamated Holdings Ltd. He is a member of the Council of the Australian Catholic University, for which he also played a significant role in its establishment. In addition he currently chairs both the National Catholic Education Commission and the Transfield Construction Management Committee.

In 1989, in recognition for his many years of public service, he was made a Companion of the Order of Australia.

And so Mr Chancellor, I commend to you Gerald Gleeson, Companion of the Order of Australia, Bachelor of Science (University of Sydney), Master of Education from the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney - distinguished public servant, a pioneer of advanced education in this State, a company director, churchman, friend and supporter of Charles Sturt University, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*) of this University.

**Dated this Twentieth Day of April One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety Four**