



## Vale the Hon. Dr John Kennedy McLaughlin AM

It is with regret and sadness that I record news of the unexpected and untimely death of former Associate Justice Dr John Kennedy McLaughlin AM, a long time Master in Equity and then Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of New South Wales (1989-2010).

He gave unstinting service to the Supreme Court of New South Wales. During his tenure, he served on a number of Supreme Court Committees, including the Education and Heritage Committees. He was also a member of the Attorney-General's Trustees Advisory Committee for over 15 years. He was a deeply devout man and was created a Knight of the Order of St Gregory the Great in 2010.

John McLaughlin loved the law and the legal profession, being admitted to the Bar in 1961 after serving as Associate to Sir Cyril Walsh. He was heavily involved in the legal profession throughout his entire career, including with the Sir Thomas More Society and the Francis Forbes Society. His engagement continued in the years of his retirement during which he completed his doctorate on the role of Irish lawyers in Australia and delivered the 9th Plunkett lecture to the Francis Forbes Society in 2020. Most recently he attended the Bar's 15 bobber for Justices Michael Meek and Ian Jackman and was due to attend the St John's College law dinner at the University of Sydney tonight.

On 27 November 2009, he was conferred with an Honorary Fellowship of the University of Sydney. The citation included the following:

"His career has been one of great public service extending beyond the law. ... 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 a Councillor of the Sydney University Union Foundation, President (and Fellow) of the Society of Australian Genealogists and a Councillor of the Royal Australian Historical Society. He made a significant contribution to the Australian Dictionary of Biography over many years. He was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2014 "for significant service to the judiciary and to the law, particularly through the documentation and preservation of Australian legal and constitutional history, and to the community."

**Andrew Bell**  
Chief Justice of New South Wales

22 March 2023