

FRANK HEWITT LEVERRIER KC – FORMER VICE-CHANCELLOR (1914–17, 1921–23)

An early graduate of the University of Sydney (BA 1884, BSc 1885, Frank Hewitt Leverrier KC was a Fellow of Senate from 1907 to 1939.

PROFILE

(1863-1940)

KC, BA BSc *Sydney*

**Fellow of Senate 1907 - 1939, including election by Senate as
– Vice-Chancellor 1914 - 1917 and 1921 - 1923**

His early years

Frank Hewitt Leverrier was born on 8 February 1863 at Waverley, Sydney, second son of Guillaume André Charles Leverrier (1826-1895). Born in France, his father came to Victoria during the gold rush but took his family back to Saint-Servan in 1863.

Frank was educated in France by the French Christian Brothers until the family returned to Sydney in 1877.

He briefly attended Fort Street Model School and, from 1878, Sydney Grammar School.

In November 1880 he passed the senior public examination in a record seventeen subjects and gained the John West medal and a scholarship at the University of Sydney. He shared a love of science and great mathematical ability with his great-uncle, the noted astronomer Urbain Le Verrier.

His student days at the University of Sydney

At the University of Sydney Leverrier resided in St John's College (until asked to leave in August 1882 because of his inability to submit to college discipline - eight years later he was elected a fellow).

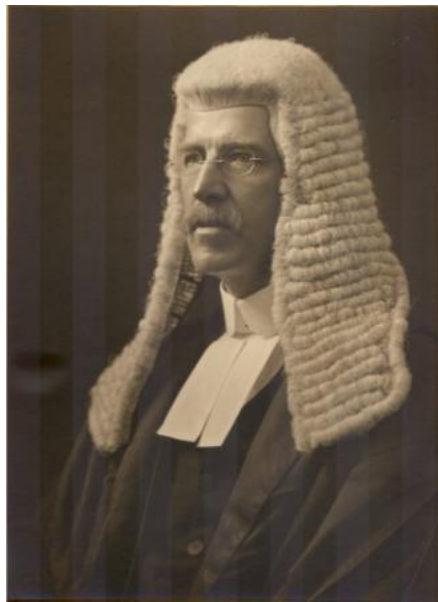
He won the Levey, Deas Thomson, R C Want and Renwick scholarships and in 1884 graduated BA with first-class honours, the gold medal in natural science and the Belmore gold medal for agricultural chemistry.

Next year he graduated BSc with first-class honours and the gold medal.

His career

Leverrier was admitted as a student-at-law in December 1885 and admitted to the Bar on 21 September 1888.

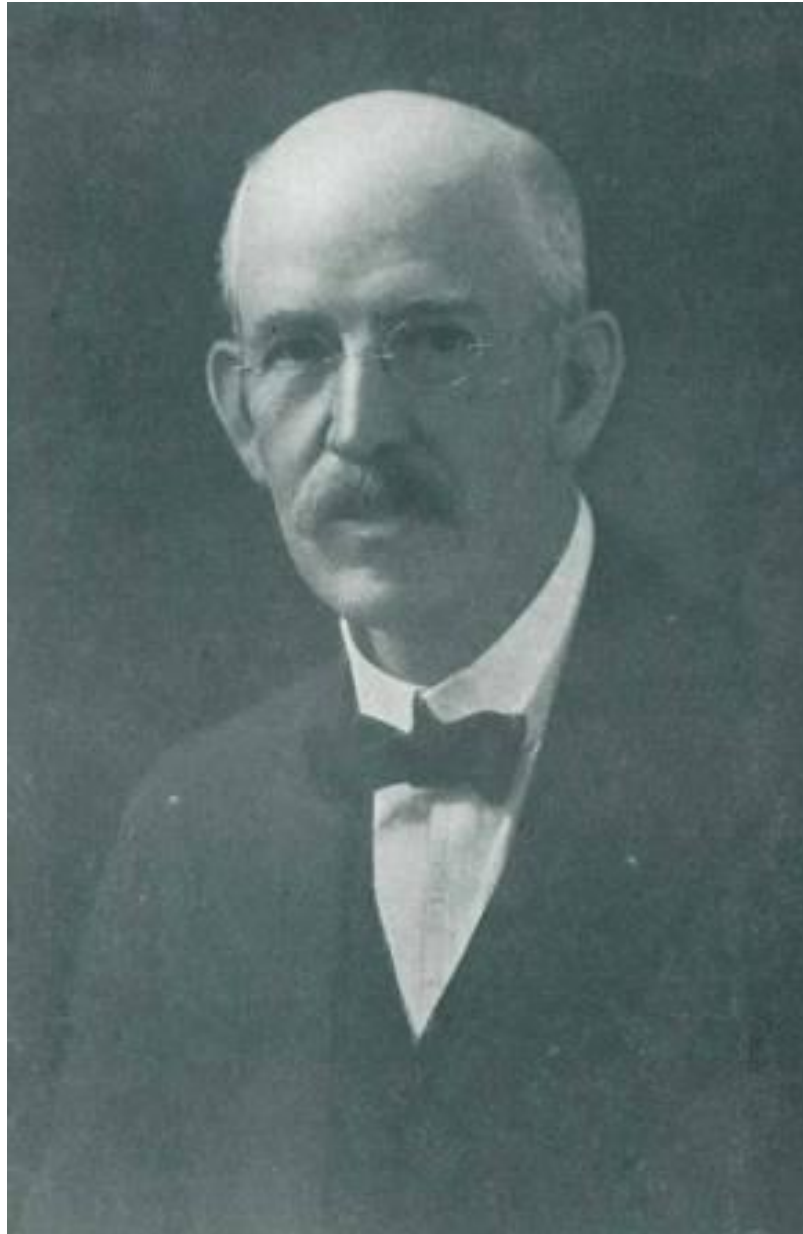
While Challis lecturer from 1890 to 1907 at the University of Sydney, Leverrier built up a large practice, mainly in equity, from Denman Chambers. He took silk on 8 March 1911 and served on the Council of the Bar of New South Wales from 1915 to 1925. He developed an extensive practice before the High Court of Australia and appeared in important constitutional cases.



Frank Leverrier KC in 1900, *photo G3_224_2039, University of Sydney Archives*



Frank Leverrier KC, *photo from 'The Sydney Morning Herald', 4 November 1914.*



Frank Leverrier KC in 1921, *photo from 'Hermes', August 1921.*

He had a life-long interest in science. He experimented in wireless telegraphy and X-rays; was a member of the Royal Society of New South Wales from 1909 and next year was first president of the Wireless Institute of New South Wales. He was chairman of the State committee of the Commonwealth Advisory Council of Science and Industry between 1916 and 1918, and of the provisional State advisory board of the Commonwealth Institute of Science and Industry (1920-23), and was a member of the State committee of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (1926-40).

During World War I he was a vice-president of the Universal Service League.

Having refused appointment as a Supreme Court judge, he retired from practice in 1926 and

from 1930 was a director of the Mutual Life & Citizens Assurance Co Ltd. In 1937 he was awarded King George VI's coronation medal.

He died at his home at Wentworth Road, Vaucluse, on 11 June 1940.

Information taken from the Australian Dictionary of Biography

His membership of Senate

Elected to the University of Sydney Senate in 1907, Leverrier served continuously until November 1939. He was a Fellow elected by a Convocation of electors to fill a vacancy 1907 - 1913, and then, from 1913 to 1939, a Fellow elected by the graduates.

Under the old constitution he was vice-chancellor in 1914-17 and 1921-23, and chairman of the Finance Committee.

On his death in 1940, Senate resolved:

'The Senate places on record its profound sense of the loss sustained by the University in the lamented death of Frank Leverrier.

For more than fifty years he was associated with the University of Sydney, first as a student and finally as a member of the Senate. In the year 1881 he was awarded a University scholarship. He graduated BA in 1884 with First Class Honours in Natural Science, and in the following year he was admitted to the degree of BSc with First Class Honours.

He became a Fellow of the Senate in 1907, and his membership of the governing body was continuous until November, 1939. His stewardship during the long period of thirty-two years was of inestimable value to the University. His legal knowledge and his unflagging interest in Science as well as his other great qualities placed him in the forefront as a University administrator. His qualifications were such that he graced a Lectureship in the Law School for some years and later became an invaluable member of the Senate Committees, viz., Finance, Buildings and Grounds and By-laws Committees. He was Vice-Chancellor under the old constitution from 1914 to 1917 and again from 1921 to 1923. He was Chairman of the Finance Committee at the date of his retirement.

He has been described as one of the finest and most useful men of our day. His service to the University will never be forgotten, and his name is listed in the honoured ranks of benefactors, not only as the donor of £500 to the University in 1927, but also as a man who, endowed with great talents, used them in the furtherance of University policy and expansion. With all his great and outstanding qualifications, his charm of manner impressed everyone with whom he came in contact. His advice was always taken and was readily given. His nature was such that, as the possessor of great gifts, he used them in a modest and most unselfish manner. He was esteemed by all sections of the community, and his work for the University during so many years will ever be regarded as loving service from one of the worthiest sons of his Alma Mater.

The Senate desires to record its deepest sympathy at his passing and offers its condolence to the surviving members of his family.'