

Emeritus Professor Father Edmund Campion

The degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa) was conferred upon Emeritus Professor Father Edmund Campion in 2005.

Citation

Chancellor, I have the honour to present Emeritus Professor Father Edmund Campion for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa).

Edmund Campion was born in Sydney in 1933 and educated at St Ignatius College. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Sydney in 1954. He then went on to complete a Master of Arts at the University of Cambridge as well as theological studies through the Catholic Institute of Sydney. He was ordained as a priest in 1961 and after curacies at several Sydney parishes was appointed a lecturer in History at the Catholic Institute of Sydney, subsequently becoming Professor of History there. Following his retirement in 1998, he was appointed an Emeritus Professor.

Professor Campion's many publications include scholarly historical studies such as *Lord Acton and the First Vatican Council* (1975) and *John Henry Newman* (1980) as well as the more personal histories, *Rockchoppers: Growing Up Catholic in Australia* (1982), *Australian Catholics* (1987) and *A Place in the City* (1994). *Lines of My Life: Journal of a Year* (2003) is an even more personal account of a year spent partly in New York in the wake of September 11, and partly in Sydney. As this work indicates, Ed Campion's interests and concerns have always been as much literary as historical. In the 1970s, for example, he was an active member of the Christopher Brennan Society, an informal group associated with Sydney University, established by the late Axel Clark who was then completing a PhD on Brennan in the English Department.

Ed Campion had begun reviewing literary and other works for the *Bulletin* back in the 1960s and relates how he was then required to buy a copy of the magazine containing his review and take it to the accounts office for payment. He continued to be a regular reviewer for the *Bulletin* as well as for many other journals and newspapers until recently. He was also the editor of *Living Here: Short Stories from Australasia 1938-1988* (1988).

Professor Campion's high standing within the Australian literary community is apparent from his appointment as Chairman of the Literature Fund of the Australia Council from 1995-98. He had previously also served a term as member of the earlier Literature Board of the Council from 1982-86 as well as being a member of the Library Council of New South Wales from 1980-86. He has been a judge of numerous literary and other awards, including the Vogel Award, the NSW Premier's Literary Awards, the Geraldine Pascall Prize, the National Book Council Awards and the Miles Franklin Award. Significantly, he was the only critic chosen to take part in the ABC's recent television program on 'Australia's Favourite Books'.

Edmund Campion therefore has made a long and distinguished contribution to the Humanities in Australia, not only through university teaching and research in his chosen discipline of History, but through his many publications directed at a more general audience and his dedicated service as a member and chair of literary committees and as a judge of literary awards. Our cultural life is considerably richer as a result of his many contributions.

Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting to you, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa), the distinguished scholar, educator and man of letters, Emeritus Professor Father Edmund Campion.