

Sarah Ferguson

The honorary degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred upon Sarah Ferguson by the Chancellor, Ms Belinda Hutchinson AM at a special honorary award ceremony in celebration of excellence in journalism in Australia at 5.00pm on 5 August 2017.

Citation

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present Sarah Ferguson to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*).

Sarah Ferguson was born in Lagos Nigeria, but returned to England with her family at the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War. She was educated in Britain, and studied English literature at King's College, London.

Sarah's career began in newspapers in the United Kingdom, writing arts reviews for *The Independent*. She moved France where she worked as a researcher for British and French broadcasters. During her time in France, Sarah met and married Australian journalist and ABC correspondent Tony Jones. They moved to Australia and then to Washington, DC where her work included covering the drug wars in Central America and the politics of the Clinton administration.

In Australia, Sarah worked for the SBS programs *Dateline* and *Insight* and spent four years on Channel 9's *Sunday* program where she filmed documentaries herself on topics ranging from international terrorism to indigenous affairs in remote Australia. However, it was the ABC which would provide her with the opportunity to take her investigative journalistic career to the next level.

Sarah joined the ABC in 2008 and went on to win four Walkley Awards for her work on *Four Corners*, including the 2011 Gold Walkley for the episode 'A Bloody Business', an expose of Australia's live cattle trade. Her investigative reporting also involved a perilous three part series on the international people smuggling trade from the Middle East to Australia.

In 2014, Sarah hosted The 7.30 Report where she demonstrated her skill as a forensic interviewer, then moved on to write and present one of the ABC's most acclaimed documentary series "*The Killing Season*" on the Rudd Gillard years. This documentary delved into the bitter rivalry and power struggle between former Prime Ministers Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard. It made for riveting viewing and was a damning portrait of two leaders, and a political party, at war. Sarah wrote a book to accompany the series, *The Killing Season Uncut*, a reflection on the politics of the period and the art of journalistic interviewing

Sarah followed this up in 2016 with another acclaimed documentary series *Hitting Home*, on domestic violence. Both series won Australian Academy of Cinema and Television awards for best documentary. In 2016 Sarah returned to *Four Corners* as host and reporter.

Sarah has received many other awards including four Logies for Most Outstanding Public Affairs Report in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013, the Melbourne Press Club Gold Quill, the George Munster Award for Independent Journalism, and the Queensland Premier's Literary Award.

Chancellor, I present Sarah Ferguson for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*), and I invite you to confer the degree upon her.