

Dr Lyndel Vivien Prott AO

The degree of Doctor of Laws (honoris causa) was conferred upon Dr Lyndel Vivien Prott at the Law ceremony held at 11.30am on 28 May 2004.



The photo of Dr Prott at the conferring ceremony is courtesy, Faculty of Law.

Citation

Chancellor, I have the honour to present to you Dr Lyndel Vivien Prott for the conferring of the Degree of Doctor of Laws (honoris causa).

Lyndel Prott was educated at Sydney Girls' High School, the third generation of her family to attend that school. She entered the University of Sydney in 1958 on a Commonwealth Scholarship, graduating in Arts in 1961 and in Law in 1964, where she was a contemporary of the Chancellor. As an undergraduate, she was an active debater with the Women's Union and a moot participant. She was also an active member of the Women's Sports Association and represented the university in the sport of gymnastics.

Upon graduation, she became a research assistant to the eminent jurist, Professor Julius Stone, then Professor of International Law and Jurisprudence in this University. In October 1964 she was awarded a Belgian Government Scholarship to the Free University of Brussels and in June 1966 graduated from that Institution with a "Licence Spéciale en Droit International avec très grande distinction". Returning to Australia in December 1966, Lyndel Prott joined the Commonwealth Public Service.

In January 1971 she was awarded a German academic exchange service scholarship to the Eberhard-Karls University of Tübingen from which she graduated in September 1973 with the degree of Dr. Juris summa cum laude and the University Medal for best law doctoral thesis that year. Upon her return to Australia, she was appointed Senior Lecturer in the Department of Jurisprudence and, in January 1984, was promoted to Reader, a position she held until January 1991.

In November 1990, this University adopted the concept of Personal Chairs. The Senate of the day resolved that "a Personal Chair is created as an extraordinary appointment to recognise the achievements of a member of the academic staff of the university who has attained exceptionally high distinction in his or her field." In January 1991 the first ten Personal Chairs were awarded, one of them being awarded to Dr Prott. From January 1991 to 1995 she held the Chair of Cultural Heritage Law in this university, being one of the pioneers in heritage law.

In 1983 she was appointed a Consultant to the Commonwealth Minister for Education and Youth Affairs to advise on Australia's accession to the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and it was on the basis of her work that the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986 was drafted and unanimously passed by Parliament, and that Australia was able to accede to the Convention in October 1989.

In 1983 Dr Prott was elected Joint Rapporteur of the International Committee of Experts convened by the Director-General of UNESCO in Paris on illicit traffic in cultural property. In December 1985 she was elected Rapporteur of the International Experts Meeting convened at Harare on the problems connected with the rights of peoples and the historical and practical significance of the problems. In December 1986 she organised, in Brisbane, the UNESCO Regional Seminar on the Movable Cultural Property Convention.

In 1987 Dr Prott was a member of the Australian Delegation to the Fifth Session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin and its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation.

In 1989 she headed Australia's delegation to the Sixth Session of the Committee and was elected the Chair of the Committee. In that capacity, Dr Prott conducted negotiations with representatives of various Governments which resulted in unanimous acceptance of the recommendations relating to two disputes then before the Committee. In 1989 she was invited by The Hague Academy of International Law to lecture on "Problems of Private International Law for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage". In the same year she was appointed by UNESCO as a member of the Unidroit Study Group to draft a Convention on Stolen and Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.

In September 1990 Dr Prott was appointed Chief of the International Standards Section of the Division of Physical Heritage of UNESCO, taking up the post in Paris. In that capacity she was involved in the adoption of two International Conventions; (i) the Second Protocol to The Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and (ii) the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. She was a contributor to the latter Convention adopted in 2001, as well as the 1995 Unidroit Convention on Stolen and Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.

In 1991, for her major contributions to the protection of cultural and natural heritage, Dr Prott was made an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia.

In 2000 the Government of Austria awarded her the "Cross of Honour for Science and Art (First Class)". In January of the same year, Dr Prott was appointed Director of the Cultural Heritage Division of UNESCO.

For the past 15 years Dr Prott has lectured in many Universities and Institutes around the world and has authored, co-authored or edited over 200 books, reports and articles. She has written in English, French and German, and has been published in Russian, Chinese, Italian, Spanish, Magyar, Arabic and Croat. With her husband, Dr. Patrick O'Keefe, she has co-authored the fundamental research text on Cultural Heritage law entitled "Law and the Cultural Heritage" of which two of five planned volumes have been published.

In late 2002, Dr Prott retired from her UNESCO post and returned with her family to Australia. She continues to write and deliver papers at conferences and conventions throughout the world, most recently at the 2003 World Archaeological Congress in Washington.

She is an Adjunct Professor in the Masters Programme in Sustainable Heritage Development at the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University where she and her husband conduct a course in International Instruments for Heritage Protection.

Dr Prott has been described by Professor Lord Renfrew, Professor of Archaeology in the University of Cambridge, as one of the pioneers in the application of Cultural Heritage law and the person most responsible for the United Kingdom acceding to the 1970 UNESCO Convention on Cultural Property.

Chancellor, I have pleasure in presenting to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Laws (honoris causa) distinguished international lawyer and pioneer in the field of Cultural Heritage law, Dr Lyndel Vivien Prott AO.