

Mr Murray Sayle

The degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa) was conferred upon Murray Sayle at the Arts graduation ceremony held at 11.30am on 4 May 2007.



Murray Sayle during the reading of his citation, *photo, copyright Memento Photography.*



The Chancellor, the Hon Justice Kim Santow, conferring the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters upon Murray Sayle, *photo, copyright Memento Photography.*

Citation

Chancellor, I have the honour to present Murray Sayle for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*.

Murray Sayle is a distinguished Australian journalist, television documentary maker and novelist.

He was born in Earlwood in Sydney and attended Canterbury Boys' High School. From there he came here to the University of Sydney, where he gave an early indication of his future vocation by editing Australia's oldest student newspaper, *Honi Soit*.

His long career in print journalism began with a cadetship on Sydney's Daily Telegraph. After stints on the Cairns Post and the Daily Mirror, he spent six years as one of the ABC's first radio news correspondents right at the start of its independent news service.

From there he travelled to Europe, working in London and for Agence France Presse in France and Switzerland. Then began more than a decade-long association with The Sunday Times and The Times of London, mainly as war correspondent. This period, from 1960 until the early 70s, saw Murray Sayle reporting the wars in Vietnam and the Middle East, terrorist campaigns in Northern Ireland, India and Pakistan, not to mention publishing a novel about journalism, *A Crooked Sixpence*.

But life was obviously too quiet for him because in 1970 he took part in an international Mount Everest expedition, and the following year reported on a Round Britain yacht race for BBC TV. A year later he not only reported the TransAtlantic Singlehanded Yacht Race for the BBC, but made a film about it, *Alone on a Wide Wide Sea*.

In 1973 he became Asian Editor, for Newsweek International, based in Hong Kong, and so began a lifelong passion for the East Asian region, particularly Japan. He lived and worked in Japan for nearly three decades, reporting throughout for leading newspapers and news magazines in the United States, Britain, Australia and Hong Kong.

He continued to write and present television documentaries, including *The March of Time*, a 30-part series for Channel 4 and PBS. He was also a regular commentator on ABC Radio National's *Late Night Live* program. In 2004, he returned to Australia, where his three children were at university. He has been a regular commentator on ABC Radio, and contributor to *Quadrant* and the *Griffith Review*.

His many awards include Journalist of the Year, for his coverage of the Vietnam war, and Magazine Writer of the Year in 1973. His favourite scoops include discovering Ché Guevara in Bolivia 1967 and the first and only interview with Kim Philby in Moscow for 20 years.

His career has seen him a witness to history in the classic tradition of journalism and foreign correspondence.

Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting to you, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters, honoris causa, journalist, documentary-maker and author, Murray Sayle, and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.