

Mr Kenneth Irving Turner

The degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa) was conferred upon Kenneth Irving Turner at the Faculty of Arts graduation ceremony held at 4.00pm on 30 May 2008.

Citation

Pro Chancellor, I have the honour to present Kenneth Irving Turner for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa).

Ken Turner is a distinguished Australian scholar in politics and history.

In 1948 he gained a Bachelor of Arts and Diploma of Education from the University of Sydney, and then taught in state high schools in Maitland and Newtown. Reflecting the desire, manifested throughout his life, for more learning, he then enrolled first in a Bachelor of Economics, and then in a Masters degree specializing in Government.

He was soon invited to lecture at the Teachers College, and shortly after that in the Department of Government. He was a member of staff in this university for three decades, from the late 1950s until his retirement in 1988, as an Associate Professor. He served for more than a decade as a capable and judicious head of the Department of Government and Public Administration.

He quickly became one of the country's leading experts on Australian, and especially New South Wales, politics. He taught in these areas, almost without interruption, for 30 years. A great many scholars teaching Australian politics at tertiary level in Australia at present owe a huge debt to Ken, as a teacher or as a mentor, and as a researcher who meticulously examined the detail of political life.

Perhaps as notable as the many achievements in Ken Turner's scholarly career have been the prolific achievements during the period of what can only very inaccurately be termed his retirement. Especially significant has been his involvement as a central figure in the Committee for the Sesquicentenary of Representative Government in New South Wales 1856-2006. This committee was set up by the then Premier, Bob Carr, to produce what became a voluminous series of vital studies in the political history of New South Wales, to celebrate 150 years of responsible government in this state. Apart from the several books under his own editorship, almost every one of the twenty odd books produced so far in this enterprise was read in its entirety in manuscript by Ken, and greatly improved by his copious editorial suggestions, based upon his encyclopaedic and probably unparalleled knowledge of New South Wales parliaments and party politics.

Indeed Pro Chancellor, as you know, a future volume edited by Ken and Dr David Clune on the state's governors will appear next year, some time after his 80th birthday.

I have great pleasure in presenting to you a proud and long serving member of this university after a life time in the furtherance of scholarship, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa), Kenneth Irving Turner, and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.