

The Hon Chief Justice Chris Kourakis Nomination for the Award of Honorary Degree

The Honourable Chief Justice Chris Kourakis currently serves as the ninth Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of South Australia. His Honour previously served as the Solicitor-General and was also the first to renounce the title of Queen's Counsel (QC) once the appellation of Senior Counsel (SC) was introduced in the State.

His Honour grew up in Port Lincoln, and is the son of Greek immigrants who came from the Aegean island of Ikaria, a place of much significance in Greek legend.

His Honour has provided long and distinguished service to the law in SA and has longstanding connections with Flinders University. He took his articles with the law firm Johnston Withers McCusker, where he worked alongside Elliott Johnston QC, one of the foundation staff of the Flinders Law School and later to become a Supreme Court Justice himself, who nurtured his passion for social justice and law reform. His Honour was admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of South Australia in 1982, having graduated LLB from the University of Adelaide in 1981. On completion of his articles he moved to the Legal Services Commission, working under the direction of Geoffrey Eames and Sydney Tilmouth. He joined the independent bar in 1989, practising from Edmund Barton Chambers until 2003. Well known for his concerns for access to justice, his professional commitment to that cause found its expression in the many cases he took on *pro bono*. In 1997 he was appointed one of Her Majesty's Counsel (QC). His Honour has throughout his career maintained close connections with the Law Society of SA and he has served on numerous committees of the Society and, from 2001/02, served a term as its President.

After his time at Chambers his career again turned toward public service, taking on the role of Solicitor-General from 2003-2008. His Honour's judicial career commenced in 2008 with his appointment as a Justice of the Supreme Court of South Australia. He succeeded the Hon. John Doyle AC QC as Chief Justice in June 2012. As was said by senior members of the South Australian Bar on his appointment as Chief Justice, his judgments mark him as a judge '...who is prepared to think outside the square, to consider new ideas and to consider new ideas and deliver judgments innovative, fair and impartial and that deliver judgments which meet the justice of the circumstances.'

Chief Justice Kourakis is recognised as one Australia's leading law reformers in the area of civil litigation processes and the modernisation of court infrastructure. He is playing a pioneering role in introducing technology to the South Australian Supreme Court in order that the administration of justice can become more efficient and accessible for ordinary citizens.

Chief Justice Kourakis' contributions to the life of Flinders University have included his delivery of keynote addresses at major conferences held at the University including, most recently, the Australia New Zealand Legal Ethics Colloquium in November 2013, his participation in University public lectures particularly the Elliott Johnston Memorial lecture, and in Flinders Law School prize-giving and graduation ceremonies, and his support for the LOGOS Australian Centre for Hellenic Language and Culture through his role as patron of the Foundation for Hellenic Studies and his frequent participation as speaker, presenter and judge at community events promoting the LOGOS Centre.

Chief Justice Kourakis has been an eminent exemplar of the values underpinning the legal profession and which the Flinders Law School strives to instil in its students and graduates. These values are rooted in a belief that law and legal education must ensure that not only the legal needs of individual clients are met, but also that through law reform and community engagement the public interest is also represented effectively. Our shared goal is to motivate both law students and the legal profession to apply their knowledge and skills on behalf of the disadvantaged as well as the powerful, and to ensure that in future all lawyers in South Australia remain committed to promoting both the rule of law and access to justice.