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CURTIN UNIVERSITY
PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA
18 DECEMBER 2015

CELEBRATING PAUL FAIRALL

The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG

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Quite simply, Paul Fairall has been a brilliant legal academic, scholar, teacher and mentor for thousands of law students.

He was born in Durban, South Africa. He settled in Australia in 1970 following a brief sojourn in the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. He has tasted successively the delights of the law school there, at the Australian National University in Canberra, at the University of Newcastle, at Bond University, at James Cook University in Townsville, at the University of Adelaide, the University of South Australia and now Curtin University.

This peregrination through the antipodean territories of the erstwhile British Empire has been distinguished on many accounts. However, the fact that he has been a Professor of Law for 20 years, Chairman of the Academic Board at James Cook University, Dean of Law at James Cook, the University of Adelaide, UniSA and Curtin, mark out a career that will be very hard to beat for the *Guinness Book of Records*. Peter Karmel was three times a Vice-Chancellor. Vice-Chancellors have Deans to do the heavy lifting. To survive four deanships, and to flourish, truly takes a remarkable personality and robust intellect.

* Former Justice of the High Court of Australia (1996-2009); Editor-in-Chief, *The Laws of Australia* (2009 -).

On top of his work of legal scholarship, teaching and law school administration, Paul Fairall has kept up a strong publishing record. I know this because, as Editor-in-Chief of *The Laws of Australia*, I have been the beneficiary of his work as a subject editor and in timely presentation of a best-selling monograph.¹

Apart from his professional excellence, he is charming, and good humoured. He has observed most of the *Ten Commandments for Australian Law Schools* that I recently propounded from a mountain near Melbourne.² For those Commandments on which he has lapsed, I have given him Extreme Absolution. His creativity and innovation are leaving a great mark on the Curtin University School of Law.

I offer praise and thanks to this most extraordinary Dean. The Pope boasts a triple crown. But down here in the antipodes, we have a Dean of Law with a quadruple crown who continues to win our admiration and affection. He has reached the top in four of thirty six law schools in Australia. He has only thirty two left that have so far missed out on his talents. No one who knows him thinks that miracles are beyond his repertoire.

On behalf of the Australian legal community I extend to Paul Fairall a message of warm felicitations.



¹ Paul Fairall, *Homicide*, The Laws of Australia, Thomson Reuters, Sydney, 2012.

² M.D. Kirby, “Unmet Legal Needs in Australia: Ten Commandments for Australian Law Schools”, Leo Cussen Justice Lecture 2015, ALTA Conference, La Trobe University, 17 July 2015.