

**Address by the Deputy Chancellor on the Occasion of the Toast to the
Retiring Chancellor,**

Macquarie University, Council Dinner,

4 December 1993.

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MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

COUNCIL DINNER

4 DECEMBER 1993

ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY CHANCELLOR ON THE OCCASION OF THE

TOAST TO THE RETIRING CHANCELLOR

His Honour Dr John Lincoln AM Hon LL D

Deputy Chancellor

On the 22nd May 1983 I attended the anniversary celebrations of the founding of the State of Israel at their Centre in Darlinghurst Road. It was one of those occasions where the world meets the world. Who should I find but Edwin Webb, later in deep discourse with Michael Kirby. On Edwin's return he said "Kirby's very interested in Macquarie" and then I knew we had a new Chancellor.

Michael Kirby was quite different from his predecessors - we were in for a new awakening. The Barwick years 1967-1978 burst upon us about the time Danny the Red was doing his thing in Paris. It was the time when thongs and T shirts were ceremonial dress for Graduation. It was on the other hand, a time when Justice Rae Else-Mitchell said "A University is a place where students learn disciplines of the mind, not a place where they learn to play politics". Michael Kirby had already disproved this, as he not only learned the disciplines of the mind, but as he so often

reminded us, he played his student politics hard to his own enjoyment and that of those around him.

The years, 29 in fact, separate Michael Kirby from Chancellor Percy Partridge. But both had that God-given love of their fellow men and women.

Michael Kirby is one of the Greats and like Beethoven you were in for something unexpected and challenging at every turn of the score. As in *Fidelio* the eternal values of love and freedom were not to be missing. But life for Michael Kirby was not meant to be easy. At his Opportunity School he was destined to be either a Bishop or a Judge, and then to Fort Street (a school he shared with both Chancellors Barwick and Partridge as also Brian Spencer, Registrar, and Vice Principal) and finally a solicitor. From then, in less than twenty years, he became Administrator of the State of New South Wales, President of the Court of Appeal, Chairman of the Expert Group of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Chairman of UNESCO's Group on Peoples Rights, Chairman of the International Commission of Jurists, Geneva, Commissioner of the World Health Organisation Commission on AIDS and so many other national and international appointments that my wife told him she thought he was Halley's Comet.

But in all this the joy of life beamed through the austere face of duty. We might say with W. H. Davies:

"What is this life if, full of care we have no time to stand and stare".

The media has nominated Michael as "one of the heroes of Australian reform". In this he follows Lord Denning, the English hero of reform both in law and social issues. But like Denning he has preserved the quiet beauty of tradition. On this theme Denning in *the Family Story* quotes Hilaire Belloc:

*"From quiet homes and first beginning
Out of the undiscovered ends,
There's nothing worth the wear of winning,
But laughter and the love of friends"*

And so it was with Michael Kirby: His parental home, his Church and his Queen remain the launching pad from which so much has been done in law reform and social issues both as Chairman and as Judge.

We thank you Michael for all you have done for Macquarie both as member of the Advisory Board of the School of Management and more directly as Chancellor. Your decade will be one of enlightenment, progress (both at home and abroad) and fair play to all. During your term, Macquarie has become of age. Your ten years is up as was Mahler's as conductor of the Vienna Opera - an apt coincidence.

We wish you well in all life's challenges. We will be proud that you have been our Chancellor. This place will always be yours. And as we send you on your way we say for you in the words of Horace translated by Byron:

*"The man of firm and noble soul,
No factions clamours can control,
No threatening tyrant's darkling brow
Can swerve him from his just intent."*