

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE5909

Saunders, Cheryl Anne

Occupation Academic, Lawyer, Teacher

Summary

Laureate Professor Emeritus Cheryl Saunders AO is an eminent law teacher and legal scholar with specialist interests in constitutional law and comparative public law.

Details

The first woman to be appointed as a professor to the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Law, Cheryl Saunders' legacy lies not least in the legions of students she has taught both in Australia and around the globe. It is also evinced in the immense volume of publications she has contributed in the areas of constitutional law, administrative law, constitutional reform, comparative constitutional law, and federation. For many, Cheryl Saunders' name is synonymous with the Melbourne Law School's Centre for Comparative Constitutional Studies, which she pioneered as founding director and with which she has been closely involved since its establishment in 1988.

For many years Saunders has been active in public debates concerning constitutional matters in Australia and also overseas. A reflection of the esteem in which her expertise is held abroad can be seen in the many occasions she has been a visiting academic; and in the involvement she has had in constitution building processes on other countries. She is author of a number of submissions and reports, of which a notable example is the 1994 report she was asked to undertake into significant Aboriginal areas in the vicinity of Goolwa and Hindmarsh during the Hindmarsh Island Bridge controversy.

Saunders has been a member of, and held senior positions with, such organisations as the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) (2008 – current); the International Association of Constitutional Law (IACL), where she has been a President Emeritus since 2007 after having been president from 2004; the Judicial Remuneration Tribunal (Vic) (2005-2010); International Association Centres for Federal Studies (president 2005 – 2010); Commonwealth Archives Council (1984 – 1988); and of the Administrative Review Council 1981 to 1993. She has been a foundation member of the Australian Academy of Law since 2007. Between 1991 and 2000, Saunders was deputy chairman of the Constitutional Centenary Foundation, chaired by the Rt Hon. Sir Ninian Stephen.

In 2009, in recognition of her services – particularly to the IACL and to the Université Panthéon-Assas (Paris II) – France conferred upon Saunders the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. In Australia she had been awarded the Centenary Medal in 2003 "for service to constitutional law and as President of the Administrative Review Council". She was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1994 "for service to the law and to public administration".

Saunders was born in Quetta, India and came to Australia in 1949. She was educated at Melbourne Church of England Girls' Grammar School and the University of Melbourne (BA 1966, LLB(Hons) 1967, PhD Law 1976). She has an honorary doctorate from the University of Cordoba, Argentina. She is married to the Hon. Ian Baker, a former Australian politician and journalist. She has two surviving children from an earlier marriage, to David Wells, and six grandchildren. In 2016, Melbourne Law School launched the 'Cheryl Saunders Scholarship' which will support students enrolled at Melbourne Law School who have demonstrated both academic merit and financial need.

Published resources

Resource Section

Melbourne Law School academic awarded Legion d'Honneur, 2012,
<http://newsroom.melbourne.edu/news/n-868>

Cheryl Saunders Scholarship Launched, Banks-Anderson, Liz and Roselina Press, 2016,
<http://law.unimelb.edu.au/news/MLS/cheryl-saunders-scholarship-launched>

Site Exhibition

Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens, Trailblazing Women Lawyers Project Team, 2016,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers>

Author Details

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