

CHANCELLOR,

I have the honor to present to you for the award of the degree of Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa, The Honorable Acting Justice Brian Frank Martin, Officer of the Order of Australia, and Member of the Order of the British Empire.

The award will recognise outstanding leadership, service and achievement, particularly in the fields of the law and local government and in respect of the general advancement of the Northern Territory community as a whole.

Brian Martin was born at Lithgow in New South Wales in 1936. He went to school in Lithgow and then, in 1953, he began legal studies through the Solicitors' Admission Board. In 1959 he was admitted to practice as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. He then began practice in Sydney.

In 1963 he was seeking an opportunity to practice in a small community where he might gain broader experience. He saw an advertisement seeking a lawyer who would come to Alice Springs to work with Ian Barker, then the town's only legal practitioner. Brian Martin applied for and won the job, came to Alice Springs and before long was invited to become a partner in the practice which became known as Barker and Martin. When Ian Barker moved to Darwin in 1971 the practice became Martin and Partners.

Brian Martin had married Lorraine Henstock in April 1963. The Martins at first intended that they might stay in Alice Springs for only a few years and then return to Sydney. However, as they became increasingly enmeshed with the Alice Springs community their departure was delayed, then deferred indefinitely. Their children Christine, Leanne, Antony and Janelle were all born in Alice Springs and began their school education there.

From the moment of his arrival in Alice Springs Brian Martin demonstrated that he possessed all of the qualities needed for successful life and legal practice in a remote town. He immediately became involved with the small but rapidly growing community and was soon recognised as a leader who would make a special contribution to Central Australia through his wisdom and legal knowledge. He enjoyed what the local community had to offer him and his family and in return he served that community generously as a wise counsellor and sympathetic friend, always with understanding of the special character of the town and its surrounding region.

His standing within the Alice Springs community was acknowledged in 1966 when he was appointed to the Town Management Board. He made a significant contribution through the subsequent period of transition to the achievement of full local government in Alice Springs in

1971, when the Town Council was created. He was elected a member of the first Council and was then elected by the Alderman to the position of Deputy to Mayor Jock Nelson. In 1973 he became Mayor, following Nelson's appointment as Administrator of the Northern Territory. In 1974 he was popularly elected as Mayor and he held the position until 1976.

Brian Martin's terms as Mayor were distinguished by his notable efforts to improve community relations in the town and especially to break down barriers between its black and white citizens. On his initiative a cross-cultural conference was held in October 1974 and this resulted in ongoing action to address deep seated social issues.

His time as Mayor was also distinguished by his leadership role in organising relief for Darwin immediately following Cyclone Tracy. On Boxing Day 1974, as soon as he heard news of the cyclone, he convened a community meeting which organised a broad program of relief for the Darwin refugees who were already streaming through Alice Springs. The memory of that hugely successful relief effort still evokes justifiable pride in Alice Springs and warm gratitude in Darwin.

Through these years Brian Martin had always accepted an obligation toward his profession. In 1968 he was one of the lawyers who formed the Northern Territory Law Society, then he served as the Society's Vice President and Alice Springs representative. Later, he took a particular interest in the nurture of the Bar in the Northern Territory, believing that the newly self-governing Territory and its courts would be best served by the evolution of an independent Bar.

Soon after the achievement of self-government in 1978 he was appointed to chair an inquiry into the Territory's welfare needs. In 1980 he chaired a Committee of Inquiry into pastoral land tenure. The improved security of tenure which resulted was a foundation for the subsequent development and prosperity of the pastoral industries.

In 1981 he moved to Darwin, with his family, to take office as the Northern Territory's second Solicitor-General and Secretary of the Department of Law, following in those offices his former partner Ian Barker. In 1982 he was appointed Queen's Counsel and Member of the British Empire. Later, in 1989, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia, in recognition of his outstanding public service and particularly his service as long-time Chairman of the Northern Territory Council of the Australian Bicentennial Authority.

In September 1987 he was appointed a Justice of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory. In 1993 he succeeded Austin Asche as Chief Justice and he held this position until his retirement from the Court in October 2003. Subsequently he was appointed an Acting Justice of the Supreme Court, which office he still holds. The duration of his term on the Supreme Court Bench is unequalled in the post-war era.

It was a term that was distinguished by plain speaking commonsense and the application of compassion, mercy and courtesy. At all times he sought to ensure that the Court earned and

maintained the reputation in the community as the institution upon which the community could always rely to administer justice according to law, independent of the Executive.

In addition, he sponsored a number of innovations designed to assist the administration of the Court's work and to make the law more accessible. These innovations included publication of judgments on the internet and provision for videoconferencing.

During his term as Chief Justice he also served as Acting Administrator on a number of occasions, and he chaired the Parole Board.

Since his nominal retirement in 2003 he served as Chairman of the University Foundation, from 2004 to 2006. He is committed to the goal of Statehood for the Northern Territory and he continues as a member of the Northern Territory Statehood Steering Committee.

There was widespread gratification with the decision of Brian and Lorraine Martin to remain in the Territory in their retirement. There is a confident belief that their contribution to the Northern Territory will continue, a belief that is well based on precedent.

CHANCELLOR

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Northern Territory, in particular to the law and local government, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Laws, *Honoris Causa* – Brian Frank Martin