

HONORARY GRADUATE

THE HONOURABLE MARGARET HILARY MARSHALL

Margaret Marshall is a most distinguished alumna of the University. Her long and uninterrupted history of public service commenced in student politics here. In her adopted country, the United States of America, Margaret Marshall enjoyed a brilliant legal career which was crowned by her appointment as an associate justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts in 1996 and, three years later, at the age of 54, as the first woman to be sworn in as the Chief Justice of that court. Prior to those appointments she held high office in one of the world's great universities, and for the past three decades she has remained active in causes and organisations dedicated to a just and democratic order in her native South Africa.

Margaret Marshall graduated from Wits in 1966 with a BA degree. Active in student representative structures while there, in 1965 she was elected Vice-President: International Relations of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). In the following year she was catapulted unexpectedly to higher office. The then NUSAS President, Ian Robertson, was served five-year banning orders some three weeks prior to the arrival - at the invitation of NUSAS - of Senator Robert F Kennedy. Kennedy spoke to student gatherings in three cities, including an address in a packed Wits Great Hall. In July 1966, Margaret Marshall was elected President of NUSAS at that body's annual congress.

These were extremely difficult years for NUSAS. As white politics swung to the right in the post-Sharpeville, post-Rivonia years, NUSAS became a target for the wrath of the government of the day, and earned the particular displeasure of B J Vorster, successively Minister of Justice and Prime Minister. Marshall's predecessor and her successor as NUSAS President were silenced, by banning and deportation respectively. Tensions ran high between English and Afrikaans students, on the one hand, and white and black members of NUSAS, on the other. Marshall earned the enduring respect of a generation of student activists for her integrity, commitment to non-racialism, and diplomatic skills of a high order.

In March 1968 she went to the United States and in the following year was awarded a master's degree in education by Harvard University. She then studied law at Harvard and Yale Law Schools, receiving her Juris Doctor degree from Yale in 1976. She became an American citizen in 1978, by which time she was practising law in Boston, concentrating principally in the areas of intellectual property and commercial litigation.

Her standing in the legal profession rose rapidly. In 1991 she was elected President of the Boston Bar Association. For many years on the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. She was an active member of the American Bar Association and became the first woman to serve as Massachusetts State Chair of the Fellows of the American Bar Association. She also served on a range of judicial and professional bodies in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Immediately prior to her appointment as associate justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts (the oldest court in continuous service in the United States), she held office as Vice-President and General Counsel of Harvard University. In this capacity

she was responsible for all legal and regulatory affairs of that university, and was a member of the President's Academic Council.

Margaret Marshall retained close links with a wide variety of anti-apartheid structures in the United States. She was a founding member of the highly regarded Africa Research Group, which examined US policy towards South Africa. She worked for a while for the Anti-Apartheid Unit at the United Nations, and was an early advocate of sanctions and disinvestment. She was for many years a Board Member of the Africa Fund, the tax-exempt arm of the American Committee on Africa. She also served for twenty years on the boards of SALSLEP (Southern African Legal Services & Legal Education Project), the American support organisation of the Legal Resources Centre, and Africa News, an independent news agency of high repute. This record of service to anti-apartheid causes was recognised when Harvard awarded President Mandela an honorary degree in September 1998. Margaret Marshall was invited to write and to deliver the citation.

Among the honours that Chief Justice Marshall has received are the American Bar Association's Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award; the Louis D Brandeis Award from the American Jewish Congress; and an honorary doctorate from Regis College. In 1998 she was the first recipient of the Harvard College Women's Professional Achievement Award. In addition to this list the award of an LLD degree *honoris causa*, the University of the Witwatersrand not only recognises the outstanding achievements of Margaret Marshall but also takes delight in celebrating the illustrious career of one of its own.

It is with great pride and pleasure that the University confers on Margaret Hilary Marshall the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.