



## SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

### Honorary Degree Citations The degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, conferred on Dr. Michael Kirby Thursday, June 5, 2008

Mr. Chancellor, the word service and the name Michael Kirby are synonymous. For more than thirty-five years, this most distinguished Canadian has given of himself unstintingly to better the lives of all Canadians.

After completing his Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics at Northwestern University, Michael Kirby taught at Dalhousie University, where he had earned his B.Sc. and M.A. in Mathematics. While there, he was invited to serve as Principal Assistant to Premier Gerald Reagan of Nova Scotia. This was but the first step in a brilliant career that soon saw him enter the national arena, first as Assistant Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Trudeau and then as Secretary to the Cabinet for Federal-Provincial Relations and Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council.

In the ensuing years, he applied his talents to several significant issues facing this country. He was a major architect of the federal-provincial negotiations that led to the patriation of the Canadian Constitution and the inclusion of the Charter of Rights in the Constitution. He simultaneously chaired Ottawa's Task Force on the Atlantic Fisheries, which led to a complete restructuring of our east-coast fishing industry.

In 1984, in recognition of his contributions to Canada, he was summoned to the Senate, where his wisdom again proved invaluable. The crowning achievement of his twenty-two year tenure as a Senator was his work as Chairman of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. His stewardship of this committee from 1999 until his retirement from the Senate in 2006 set new standards for its insight, advocacy, and compassion.

Under his guidance the committee revitalized the debate about health care and made many recommendations that were later enacted by government. He also steered the committee through the first-ever comprehensive examination of mental health, mental illness, and addiction in Canada. Principally authored by Michael Kirby, the committee's final report, *Out of the Shadows at Last*, urged the development of a national mental health strategy. His stature with provincial and national leaders and his profound social conscience played a large part in the subsequent establishment of the Mental Health Commission of Canada in 2007. Fittingly, Prime Minister Harper appointed him its first chairman.

In 1997, Dalhousie University recognized Michael Kirby's many achievements with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. Today, we pay homage to this great champion of the people of Canada.

Mr. Chancellor, on behalf of the Senate of this university, I ask that you now confer upon Michael Kirby the degree Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.