



HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA

13 September 2026

MEDIA RELEASE

The High Court notes with sadness the recent passing of the Honourable Mary Gaudron KC, who served as a Justice of the Court from 1987 to 2003. She was the first woman to be appointed to the Court.

Born in New South Wales in 1943, Mary Gaudron graduated from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts in 1962 and a Bachelor of Laws in 1965. She was called to the Bar in 1968, and in 1972 was the first woman to be appointed to the Council of the New South Wales Bar. She was appointed as a Queen's Counsel in 1981.

Prior to her appointment to the High Court, Ms Gaudron was the Deputy President of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission from 1974 to 1980, Chair of the New South Wales Legal Services Commission from 1979 to 1980, and Solicitor-General of New South Wales from 1981 to 1987.

Following her retirement from the High Court, Ms Gaudron served as a member of the International Labour Organisation's Administrative Tribunal from 2003 to 2012.

Throughout her distinguished career, Ms Gaudron advanced the role of women in the legal profession and in the judiciary by her advocacy as well as her example. As a Justice of the High Court for 16 years, her impact on its institutional character and contribution to its work were profound.

The Justices of the Court extend their sincere sympathies to Ms Gaudron's family. A ceremonial sitting of the Court to honour her will be held on a date to be advised by the Court.