

The Hon Alex Chernov AO QC BCom LLB (Hons)

The Hon Alex Chernov has played a significant role in legal education and leadership of the legal profession. The 20th Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Alex is a distinguished public figure: a distinguished Justice of the Supreme Court, a senior member of the Victorian Bar and an individual who has made an extraordinary contribution to society over many years.

After gaining the degrees of BCom and LLB (Hons) from The University of Melbourne, he was a part-time tutor at Ormond and Newman Colleges and at Monash University.

In 1968 Mr Chernov signed the Roll of Counsel at the Victorian Bar and in 1980 was appointed Queens Counsel. He practised almost exclusively in commercial and company law and equity, appearing in the Supreme Courts in most states and the Supreme Court of Fiji, at trial and appellate levels, and before the High Court of Australia and the Privy Council.

Whilst a barrister Alex Chernov played a significant role in the leadership of the legal profession and legal education in Australia and in our region. Between 1971 and 1975 he was the Independent Lecturer in Equity for the Council of Legal Education and, between 1985 and 1987 was an Honorary Consultant to the Australian Law Reform Commission. He is the co-author of Brooking and Chernov, Tenancy Law and Practice in Victoria, and the editor of its second edition. During 1985 and 1986 he was the Chairman of the Victorian Bar and Vice President of the Australian Bar Association. Between 1990 and 1991 he was President of the Australian Law Council and was Vice President of LawAsia between 1995 and 1997. In 1997 Alex Chernov was appointed a Judge of the Trial Division of the Supreme Court of Victoria and in 1998 was appointed to its Court of Appeal. In 1992 he became a member of the Council of the University of Melbourne and chaired a number of its major committees. In 2004 he was elected a Deputy Chancellor of the University of Melbourne and as Chancellor in 2009. Recently reappointed until 2013, the Chancellor's term was cut short by his appointment as Governor of Victoria.

Chancellor Chernov's appointment as the next Governor of Victoria is an eloquent statement about a highly regarded public figure: a distinguished Justice of the Supreme Court, a senior member of the Victorian Bar, a person strongly committed to education and a leader and servant of the University.

Alex has made an extraordinary contribution to society over many years. His eminent public service to fellow Australians, most of it provided while pursuing an important legal career, has entailed considerable self-sacrifice.

Although the role of Chancellor is part-time, Justice Chernov was to be found in his University office almost every day of the year, other than when absent from Melbourne, always working with consummate skill and integrity. His wise counsel, available around the clock, has been an invaluable resource to the University's senior leadership.

He will be remembered in particular for his passionate efforts to secure the successful establishment of the Australia India Institute. These included an immense investment of time as Chair of the Institute Board in securing the inaugural leader for the new Institute, negotiations with University and government partners to set the focus for the Institute, and two trips to India to consolidate arrangements. The University's, and indeed Australia's ties with India have been further strengthened through his interest in the work of the ASHA Project. With project leader Dr Kira Martin he toured the slums of Delhi, and lent support to the work of the University's Nossal Institute for Global Health in delivering better public health services to the disadvantaged and the distressed. He helped build the community's understanding of such issues by bringing Dr Martin to the University to deliver the Chancellor's Human Rights Lecture in 2010.

Alex Chernov has provided unstinting dedication to the University over many years, and also has made a significant contribution to society over many years. The University of Melbourne is fortunate to have been the beneficiary of his remarkable commitment, eminent service and leadership, and he is deserving of the award of Honorary Doctor of Laws.