

Margaret Somerville

Margaret Anne Ganley Somerville, AM, FRSC (born 1942) is an Australian/Canadian ethicist and academic. She is the Samuel Gale Professor of Law, Professor in the Faculty of Medicine and the Founding Director of the Faculty of Law's Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law at McGill University.

Born in Adelaide, South Australia, she received a A.u.A. (pharm.) from the University of Adelaide in 1963, a Bachelor of Law degree (Hons. I) from the University of Sydney in 1973, and a D.C.L. from McGill University in 1978.

From 1963 to 1969, she was a registered pharmacist in South Australia, Victoria, New Zealand, and New South Wales. After returning to University and receiving her law degree she became an attorney for a Sydney, Australia law firm, Mallesons (as it then was) (formerly Stephen, Jacques and Stephen; now Mallesons Stephen Jaques) from 1974 to 1975.

In 1978, she was appointed an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Law at McGill University. She was appointed an Associate Professor in 1979 and an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Medicine in 1980. In 1984, she became a Full Professor of the Faculty of Medicine and in 1989 was appointed the Samuel Gale Professor of Law. From 1986 to 1996, she was the founding Director of the McGill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law and was appointed acting Director in 1999.

In 1990, she was made a Member of the Order of Australia "for service to the law and to bioethics".^[1] In 1991, she was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. In 2004, she was awarded UNESCO's Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science.^[2]

She has received honorary degrees from University of Windsor (1992), Macquarie University (1993), and St. Francis Xavier University (1996). Her most recent honorary degree awarded June 19, 2006 at Ryerson University in Toronto was controversial and opposed by many students and faculty who feel her beliefs on same sex marriage and her political lobbying against it are tantamount to homophobia.

She will be giving the 2006 Massey Lectures.