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Lord Kerr of Tonaghmore



QC 1983

Year of call 1970

Lord Kerr is available for appointment as an arbitrator, mediator and to conduct expert determinations. His expertise spans a wide range of commercial, environmental and public law disputes, in both domestic and international settings. He can be appointed directly by parties involved in litigation or through one of the ADR institutions.

Lord Kerr retired as a justice in September 2020 after a distinguished judicial career which culminated in him spending 11 years sitting in the UK Supreme Court. He was the first justice of the Supreme Court to come from Northern Ireland. He has delivered the leading judgment of the Supreme Court in a number of important, ground-breaking cases including *Montgomery v Lanarkshire Health Board* (a joint judgment with Lord Reed) [2015] UKSC 11 which dealt with the requirement of informed consent for medical procedures; *Re NIHR* [2018] UKSC 27 on the question of the compatibility of the law on abortion in Northern Ireland with article 8 of ECHR; *R(on the application of Steinfeld and Keidan) v SoS for International Development* [2018] UKSC 32 concerning the availability of civil partnership to couples of different genders; *Stocker v Stocker* [2019] UKSC 17 dealing with the use of dictionary definitions in defamation actions; and *Elgizouli v SSHD* [2020] UKSC 10 which dealt with the development of the common law and the application of the Data Protection Act 2018 to the transfer of material to the USA which might have facilitated the imposition of the death penalty.

He served as Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland from 2004 to 2009 and joined the Privy Council in 2004. He was appointed as Northern Ireland's Lord of Appeal in Ordinary in June

2009 (the last Lord of Appeal in Ordinary to be appointed before the creation of the Supreme Court). From 1995 - 1999, he was the Commercial Judge for Northern Ireland.

Lord Kerr was educated at St Colman's College, Newry and read law at Queen's University, Belfast. He was called to the Bar of Northern Ireland in 1970 and to the Bar of England and Wales at Gray's Inn in 1974. He served as Junior Crown Counsel from 1978 to 1983, at which point he took silk and served as Senior Crown Counsel from 1988 to 1993. In 1993 he was appointed a Judge of the High Court of Northern Ireland and was knighted. He was Commercial Judge, Northern Ireland from 1995 to 1999.

Lord Kerr has many duties and interests away from the bench. He is a regular speaker at various British and Irish universities, and has been chairman of the Northern Ireland Mental Health Commission, chairman of the Distinction and Meritorious Service Awards Committee for Northern Ireland, a member of the Judicial Studies Board for Northern Ireland and a member of the Franco-British Judicial Co-operation Committee. In 1999, he was an Eisenhower Exchange Fellow, travelling extensively in the United States and studying the administration of justice and court practice in America, including a wide-ranging study of various species of ADR in a number of states. Between 2014 and 2020 Lord Kerr was President of the Expert Witness Institute.

In addition to Lord Kerr's numerous committee positions, in 2009 he received an honorary doctorate from Queen's University at the Belfast School of Law. He was also awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Ulster in 2014.

Career and Judicial Appointments

- Called to Bar of Northern Ireland, 1970,
 - Called to the Bar of England and Wales, Gray's Inn, 1974
 - QC (Northern Ireland), 1983
 - Junior Crown Counsel (Common Law), 1978 - 1983
 - Senior. Crown Counsel, 1988 -1993
 - Bencher, Inn of Court of Northern Ireland, 1990
 - Judge of the High Court of Justice, Northern Ireland, 1993 - 2004
 - Commercial Judge Northern Ireland, 1995 - 1999
 - Honorary Bencher, Gray's Inn, 1997
 - Honorary Bencher, King's Inns, 2014
 - Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, 2004-2009
 - Justice of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, 2009 - 2020
 - ADR Accredited Mediator, 2020
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Other Appointments

- Chairman Mental Health Commission for Northern Ireland, 1988
 - Kt, 1993
 - Member: Judicial Studies Board, Northern Ireland, 1995 - 2004
 - Franco British Judicial Co-operation Committee, 1995 - 2001
 - Chairman Distinction and Meritorious Service Awards Committee, Northern Ireland, 1997 - 2001
 - Eisenhower Exchange Fellow, 1999
 - PC, 2004
 - Honorary Fellow American Board of Trial Advocates, 2004
 - Hon. LLD: QUB, 2009; Ulster 2014
 - President of the Expert Witness Institute, 2014 - 2020
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