

Inspiring Lawyers

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Project description:

There are at least four categories in which a PhD student might propose a thesis on the influence of legal education in the life of an inspirational individual or group. The most obvious is where a law student proceeds to become a leading judge. There are also, however, those who have studied law but gone on to inspiring lives in other vocations, such as the novelist Harper Lee or the politician Jennie Lee who played a significant part in the creation of the Open University. Second, there are those who came to law after studying other subjects, for example, Lord Denning and Baroness Thatcher. Then there are those who have rounded off careers in the law by proceeding to study other subjects 'in retirement', including Lord (Gerald) Gardiner, Lord Chancellor & then Chancellor of the Open University, and Lord Bridge, law lord, who studied social sciences and mathematics respectively at the Open University.

Examples of lawyers who would merit such a study in their own right, but who might also be researched alongside another leading figure, would be the first women judges in highest courts, such as Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (USA) and Baroness Hale (UK); the first women Chief Justices in their jurisdictions, Beverley McLachlan (Canada) & Dame Sian Elias (New Zealand); the successive Presidents of Ireland, Mary Robinson & Mary McAleese; the leaders of Asian independence movements in Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who all came to London to become barristers; and Nelson Mandela and other lawyers in the African struggle against apartheid. We are open, however, to proposals to study as diverse a range of inspiring characters as possible among those who have influenced the law or who have been influenced by legal education.