

The History and Influence of the English Inns of Court

an evening with

Professor Sir John Hamilton Baker



Sir John Hamilton Baker, QC, FBA, FRHistS, (born 10 April 1944) is an English legal historian. He was Downing Professor of the Laws of England at the University of Cambridge from 1988 to 2011.

Baker was born in Sheffield, the son of Kenneth Lee Vincent Baker, and Marjorie Baker (née Bagshaw). He was educated at King Edward VI Grammar School, Chelmsford, and University College London (LLB, PhD). He was called to the Bar at the Inner Temple in 1966 and was elected an Honorary Bencher in 1988.

His first academic post was as an Assistant Lecturer in Law at University College London in 1965. In 1967, he was promoted to Lecturer, and in 1971 moved to the University of Cambridge. There he was Librarian of the Squire Law Library until 1973, and remains a Fellow of St. Catharine's College, where he resides above the Sherlock Library.

In 1973, Baker became a Lecturer in Law at the University of Cambridge. He was appointed Reader in English Legal History at the University of Cambridge in 1983. In 1988, he was appointed Professor of English Legal History. From 1998 until 2011, he was Downing Professor of the Laws of England.

He was President of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge until 2007 when he was succeeded by Professor Sir Christopher Alan Bayly. He is also Literary Director of the Selden Society (jointly 1981-1991, sole since 1991).

Appointments have included Visiting Professor, New York University School of Law since 1988, Visiting Fellow, All Souls College, Oxford in 1995, Honorary Fellow, Society for Advanced Legal Studies 1998, Corresponding Fellow American Society for Legal History 1992 and Foreign Honorary Member, American Academy of Arts and Sciences 2001. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy (1984) and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society (1980).

Baker was appointed a Fellow of University College London in 1991, awarded an Honorary LLD of the University of Chicago in 1991, and received the Yorke Prize (University of Cambridge) 1975, and the Ames Prize (Harvard Law School) in 1985. He was knighted in 2003. In 2004, he was awarded the Irish Legal History Society's Gold Medal.

Amaryllis Theatre Company
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