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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

21 OCTOBER 1986

It was with deep regret that I learnt today of the death of Mr Justice Lionel Keith Murphy.

Lionel Murphy was a great Australian and one of our finest ever jurists. He made a significant and lasting contribution to the Parliament and the legal system of this country.

Lionel Murphy served with distinction as a Senator from 1962 until 1975. From 1967 he was Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, and from 1972, Leader of the Government.

As Attorney-General of the Commonwealth between 1972 and 1975 he pioneered major reforms of the law in relation to family law, legal aid, consumer protection, and civil liberties.

As a Judge of the High Court, Lionel Murphy brought to the Court a vision of social justice and a commitment to the principle that all are equal under the law. His contribution to the High Court is a lasting memorial to the principles he held so strongly, and which guided him throughout his legal, parliamentary and judicial careers.

The last few months have been a particularly difficult time for both the Judge and his family. Yet he faced this period with characteristic strength and courage.

Lionel Murphy's commitment to the law and his sense of public duty were epitomised by the fact that in recent days, when his health and physical strength were rapidly failing, he continued to work to complete outstanding judgements.

I wish to express my personal sympathy, and that of the Government, to Mrs Ingrid Murphy and the Judge's family for the loss they are feeling at this time.

I have personally lost a colleague and friend.

The people of Australia have lost a humanist and a jurist of rare talent and significance.

A State Funeral Service will be held in Sydney at 2.30 pm on Monday, 27 October, 1986. Further details will be advised.
