

Bio of Gay J. McDougall

Gay McDougall has spent her career working on issues of race, gender, and economic justice in the U.S. and in the global context.

She has been a leader on human rights within the UN for more than three decades, holding several important positions, including 6 years as the first UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues and 8 years of service on the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. **She was Vice Chair of the CERD from 2018 and 2019.** She was Special Rapporteur on the issue of systematic rape and sexual slavery practices in armed conflict from 1995 to 1999 and played a leadership role in the UN Third World Conference against Racism held in Durban in 2001.

McDougall was a member of the South African governmental body created to administer its first democratic, non-racial elections in 1994, which resulted in the historic election of President Nelson Mandela. Prior to that appointment, she served for 15 years as Director of the Southern Africa Project of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, working closely with South African lawyers to secure the release of thousands of political prisoners from jail. The Government of South Africa bestowed on her their national medal of honor, the Order of O.R. Tambo Medal for her extraordinary contributions to ending apartheid.

As Executive Director of Global Rights, she also worked with lawyers and activists in 10 countries around the world.

McDougall is currently Adjunct Professor at Fordham School of Law. She received a J.D. from Yale Law School, an LL.M. from the London School of Economics and Political Science and has Honorary Degrees from nine institutions.