

DR DOUGLAS BRYDEN, AM

Citation for Conferral of the Award Companion of the University

Douglas Bryden spent his early years living in Wagga Wagga on what is now the Charles Sturt University campus in a house on McKeown Drive. Doug's father was an orchardist, then working for the Department of Agriculture on its experimental farm. The large rock on which a young Douglas Bryden sat in front of the family home, awaiting his brother's return from school each day, is still in place there.

Doug began his working life as a teacher working in rural townships, before following his brother John into the veterinary profession, graduating from the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Sydney in 1963.

Following graduation, Doug spent the first six months of his career in Orange then established a practice in Tamworth in July 1964. Doug soon received requests to set up a practice in Quirindi, and another in Barraba, which he did using aircraft from his Tamworth practice - a true "flying veterinarian" service.

He obtained Membership of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists in 1974. In 1987 Doug was elected President of the College and, in the same year, a founding member and first Chairman of the Cattle Chapter of the College.

Reflecting his passion for education and professional development, Doug had a very long association with the University of Sydney Post Graduate Foundation, from its earliest days. In 1974, while still in practice in northern NSW, he became Honorary Secretary then, in 1979, Associate Director. In 1987, Doug succeeded Tom Hungerford as Director of the Foundation. Under Doug's direction, the PGF prospered and matured and, when he retired from that role in 2000, the organisation was widely acknowledged as a world-class provider of continuing education to veterinarians.

His role in the Post Graduate Foundation led to Doug's nomination as Chairman of the Fifth United Nations Consultation on Veterinary Education in Rome, in 1993.

The Australian Veterinary Association, in 1994, conferred on Dr Bryden the Gilruth prize, the Association's highest award, in recognition of *'his vision, innovation and commitment in providing a wide and expanding range of continuing education opportunities to veterinarians in Australasia.'*

In January 2001, Dr Bryden was again honoured for his contribution to veterinary science with membership of the General Division of the Order of Australia (AM). The award was made in recognition of *'his service to veterinary science, particularly in the fields of continuing education and clinical practice through the University of Sydney Post Graduate Foundation.'*

In early 2004, the Vice-Chancellor of Charles Sturt University appointed Dr Bryden as a consultant to lead the development of the veterinary course. It was a sweet irony that Doug and his wife Rosemary were, in 2004, resident on-campus in WACOBU cottage, just a few metres from the rock where, as a child more than 60 years earlier, Doug had sat and waited for his brother, John, to return from school,.

The decision to appoint Dr Bryden to this role soon proved to be an inspired choice. It was critical to the development of the proposed program that practitioners in rural practice gave clear and strong support for the new course. Doug's reputation as an educator dedicated to the needs of practitioners, and his own long career in rural practice, provided him with the

standing to bring those supporters on board at a time when a commitment to the course from the profession was wavering.

In his role as Consultant to the University, Doug worked with existing staff and the Interim Curriculum Committee to develop a plan for an outstanding veterinary course, aligned with the University's mission, and to address the declining participation of veterinarians in rural practice, rural communities and the livestock industries. Doug saw and understood the need for a new and different veterinary program, and had the courage and foresight to meet the challenge.

One of the key ingredients to the success of the CSU veterinary science program has been the way in which students are selected into the course. Selection criteria are broad, and not limited to previous academic success. Candidates are selected for the course based on their commitment to rural communities and rural veterinary science, as well as on academic ability. Leadership, communication skills and a well-rounded character are as important as grades for the veterinary program envisioned by Dr Douglas Bryden.

Kym Abbott, founding Head of School for the veterinary program, describes Dr Bryden's vision for the veterinary course at CSU as original and unique in the world.

"The commitment to rural practice and students from rural backgrounds, the passion for innovative educational processes and the fundamental role for rural veterinary practices to contribute to the training of our graduates, are all defining characteristics of the CSU program, and are all a result of Doug's inspired vision for the School," Professor Abbott said.

In his development, guidance and oversight of the new CSU veterinary program, Dr Bryden has provided significant support for the advancement of the University, and made a significant contribution to the life of and objectives of the University.

The first graduates from the CSU veterinary course entered the veterinary workforce in August 2010. There was very substantial competition between veterinary practices to employ these outstanding young people and many practices were disappointed that they will have to wait another year, or two, to secure the services of a CSU graduate. Every one of the 2010 graduating class has started their professional careers in rural practice.

The overwhelmingly strong interest in these graduates from rural practitioners gradually built over the six years of the course, as the students completed placements and work experience in veterinary practices around the country, and practitioners noted the quality of their characters and their training. The CSU graduates, by virtue of their backgrounds, the selection process and their early and repeated exposure to veterinary workplaces during their training, will be a very valuable resource for rural communities and rural veterinary practices in the future.

While Dr Bryden's direct contribution to the veterinary program ceased in 2005, as the program director and other new staff were appointed and joined the University, his interest and personal contribution to the course has continued. Doug still visits the School at least once a year, to participate in the student selection process, welcoming nervous applicants and their families and keeping interview panels running to time.

Dr Bryden has created and funded an annual prize, named at his request for Dr Heidi Austin who worked alongside Doug through 2004 to set up the new program. The Dr Heidi Austin Prize is awarded annually to the veterinary student in third year with the best all-round success in veterinary practice placements and a range of practical skills essential for the rural veterinarian.

The foundation class of veterinary students, in recognition of the contribution that Dr Bryden has made to their careers, created their own prize in his honour. The Doug Bryden Shield for Man of the Match is awarded each year after the football match between Veterinary Science

and Agricultural Science at the students' halfway day celebrations. It has been fortunate that, in the several years since these prizes were created, Dr Bryden has been able to attend, with Rosemary, and make these awards personally.

Dr Bryden has been quoted to say: "Something which I felt was great advice for a new graduate, was to understand how important it is to get to the source of the problem, and to show that you were well on the right track and in command of the situation on the first visit."

Chancellor, Douglas Bryden has been, and continues to be, a major contributor to the University. In his vision for the way veterinary students should be selected and trained he has provided a significant contribution to the development of inland Australia and its regions. He has demonstrated, as a great quiet achiever, a dedication to this University and the regions it serves that makes him a worthy recipient of the award Companion of the University.

Dated this Fourteenth day of December Two Thousand and Eleven