

MR BASIL WILLIAM ATKINSON

Citation for the Conferral of a Doctor of Health Studies (*honoris causa*)

Basil William (Bill) Atkinson was born in Sheffield, England, and migrated to Australia with his parents in 1933. He received his secondary schooling at Hurstville Boys High School in Sydney.

In 1948 Bill completed his early training in physical therapy when he gained membership to the Society of Massage and Electrotherapy, which became part of the Australian Physiotherapy Association with the passing of the New South Wales Physiotherapists' Registration Act in 1946.

Bill practiced in established orthopaedic clinics in Sydney until 1951, when he started his own clinic in Rockdale. However, his interest and self-study in biomechanics, pathomechanics and manual therapy caused him to be dissatisfied with mainstream practice in New South Wales at that time. As there was a lack of understanding about the subjects of manual and manipulative therapy, he was compelled to further his knowledge overseas, particularly in the United Kingdom.

In the mid - 1960s, Bill became a founding member of the Manual Therapy Study Group in New South Wales, serving as its Chairman from 1970 - 74. This small group created such an interest in manual therapy assessment and treatment that today it is considered a specialised stream of physiotherapy practice. In 1969 Bill was invited to be a tutor at the first manual therapy course conducted in Australia by Professor Freddy Kaltenborn of Norway, a renowned instructor in manual therapy.

In 1972 Bill travelled to London in Ontario, Canada, where he studied under Professors Kaltenborn and Evjenth, and in 1973 to London, England, where he undertook further training under the tutelage of pioneers in the development of manual and manipulative therapy, Doctors Cyriax and Stoddard. In that same year Bill completed orthopaedic manipulative therapy certification, conducted by the International Federation of Orthopaedic Manipulative Therapy. At the request of colleagues interested in orthopaedic manipulative therapy, he began conducting informal, continuing education courses in New South Wales in 1974. In 1976 Bill was again travelling, this time to Oslo in Norway, where he continued his study of manual therapy, working in the clinics of Professors Kaltenborn and Evjenth.

Bill became a founding member and president (1986-2002) of the Australian Association of Orthopaedic Manipulative Therapists, established to oversee physiotherapy instruction in what was then known as the Nordic philosophy of manual therapy. Bill was subsequently recognised with the award of Esteemed Member of the Australian Physiotherapy Association's New South Wales Branch for his contribution to manual therapy in Australia. In 1986 he successfully completed the final examinations of the International Seminar of Orthopaedic Medicine/Manual Therapy, qualifying as a teacher and examiner within this international system.

Bill's vision to establish a formal university program in manual and manipulative therapy in Australia became a reality in 1995 when a collaborative agreement between the Australian Association of Orthopaedic Manipulative Therapists and Charles Sturt University resulted in the establishment of the Master of Health Science (Orthopaedic Manipulative Therapy). Last year ties with the University were further cemented by the Association's commitment to fund

the establishment of a three-year lectureship in physiotherapy. The Master of Health Science (Orthopaedic Manipulative Therapy), which has since been accredited by the International Federation of Orthopaedic Manipulative Therapists, is a tribute to Bill's dedication and commitment to manual therapy over the last five decades.

As a senior academic associate of the University since 1996, Bill maintains an active role in both the teaching and examination of the Master students. He also conducts introductory courses throughout New South Wales for physiotherapists interested in this approach to manual therapy.

Bill and his wife Leonie have lived in the Sydney suburb of Rockdale since 1951, where he has also worked as a private physiotherapist for the last five decades. They have raised three daughters, two of whom have pursued careers in education, one of them a graduate of the former Mitchell College of Advanced Education (now Charles Sturt University) in Bathurst.

During his career as a physiotherapist Bill has always been keen to pass on his skills and knowledge to his peers, and has always had a passion for improving physiotherapy treatment through education. He has lectured internationally and presented papers in the company of noted leaders of the profession at a number of international physiotherapy conferences and seminars. Despite his city domicile, Bill has never lost sight of the needs of rural physiotherapists, and continues to run courses for regional groups throughout New South Wales.

As well as heightening the profile and importance of manual physiotherapy in Australia, Bill has also given back to his profession and to regional and rural Australia the benefits of his education, knowledge and skills. He has never sought laurels or acknowledgment for what he has done or achieved, which is testimony to his character and professionalism. Indeed, he humbly and publicly admits that the support of his wife, Leonie, his family, and their happy life together have been his most valued achievement and the key ingredients to his career and any contribution he may have made to the physiotherapy profession.

Chancellor I present to you Basil William Atkinson, a valued clinical educator, a respected physiotherapist in Australia, and a man on whom Charles Sturt University is proud to confer the award Doctor of Health Studies (*honoris causa*).

Dated this Twenty Sixth Day of April Two Thousand and Two