

## **MR WALLACE CLYDE FIFE**

### **Citation for the conferral of a Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*)**

I present to you Wallace Clyde Fife for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*). In presenting Mr Fife to you the University, the community of Wagga Wagga and the Riverina beyond seeks to recognise one of its most distinguished sons and one who has given a lifetime of distinguished public service to the University, to the region, to the state of New South Wales and to the Commonwealth of Australia. Charles Sturt University and its predecessor institutions have been major beneficiaries of the contribution that Wal Fife has made to the public life of this region.

He was born in Wagga Wagga on 2 October 1929, educated at the Wagga Wagga Public School and Canberra Grammar School and married Marcia, his devoted wife and helper on 31 May 1952. They are the proud parents of two daughters and two sons, one of whom is also graduating at this ceremony today.

Wal Fife's public life began in 1957 when he was elected to the New South Wales parliament as Member for Wagga Wagga becoming one of that parliament's youngest members. With the election of the Askin government in May 1965 he became a member of the first cabinet and held portfolios continuously from 1965 to 1975. Significantly, at the time when the Martin Committee Report was released establishing Colleges of Advanced Education as a system of education (similar in standards but different in intent from universities) Wal Fife was Assistant Minister for Education and played a determinative role in having the second and third colleges of advanced education in New South Wales established in county regions - Mitchell College at Bathurst in 1969 and Riverina College at Wagga Wagga with study centres at Griffith and Albury in 1970. Subsequently he held the portfolios of Minister for Mines, Conservation, Power, Assistant Treasurer and, finally, Minister for Transport and Highways at the time he resigned from the Legislative Assembly in October of that year. He was subsequently elected to the Parliament of Australia as Member for Farrer on 13 December 1975 and was re-elected at general elections held in 1977, 1980 and 1983. Later he was re-elected in 1984, 1987 and in 1990 as Member for Hume. He resigned from the parliament prior to the most recent federal election.

During this long period of service in the Commonwealth Parliament between 1977 and 1983 he held ministerial appointments as the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister, Minister for Education and Minister for Aviation. Since 1983 he has held shadow portfolios and in the last parliament was Manager of Opposition Business in the House of Representatives. During his long parliamentary career spanning almost three decades and after service at both the state and federal parliaments, Mr Fife has returned to his beloved Wagga Wagga to continue his interests in business, farming and community affairs. He retires as one of Australia's most respected parliamentarians recognised by all as a truly professional politician devoid of rancour and with a reputation for total honesty and integrity.

Mr Fife has been a loyal servant of this region where many thousands of his constituents can recall personal examples of his humility, kindness and effective

representation. Mr Fife has been a loyal and devoted supporter of education in general but especially of Charles Sturt University and its predecessors. He played a determining role in establishing a College of Advanced Education in Wagga Wagga, and in determining the name of that college. He facilitated the move of the College from the site of the old Wagga Wagga Teachers College to Boorooma Campus and in 1977 was instrumental in winning government support for the incorporation of the Wagga Wagga Agricultural College into the then Riverina College. He has been a frequent visitor to the institution and in every way possible has provided advice and guidance in the further development of the institution.

In recognition of this service provided over some 25 years, the Board of Governors has resolved to recognise Mr Fife's distinguished service. It has done that by naming the new lecture theatre complex the Wal Fife Theatres and it also wishes to honour him at this ceremony. In honouring Wal, the University wishes also to recognise the significant contribution of his wife Marcia and of his late father and other relatives to the city of Wagga Wagga.

And so Mr Chancellor, I present to you Wallace Clyde Fife parliamentarian, administrator, distinguished citizen of Wagga Wagga and the Riverina, a founder and devoted supporter of Charles Sturt University for admission to the degree Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*).

**Fourteenth Day of April One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety Three**