

MRS JOYCE HOLMES

Citation for the conferral of a Master or Arts (*honoris causa*)

Joyce Holmes has been actively involved in Wagga's cultural and educational life for fifty seven years. It is a remarkable achievement. But Joyce will *not* thank me for saying so. In common with many women of her generation and circumstances, she remains an intensely private person for whom community service has become a way of life. Although a serious obligation, her community work has never been a chore, still less a matter for public recognition or acclaim. So she will squirm whilst I catalogue her achievements.

Joyce Bowden was born in Murwillumbah in 1908, and educated at Ravenswood School and the University of Sydney, from which she graduated Bachelor of Arts with first class honours in psychology. Among her friends and contemporaries was my mother-in-law, Grace Wilkinson. I welcome this opportunity to pay tribute not only to Joyce, but to that entire generation of University women. It is tempting to think of them as a privileged group. We forget, however, that they were products of the great depression, which exacerbated the difficulties for women determined to make their own way in the world. Joyce counted herself fortunate to find work as a governess on country properties.

In 1936 she married Dr Raymond Glennie Holmes, who began practising in Wagga the following year. Joyce immediately threw herself into the Wagga Shakespeare Club, the Workers' Educational Association, and the Wagga School of Arts.

As the mother of three mischievous young sons, soon to be joined by a daughter, it is unsurprising she was an early convert to the pre-school movement. In 1945 she founded the Wagga Nursery Kindergarten Society. It currently runs seven pre-schools, including Koala and Kookaburra which Joyce herself established. She also was instrumental in establishing the Wagga Baby Health Centre, as well as the Kurrajong School for the developmentally disabled. She remains a dedicated supporter of Riding for the Disabled. Together with HE Gissing, B Penn Lusher and the redoubtable 'member for Wagga', Eddie Graham MLA, Joyce launched the city's campaign for its own University in 1943. She enthusiastically supported Dr Bill Merrylees' Riverine University League and, when the Riverina College of Advanced Education was established in 1972, proved herself a firm friend by tutoring in the Adult Literacy Program.

During the past fifteen years Joyce has won an enduring place in the affections of literally hundreds of our students through her participation in classes as an audit student. If she had received credit for all the subjects she has studied, the University would be conferring not one, but *two* degrees today!

Joyce's community involvement has meanwhile not abated. She currently is secretary of the Wagga Tree Planters, patron of the Shakespeare Club and the Junior Girl Guides, an active member of Probus and the Red Cross, and an indefatigable competitor in the annual City-to-Lake Run. At eighty six Joyce offers tangible proof that age need be no barrier to a full and active life.

Mr Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting Mrs Joyce Holmes for the award of Master of Arts (*honoris causa*).

Dated this Twenty-Second Day of April One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety Four