

CITATION DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR K R MCKINNON, VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG, ON THE OCCASION OF THE ADMISSION OF ROBERT MARSDEN HOPE TO THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF LAWS, HONORIS CAUSA

Deputy Chancellor, I present Robert Marsden Hope.

Born in 1919, he attended the Sydney Church of England Grammar School, and then undertook law studies at the University of Sydney which were interrupted by war service with the Australian forces in the Middle East and New Guinea. After the war he completed his studies and was admitted to the Bar in 1945, practising as a Barrister from 1946 to 1969, and being appointed as a Queen's Council in 1960.

For over a decade until the late 1950s, he was also active academically. He lectured part-time in the Sydney University Law School and wrote and edited legal texts. He has been President of the Joint Examinations Board.

Robert Hope accepted the call to a judicial career in 1969 when he was appointed a Judge of the New South Wales Supreme Court. From 1972 to 1989 he was a Judge of the Court of Appeal. Since official retirement from the bench in 1989 he has accepted a further call to public service as part-time Chairperson of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission.

His reputation as a judge of special ability and standing prompted other appointments that have given him national prominence. From 1973 to 1974 he chaired a Committee of Inquiry into the National Estate. In 1974 he began a long involvement with inquiries into the 'intriguing' world of security and intelligence. He acted as Royal Commissioner on Intelligence and Security; he then conducted the Protective Security Review and, in 1983, he was appointed the Royal Commissioner inquiring into Australia's Security and Intelligence Agencies. In all those roles there was widespread recognition of his integrity and dedication to the national interest.

In parallel with his judicial career, Robert Hope undertook other demanding roles, consistent with his vision of citizenship and the obligations of those who care deeply about individual liberties, and the national heritage. He has served as President of the Australian Council of Civil Liberties and is the Foundation Chairman of the New South Wales Heritage Council - a post he has held since 1978. He takes an active interest in aboriginal affairs.

Similarly, he is a lover and supporter of creative arts and music. He was Chairman of the Old Tote Theatre in the 1970s, a member of the Board of the Nimrod Theatre from its inception until 1984, a member of the Australia Council; currently he serves on the Board of Musica Viva.

Robert Hope's involvement in the governance of universities began in 1970 when he became a member of the University of Sydney Senate, from which he resigned in 1975 to become the Foundation Chancellor of the University of Wollongong.

In the ensuing sixteen years he has been one of the University's greatest assets. As Chairman of the "Board" - the University Council - Robert Hope has guided the University through its initial reputation-building stage, through the difficult times of "standstill funding" in the late 1970s, through an exemplary 1981 amalgamation with the Wollongong Institute of Education, through a decade of rapid growth, and through the stresses and strains of recent higher education upheavals - all with a deft touch, sensitivity and invariable good humour.

No respecter of unnecessary procedural rigidity, he seeks to resolve Council issues in ways which advance the University. He allows contending opinions to be heard, queries confusing statements and summarises the options clearly. There have been Councils of many complexions since 1975 and no member has ever had anything but the greatest respect for his chairmanship, especially his fairness.

The current Vice-Chancellor, like his predecessor, has innumerable reasons to be grateful for Robert Hope's wisdom. He is both supportive of new developments, and encouraging and wise in adversity; above all, he is a perceptive counsellor and friend. While not intruding into management, he keeps a weather eye open for the effects of policies and management actions, subsequently tempering and counselling, seeking the best effect for the University.

Circumspect though our Chancellor is, his vision of the proper role of the Chancellor of an Australian University extends to concern for the Australian culture. A notable example occurred many years ago, when his habitual close reading of the voluminous course proposals for a mid-year Council meeting, revealed the proposed deletion of the literature course strand which included courses in Australian Literature. At his urging Council responded by insisting on the continuation of the strand.

It is rare, almost contradictory, on a University campus, to find unanimity of opinion. But the members of the University of Wollongong are united, uniquely, in their warm appreciation of Chancellor Robert Hope. They like him as Chancellor and as an approachable friendly man who might well have been an academic, probably in his avocation, history, had he not opted for the law.

He has, of course, been publicly honoured: he was made a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George in 1977 and admitted to the very select company of Companions of the Order of Australia in 1989.

To these honours the University is today taking the opportunity to add its own highest honour, taking advantage of a very appropriate moment, as the new Faculty of Law is being inaugurated.

Robert Hope has long served this University, as he has the law and the nation, with distinction and grace. Chancellorial impartiality he has always shown, but this characteristic is only one of many other profoundly important personal characteristics - generosity of spirit, compassion, personal warmth, dignity and consistent courtesy to all.

Deputy Chancellor, it is a very special pleasure for me to present, with pride and gratitude, Robert Marsden Hope for admission to the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.