

Mr Robert Otto Albert OA RFD RD

The title of Honorary Fellow of the University was conferred upon Robert Otto Albert, OA RFD RD, at the graduation ceremony held at 11.30am on 18 October 2002.

Citation

Professor Ross, I have the honour to present Robert Otto Albert, OA RFD RD BA LLB for the conferring of the title of Honorary Fellow of the University.

Mr Albert is a major and longstanding benefactor of this University, and his interest extends over a wide area of its endeavour. He has provided funding for many projects and has invested countless hours in sharing his wisdom and expertise.

The Conservatorium of Music, the Bruce Williams' Fund for the Library, the Sports Union and St Paul's College have all been recipients of major donations from Mr Albert. In 1999 and 2000, he provided funds for the refurbishment of significant rooms on the Quadrangle. He was responsible for the restoration of the Steinway concert piano in MacLaurin Hall, and, most recently, was instrumental in obtaining for the University, the Stuart piano in the Great Hall.

In particular, Mr Albert has directed his generosity and energies to the benefit of St Paul's College. He served on the College Council for 21 years, from 1981 until March this year; he was Bursar of the College from 1987 until 2002 and secretary of the alumni body, St Paul's College Union, for 35 years; and he has provided and continues to provide bursaries for students who would not otherwise be able to live on campus.

With his family, he made possible the building of an entire new College wing in the style and spirit of the original architect, Edmund Blackett; he was the founder of the College Foundation and has been its Chairman since its inception in 1977. This Foundation releases between \$500,000 and \$900,000 to the College annually for the maintenance and restoration of the buildings and for a sizable scholarship program which makes College membership accessible to as many as 30 students a year.

He is the best of graduates. He cares deeply for his university and college, and he gives constant, practical expression of this care. His enthusiasm for improving the quality of life for all generations of university staff and students is boundless. He lives life to the full, and infects others with his own cheerful and outgoing enjoyment. Nor does he stand on ceremony, and is as happy sharing a sandwich lunch in the office as he is at a formal dinner.

In the wider community, Mr Albert's interest and generosity have benefited the Australian Ballet, the Sydney Maritime Museum, the Navy League and many other organisations.

It is a measure of the man that Mr Albert's philanthropy has been private, discreet, without attention or fanfare, and has been characterised by modesty and self-effacement.

Professor Ross, I present Robert Otto Albert for the conferring of the title of Honorary Fellow of the University.