

Mr Ross Roderick Gittins AM

The honorary degree of Doctor of Science in Economics was conferred upon Ross Roderick Gittins AM, BCom *UoN*, by the Deputy Chancellor Alan Cameron AO at the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences graduation ceremony held at 9.30am on 27 April 2012.



The Deputy Chancellor and Ross Gittins AM, *photo, copyright Memento Photography.*

Citation

Deputy Chancellor, I have pleasure in presenting Ross Gittins for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science in Economics (*honoris causa*).

Mr Gittins has been Economics Editor of the Sydney Morning Herald since 1978. Not only is his tenure unprecedented, but so is his national importance as a public intellectual. His columns are also published in the Age and the West Australian and he is a frequent participant in radio and television programs and in public fora of many kinds. He has authored or co-authored six books. He has been a central figure for decades for HSC students studying Economics. He is, in short, a national figure whose influence reaches from Cabinet in Canberra to the high school.

In 2008 he was made a member of the Order of Australia for service to journalism as a commentator on economics. In 1993 he won the Citibank Pan Asia award for excellence in finance journalism. He is an honorary life member of the Australian Business Economists, and a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants. He has been a Nuffield press fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge.

He has developed the art of the newspaper column to new heights in Australian journalism. His columns are notable for their independence, their wit, and their insistence of going beyond the sound and fury of public debate into the theoretical assumptions and evidence behind the competing claims. His early education as an accountant means he brings a forensic scrutiny of the data that is concealed by the lightness of his rhetorical touch. He has acted as an honest broker between scholarly work and the public. This has been true of macro-economic management issues, but also especially of behavioural economics and the sociology of economics.

He has presented many invited lectures to the central decision-makers on the Australian economy - the Treasury, Reserve Bank, Productivity Commission, Australian Bureau of Statistics. Equally, however, he has frequently presented to such gatherings as the Happiness conference, several writers' festivals, and to teachers' and community organizations. He was a member of the inaugural Department of Government and International Relations advisory board, and has addressed the annual dinner of the Sydney University Association of Professors. He has frequently given of his time and energy to give guest lectures and seminars at this University in Government, Economics, and Political Economy, which have invariably been strongly appreciated by students.

His books and articles are often set as references on courses, including many Sydney University courses. A search for his name on Google returns more than 80,000 hits. There can be no doubt Ross Gittins is a major figure in Australian public affairs.

He has authored or co-authored the following books: *The Australian economy: a student's guide to current economic conditions*; *Gittins' guide to economics*; *Gittinomics: living the good life without money stress, overwork and joyless consumption*; *The Happy Economist : Happiness for the hard-headed*; and *How Australia compares* with Professor Rod Tiffen of this university.

In sum, Ross Gittins has made an outstanding contribution to the public understanding of economics as a part of Australian social and political life. He has produced not only journalism of great quality and integrity, but also has been an important contributor to contemporary Australian scholarship. He remains a voice of reason in a public debate that is not always reasonable. With this honorary doctorate this University recognizes his long career of extraordinary achievement.

Deputy Chancellor, I present Ross Gittins for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science in Economics (honoris causa) and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.