

Ms Jennie Mackenzie

An honorary Fellowship of the University was conferred upon Jennie Mackenzie by Presiding Pro-Chancellor Mr Peter FitzSimons AM at a Faculty of Science graduation at 2.00pm on 6 December 2018.

Citation

Presiding Pro-Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present Ms Jennie Mackenzie to you for an honorary fellowship of the University.

Today, Jennie is being honoured in recognition of her outstanding support for the interests and welfare of the University through her significant contribution to volunteering, philanthropy, and the fostering and mentoring of early career researchers, particularly at the University's Charles Perkins Centre.

Jennie has enjoyed a long and distinguished career working with children and families as both an educator and author.

She was director of a preschool before becoming Early Childhood Advisor for ABC radio, television and associated projects for under 8 year olds, most notably Play School. She has also produced radio and TV programs, books and audio and has contributed to programs for TAFE Satellite Education and Kindergarten of the Air. She is a published author of books and regular magazine articles for children and care givers and was honoured with a Television Society of Australia award as producer-director for an episode of Play School.

Jennie was the first President of the 222 Committee, formed by a group of friends to support children attending a Kindergarten Union centre in the inner city of Sydney. She also worked with the NSW Council of Social Services and was a foundation member of Contact, a NSW Government committee to support isolated children and their care givers.

Through her own cancer battle and experience as a health consumer, Jennie became interested in health and medical research, and in supporting research through philanthropy. She was introduced to the work of the Charles Perkins Centre and was excited by the Centre's vision for change and multidisciplinary approaches to research.

This approach resonated with Jennie as it echoed one of the formative experiences of her own career, where she able to participate in a multidisciplinary program in early childhood education at Macquarie University. Her enthusiasm for the work of the Charles Perkins Centre has led her to make a number of significant gifts to the University in recent years in support of early career researchers at the Centre.

Jennie's support is currently funding the work of Dr Melkam Kebede who is researching the relationship between obesity and type 2 diabetes and Dr Rosie Waern's postdoctoral research into Nutrition for Health Living.

In 2014 Jennie was appointed to the Vice-Chancellor's Campaign Board, a group comprised of the University's most visionary philanthropic supporters. The Board was established in 2012 to provide high-level strategic advice to the University's campaign leadership team and Jennie is actively engaged with this group.

Jennie has contributed to the promotion of academic purposes at the University as a volunteer and was on the judging panel for the finals of the Three Minute Thesis finals. Key criteria for judging are the straightforward communication of complex academic concepts and the University was able to draw on Jennie's background and expertise in teaching and learning, and in broadcast media for children.

Since 2014, Jennie has met with a number of early career researches and students at the Charles Perkins Centre to mentor and coach them on communication and presentation style for non-academic audiences. These skills are becoming increasingly important as the University is seeking to grow the public and media profile of its academics as ambassadors of the institution.

Presiding Pro-Chancellor, I present to you Ms Jennie Mackenzie and invite you to confer the title of Honorary Fellow of the University upon her.