

Professor Colin Power

The honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (DLitt) was conferred upon Professor Colin Power, FACE ARACI MIIS, former Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO and Adjunct Professor in the School of Education, University of Queensland, at a conferring of degrees ceremony held in the Great Hall on 8 November 2002.

Citation

Deputy Chancellor, I have the honour to present Professor Colin Power for the admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa).

In April 2000, Professor Colin Power completed a term as Deputy Director-General of UNESCO - the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. That term as Deputy Director-General came after ten years as Assistant Director-General for Education, a time when, in effect, Colin Power was the "E" in UNESCO. These are the most senior posts that an Australian has held in UNESCO, and are among the highest positions held by an Australian in the UN system as a whole.

For the twelve years he was at UNESCO, Colin Power was responsible for UNESCO's education programs in the organisation's 188 member states. He is now credited for having played an outstanding international role in assisting education authorities the world over during a decade of profound political, economic and cultural transformation. That work saw him liaise with many world leaders, most of the world's ministers of education, and literally hundreds of non-government organisations, government aid agencies and multilateral organisations as they sought to tackle the formidable global problems of equal access to education, the quality of education, and its relevance to economic and social change. As Deputy Director-General of UNESCO, Colin Power assumed a very high level of responsibility within the UN system in the global struggle to alleviate poverty, to defend human rights, and to protect world cultural and natural heritage sites.

Colin Power began his career teaching science and mathematics in secondary schools, and then assumed responsibility for research, curriculum and planning in the Queensland Department of Education. Subsequently, he became Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Queensland, completing his PhD in science education in 1971. In 1978, he took up appointment as Professor of Education at the Flinders University of South Australia, of which he is now Professor Emeritus. At various times he has accepted invitations to be Visiting Professor at the universities of Illinois, Stanford, Missouri, London, East Anglia and Stockholm. Currently, he is Adjunct Professor of Education at the University of Queensland. Colin Power is author or co-author of 13 books and over 250 published works on education, including major contributions to science education, reform of secondary and higher education, evaluation, and transitions in education.

Colin Power has always been - indeed, continues to be - a passionate advocate of the right of every person to education, emphasising, in his own words, "that quality education directed to the full development of the human personality is a global public good, is the key to peace, to development, social cohesion and democracy in the twenty-first century". Perhaps nothing illustrates this passion more than the leading role played by UNESCO in the Education for All initiative spearheaded by UNESCO in 1990 with the World Bank, UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme. In mobilising the international community to ensure equality of access to education, Colin Power brought a formidable combination of intellectual, strategic and persuasive skills.

That literally millions of children, young people and adults over the past decade have had opened up to them the world of learning is due in no small part to the energy, commitment and skill shown by Colin Power. He is an Australian of whom all Australians can be proud. More than that, he is a global citizen who has played a leading role in ensuring that education is placed at the centre of global strategies for peace, for progress, and for the universal application of human rights.

Deputy Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting to you, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa), scholar, educator, and international civil servant, Professor Colin Power.