

Sir John Seymour Proud

The honorary degree of Doctor of Engineering was conferred upon Sir John Seymour Proud, BE Sydney, MIMM MAusIMM, at a conferring of degrees ceremony held in 1984.

Sir John was a company director and a former Fellow of Senate (1975-1983).



Sir John Proud (left) receiving his honorary doctorate from the Chancellor, Sir Hermann Black, photo, *'The University of Sydney News'*, 30 October 1997.

Report

A graduate of the Faculty of Engineering, Sir John was a Fellow of Senate from 1974 to 1983, and was awarded an honorary doctorate of Engineering in 1984 for his work for the University.

Sir John was born on 9 August 1907, the son of William and Hannah Proud of Manly. His father was the founder of Prouds, the jewellers, but when John joined the family company after an indifferent performance at Sydney Grammar, he realised quickly that it was not the career for him.

He returned to his studies, and secured a place in mining engineering, where he excelled. He graduated in 1935, and left Sydney to manage a tin mine in Tasmania.

Two years later, on 19 February 1937, he was in a small plane on a flight from Brisbane to Sydney when it crashed in remote rainforest in the McPherson Ranges. Only three people survived the crash - Proud, Binstead and Westray, who died trying to reach help. Binstead and Proud, who had a broken leg and protruding bone. waited nine days to be rescued.

Sir John managed a small engineering works in Sydney and acted as a mining consultant before joining the board of the Newcastle Wallsend Coal Company in 1948. He was chairman of both Newcastle Wallsend and of Peko Mines and later of the merged company Peko-Wallsend, until he retired in 1978.

Throughout his career, Sir John was also an energetic benefactor, and established research foundations in electrical, civil and mining engineering, as well as the privately funded environmental initiative, Earthwatch Australia. He was a trustee of the Australian Museum from 1971 to 1977, and was founding chairman of the Lizard Island Research Foundation.

After he was awarded his honorary doctorate, the Chairman of the Warren Centre for Advanced Engineering's Board of Directors, Mr Neville Chidgey, wrote to Sir John.

"It was most pleasing to see that the presenting remarks [at the ceremony] made specific reference to the key role taken by you in the establishment of the Warren Centre and the practical encouragement and wisdom which you have provided," he wrote. "I well realise that the Cenrre would hardly have got off the ground at all if it had not been for your enthusiasm and leadership, particularly in those early days when it was necessary to inspire confidence among the engineering profession that the Centre was needed and could succeed."

When Sir John Proud died on 9 October 1997, the University of Sydney lost one of its greatest supporters and benefactors.

From 'The University of Sydney News', 30 October 1997