

Emeritus Professor James Gerald D’Arcy Rankin



The honorary degree of Doctor of Medical Science was conferred upon James Rankin by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Michael Spence AC at a Faculty of Medicine graduation at 9.30am on 21 April 2017.

Citation

Vice-Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Medical Science (honoris causa) James Gerald D’Arcy Rankin, Emeritus Professor at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, the University of Toronto, and Honorary Professor at the Sydney Medical School.

Professor Rankin graduated MB BS from the University of Sydney in 1954. Following graduation he was a resident medical officer at St Vincent’s Hospital, Sydney. He joined Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in 1957 as Registrar to the Gastroenterology and Clinical Research Units. In 1962 he took up a Visiting Fellowship at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Presbyterian Hospital in New York where he undertook research on hepatic physiology and disease. He became an Honorary Assistant Physician at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in 1963.

In 1964 Professor Rankin moved to the University of Melbourne’s Department of Medicine at St Vincent’s Hospital to pursue a career in academic medicine. During his first year in Melbourne, and in response to great community and professional concern about the social and medical impact of excessive alcohol consumption, he established the first medically-based combined clinical and academic program for the treatment and of study for alcoholism in Australia.

Professor Rankin says of this time: *“The Sisters of Charity owned St Vincent’s Hospital and were keen to have a clinic started for patients with alcohol problems. The Hospital was located in an area that probably had the highest concentration in Australia of homeless people and people with alcohol problems.”* The alcohol field was an unpopular area medically and professionally but over a six-year period, substantial clinical services and research and educational programs were established. These included the introduction of problems of alcohol use into the undergraduate medical curriculum at the University of Melbourne.

In 1970 Professor Rankin moved to Canada to a joint post as Director and Physician-in-Chief of the Clinical Institute of the Addiction Research Foundation of Ontario, a new University of Toronto teaching hospital, and Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine. Over an eight-year period clinical, research and educational programs on alcohol and drug-related problems were developed.

From 1978 to 1981 he was Director of the Division of Drug and Alcohol Services within the Health Commission of New South Wales and Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of Sydney. One of his key achievements was the establishment of drug and alcohol programs within Sydney’s major Teaching Hospitals. This included the establishment of senior academic, medical and nursing appointments at each site. These programs established a national benchmark for hospital-based services and a foundation for future academic development.

In 1982 he became Director of the Canadian Liver Foundation Epidemiology Unit and Professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Biostatistics at the University of Toronto. From 1985 to 1993 he served again as Head of Medicine and Physician-in-Chief at the Clinical Institute.

Professor Rankin returned to Australia in 1994 as Clinical Professor at the University of Sydney and Chair of the Central Sydney Area Drug and Alcohol Services. His review of these services led to a major restructure to close long-term inpatient programs and expand ambulatory care.

Throughout his career Professor Rankin has contributed significantly to research and education in the fields of hepatic disease and alcohol and drug-related problems. He has been a key participant in numerous national and international societies, commissions and government committees. He was instrumental in the establishment of and served as the first President of *both* the Australian and Canadian Medical Societies on Alcohol and other Drug-related Problems. Since his official retirement in 2000 he has continued pursuing his interests in the drug and alcohol field.

Honours awarded him include Honorary Fellow in the Australasian Chapter of Addiction Medicine, The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, and Honorary Life Memberships of the Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine and Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and Other Drugs. The Rankin Oration at the annual conference of Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and Other Drugs

and Rankin Court within the Drug and Alcohol Services at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney have both been named in his honour.

Vice-Chancellor, I present Professor James Rankin for admission to the degree of Doctor of Medical Science (honoris causa) and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.