

## Mr Robert Alwyn Raymond OAM

The honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (DLitt) was conferred upon Robert Alwyn Raymond OAM, journalist and network and independent film maker, at a conferring of degrees ceremony held in the Great Hall on 9 May 2003.

### Citation

Professor Sachs, I have the honour to present Robert Alwyn Raymond for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa).

The son of a country school master who spent most of his career in the outback, Bob Raymond was born in 1922 in Beaudesert, Queensland. After his father's death in 1934, Bob was taken by his mother 'home' to England where he completed his secondary education at The Skinners' School, Tunbridge Wells, and the Henry Mellish County School, Nottingham. The outbreak of World War II, however, made it impossible for him to take up a place which he had been offered at Cambridge University in 1938.

In 1940 Bob Raymond headed for Fleet Street, where he started as a cadet on the Daily Sketch, moved soon after to the news department of the ABC, and within a year was on the staff of the Sydney afternoon paper, the Daily Mirror. He lived in London through the Blitz and later, the V-1 and V-2 offensives, and in 1944, as a 22-year old war correspondent for the Mirror, took part in the D-Day invasion.

After the war Bob Raymond remained in the UK, writing for the Picture Post, Illustrated, Everybody's and the Daily Mirror, and between 1948 and 1952 his own column, a critical perspective on the press called 'So They Say...' appeared in the New Statesman and Nation.

A short stint as Press Officer for the Volta River aluminium project on the Gold Coast, now the Republic of Ghana, began in 1953, and in 1957 he joined the personal staff of Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah, with responsibility for the foreign press during the country's independence festivities. But with those celebrations over, Bob Raymond returned to Australia, joining the Talks Department of the ABC and, in 1961, founding the enduring current affairs program, Four Corners, with Mike Charlton. In the same year Bob Raymond began a collaboration with this University's Professor Stuart Butler, with whom he wrote the newspaper strip Frontiers of Science for the next 19 years, a major feature distributed all over the world in up to a dozen languages. Thus began one of the most distinguished careers in Australian television, current affairs and documentary history.

As producer and director of Four Corners during the first 3 years of the program's life, Bob Raymond brought events occurring all over the world into the homes of Australia's first generation of television viewers. In 1963 he set up the Special Projects Division for the Nine Network, establishing the first documentary unit in Australian commercial television. Between 1963 and 1968 he wrote, produced and presented over 70 one-hour documentaries, shot at home and abroad, including *We, the Destroyers*, with Alan Moorehead, which established the conservation genre in Australian television.

*Life and Death on the Great Barrier Reef* (1969), *Shell's Australia* (1971-1975), *Discover Australia's National Parks* (1978), *Pelican's Progress* (1979), *Out of the Fiery Furnace* (1984) and *Man on the Rim* (1988) opened the eyes of all Australians to the world around them. His non-fiction books - from *Australia's Wildlife Heritage* (1975) and *Australia: The Greatest Island* (1979) to *Fifty-Two Views of Rudy Komon* (1999) and his three volumes of autobiography, offer unique insights into the natural and cultural world of 20th century Australia. In 1998 the Commonwealth recognised his 'services to television, current affairs and documentaries' with the award of the Medal of the Order of Australia.

Professor Sachs, I have great pleasure in presenting to you, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa), writer, filmmaker, pioneer of Australian television documentaries and investigative news reporting, Robert Alwyn Raymond and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.