

Sir William Tyree OBE

The degree of Doctor of Engineering (honoris causa) was conferred upon Sir William Tyree OBE at the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology graduation ceremony held at 2.00pm on 16 May 2008.



Academic Board Chair Professor Bruce Sutton (left), Sir William Tyree OBE (centre) and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gavin Brown (right), *photo, copyright Memento Photography.*

Citation

Presented by the Vice-Chancellor Professor Gavin Brown

Professor Sutton, I have the honour to present Sir William Tyree for admission to the degree of Doctor of Engineering (honoris causa).

Sir William was born in New Zealand in 1921. He obtained a Diploma in Electrical Engineering from Sydney Technical College in 1949 and commenced his illustrious career spanning 60 years during which he has held leadership positions in both public and private enterprise.

Committed to innovation and leading edge technological advancement, Sir William has been a pioneer in the electrical engineering industry, founding Tyree Industries, a manufacturer of electrical motors and transformers in 1956. From 1963 to 1969, he converted Tyree Holdings into a public company, consolidated all the English transformer manufacturers to form the largest power and distribution transformer manufacturer in the Southern Hemisphere, and eventually sold to Westinghouse Electric Corporation. In 1981, Sir William founded the Tyree Group of Companies and he continues to be actively involved in managing this Group.

Following his visit to Paris in the 1950s, Sir William initiated the establishment of the Australian National Committee of CIGRE, the international organisation dedicated to the identification and development of solutions to technical issues in the power supply sector.

In recognition of his service to Australian society in electrical engineering and manufacturing, Sir William was awarded the Centenary Medal in 2001. He is an outstanding person, having achieved at the highest level in his field of endeavour, he has also made significant, pioneering contributions to a diversity of areas of great benefit to the community

In 1970, Sir William made a generous philanthropic investment and established the A W Tyree Foundation. From this base, many ground-breaking developments have been achieved including the establishment of Mediceck, the first multi-phasic screening centre in Australia. This was followed in 1978 by the Sydney Square Diagnostic Breast Clinic, a multi-disciplinary centre for the diagnosis of breast cancer, another first in Australia. Sir William's initiative in setting up multi-phasic screening over 30 years ago provided the impetus for the Government and the medical profession to take a more active interest in preventative medicine for breast cancer.

Sir William has been actively engaged in technological developments and education and through the AW Tyree Foundation he has provided significant philanthropic support to excellence in higher education, engineering innovation, medical research and the arts that leave an enduring legacy. In recognition of his philanthropic contribution, Sir William was awarded Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1971 and, in honour of his services to the community, he was awarded the Knight Bachelor in 1975.

In 1982, Sir William and the A W Tyree Foundation funded the Tyree Chair of Otolaryngology at the University of Sydney, bringing together engineering and medicine for the treatment of deafness. Professor William Gibson who held the Chair went on to establish the RPAH Adult Cochlear Implant Program in 1984 and the Children's Cochlear Implant Centre in 1986. Sir William's support has had enormous impact on research and practice in the area of hearing impairment and in the development of cochlear implants and the bionic ear and in recognition of his interest and role, Sir William was admitted as Honorary Fellow of the University of Sydney in 1985.

Last year, Sir William made a million dollar commitment to the University of Sydney to establish a Power Engineering Laboratory which will provide the practical infrastructure support for students to work on professional level equipment, exposing students to methodologies and practices used in industrial environments and lessening the gap between industry and academia.

In 2003 Sir William, through his Foundation, provided significant philanthropic and moral support and, together with the Australian Industry Group, persuaded State and Federal Governments to support the establishment of the Australian Industry Innovation Exchange Network, now IXC Australia. This network was designed to bring together researchers, industry and government via a "Super Net" concept to speed up the commercialisation of Australian inventions and research. Sydney University was an early member of this Network.

Sir William continues his strong support of engineering innovation and education and is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (FTSE).

Professor Sutton, I present Sir William Tyree for admission to the degree of Doctor of Engineering, (honoris causa), and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.