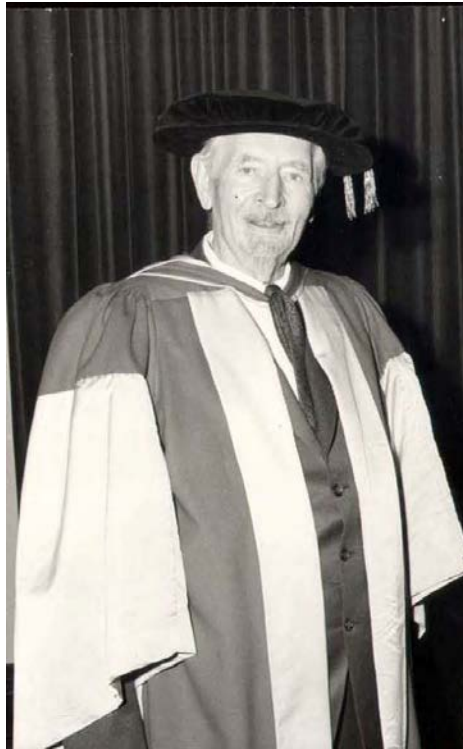


## Emeritus Professor Leslie Wilkinson OBE



Emeritus Professor Leslie Wilkinson, OBE, FRIBA LFRAIA, Professor of Architecture in the University of Sydney 1918-47 and Emeritus Professor from 1947, was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters on 2 May 1970.



Emeritus Professor Leslie Wilkinson, *photo G3\_224\_1081, University of Sydney Archives.*

### Citation

*Presented by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Bruce Williams:*

Deputy Chancellor, 52 years ago Leslie Wilkinson was appointed our first Professor of Architecture. He has achieved a notable series of firsts - the first Professor of Architecture in Australia, the first Dean, the first registration on the roll of the Board of Architects, the first Gold Medallist of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

Today, Deputy Chancellor, he will achieve, in his 87th year, a different kind of first - his first University degree.

Leslie Wilkinson came to us from University College, London, where he had been Associate Professor at the School of Architecture. He had served articles under the London architect, J S Gibson, and attended the Royal Academy School.

During this period of his education he received the Gold and Silver Medals and the Travelling Studentship of the Royal Academy, and he was a Silver Medallist of the RIBA.

Ruskin once wrote that a person who is not a sculptor or painter cannot be an architect, only a builder. Wilkinson was trained to be an architect, and grew to adorn his profession.

He completed the design of our splendid quad., from the Old Fisher to this Great Hall of Blacket's. He designed the fine front of the Botany Building across Science Road. At Vaucluse, he designed extensions to Blacket's St Michael's, for which work he received the Sulman Award.

All this was fine, sensitive adaptation to Blacket. Before he came to Australia he had been greatly impressed by the architecture of the Mediterranean and thought it well adapted to Sydney's climate and topography. In

this style he designed a series of excellent houses in and around Sydney. One of these houses received the Sulman Award for Architecture in 1935.

His interest extended far beyond the design of individual buildings. He was an early and far-sighted exponent of planning. He advocated government ownership of land and rational subdivisions to allow more economical use. He was a firm supporter of the town and terrace house and recent developments in these forms are testimony to his support.

Between 1920 and 1927 he prepared a master plan for the University of Sydney. He designed the Physics School in relation to his concept of spacious vistas, which were ridden over by rapid post-war expansion. He arranged for the transfer of the facade of the old Commercial Bank in Martin Place to its present location in Science Road - an enlightened act of preservation.

Through his designs and the lucid forceful expression of his views he has exercised a very great influence on his profession. I referred to Professor Elkin as grand old man of Anthropology. Equally, Professor Wilkinson is the grand old man of Australian Architecture.

His students over the years have regarded him with awe and affection, and have gained from him a broad understanding and commitment to architecture. While he was, himself, a brilliant draughtsman and appreciated greatly the draughtsmanship of others, his greatest concern was always with the building which would result from the drawing and his highest praise for a design was to say, "That will build well." His designs built well.

*From The University of Sydney News, 2 July 1970*