

Mr Mack Geoffrey Williams

The title of Honorary Fellow was conferred upon Mack Geoffrey Williams at the ceremony held at 2.00pm on 12 April 1996.

Citation

Chancellor,

I have the honour to present to you Australia's Ambassador to South Korea, Mack Geoffrey Williams, for the conferring of the title of Honorary Fellow.

In 1961, Mack Williams graduated from this University with a BA (Hons.) degree. His choice of Geography as a major subject was a pointer to his curiosity about the world. He also specialised in Asian history, headed the University's International Affairs Association and used the Student Representative Council's first Travel Grant to explore Japan and Southeast Asia. Already at that stage, he could be described as an Asianist, and indeed Asia came to dominate his career.

After serving in Australia's embassies in Saigon, Phnom Penh and Port Moresby, he was appointed High Commissioner in Dhaka, and Ambassador in Manila and Seoul. Throughout his career, Mack has upheld the interests of the University of Sydney, helping to forge international links so vital to our mission in the 21st century. Three years ago his links with his alma mater were strengthened when his eldest daughter, Ineke, graduated with a BA (Hons.) degree. For Mack it was a renewal of an emotional and ideological relationship with his University.

He believes that language studies alone can not convey the character and quality of contemporary Asia. Rather he views people and politics as keys to understanding these cultures. As an alumnus, he knew very well that Sydney had, as it has now, the capacity to contribute in the Philippines and Korea to areas such as education, medicine and law. These contributions he regarded as being potentially as limitless as the human imagination. His aim has always been nothing less than putting the University of Sydney on the map of both countries. As Sydney builds its international programs, Mack Williams is doing his best to ensure we accelerate towards meaningful goals. He delights in knowing that a Sydney graduate, his Executive Assistant in Seoul, was the first Australian Korean in the Foreign Service. He views Australian Koreans as a rich resource for both countries.

He reminisces now that in his early graduate days many of his mates headed for Great Britain after they completed their university studies. Now, however, young Australian graduates are not daunted by cultural differences they now wish to experience in Asia. If Mack Williams has his way, the wish to experience those cultural differences will be embraced by legions of young graduates, and he hopes that many of those young travellers will come from Sydney University.

Chancellor, I have the honour to present to you Mack Williams for the conferring of the title of Honorary Fellow.