150 years, 150 firsts: The people of the Faculty of Medicine

Researched, written and compiled by Lise Mellor for the Faculty of Medicine, the University of Sydney

With valued assistance from Louise Freckelton, Tarina Rubin, Ann Sefton, Yvonne Cossart and David Tiller
The impact of the Faculty of Medicine can be measured by the achievements of our alumni and staff in research and innovation, by their vision and passion and by their commitment and dedication to service.
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In some instances, full qualifications and fellowships are not listed. This occurs when we have been given information regarding one of our deceased alumni and this information was not known.

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Our alumni are, with our staff, our greatest asset. They represent the traditions of the Faculty and its many successes of the last 150 years.

In this volume you will read of the achievements of 150 of the 22,000 alumni to have graduated from this Faculty. While only a small number of our alumni have been profiled here, it is the thousands of our graduates, listed in the final pages of this publication, to which we would like to pay tribute in this book.

Together and individually they have moved mountains in terms of their effect on medical knowledge, moved hearts in their dedication and service to the community, moved minds on health care practice and policy in Australia and beyond. They have led universities, headed government departments, initiated multi-national efforts and created ideas of permanent value. They have served our nation and many more beyond the borders of this country.

We can rightly be proud of our family. I hope this book will reacquaint you with some of our famous uncles and aunts and introduce you to some lesser known relatives. We hope that you will find both surprises and friends amongst those profiled here. We also hope that scanning the alumni lists at the end of this book will remind you of your classmates from days gone by.

“Ambition inspired by achievement” describes the vision of our forebears for this Faculty but also describes the quiet achievement of our family members. As each generation of alumni graduate we are certain that their future endeavours will be inspired by those who have gone before them.

Professor Andrew Coats

Dean, Faculty of Medicine, the University of Sydney
June 2006
Introduction

In our 150th anniversary year, this compendium of our alumni aims in some small way to celebrate the most important result of the Faculty’s endeavours – its graduates. Since 13 June 1856, approximately 22,000 students of the Faculty of Medicine have passed through our Faculty and have gone on to make their mark. Whether in Public Health or Medicine, in Sleep Medicine or Indigenous Health Promotion, the work of our graduates has impacted upon the lives of many in extraordinary ways, whether they be in Australia or elsewhere in the world.

Our alumni have gained acclaim for a remarkable array of practices and service across the globe. Some have been outstanding educators and mentors, both inside and outside the University of Sydney. Some have been pioneers in their particular practice. Some have laboured towards astounding medical discoveries that have made possible a drastic increase in the term and quality of our lives. There are others who have spent many years dedicated to community medicine, working in countries less fortunate than Australia. Substantial numbers of alumni have served this country at war. There are graduates young and old who have flown quickly to offer their services in response to various catastrophes. Some are religious people; we have educated some of the early missionaries of the 1900s as well as those who remain spiritual leaders today. There are those who have left the field of medicine and have made their mark as public figures. Others are poets, writers, artists or musicians. Many of our graduates have won awards and have gained international recognition for their service – yet more have laboured tirelessly without fame or glory.

This compendium aims to give you a snapshot of some of our alumni and the ‘firsts’ they have achieved. To select 150 alumni to profile has been an extremely difficult task and no doubt is in itself a controversial act. Those profiled here are not the ‘best’ or ‘most distinguished’ or ‘most worthy of acclaim’, nor do we consider this list to be somehow ‘objective’; to make such claims would clearly be absurd. It is not possible for us to profile all our graduates who deserve recognition, the numbers are too great.

Many sources both living and documentary have been consulted in coming to this selection. We hope in the end that this selection of individuals can be read as 150 representatives of the diversity of all our graduates and the huge range of their achievements. This compendium represents just a small part of a larger project for the 150th year in which we are continuing to gather information about more of our alumni and staff with a view to developing a permanent record of their work.

As you will see from the contents page, we have placed the profiled alumni into various categories as a convenient way of ensuring broad coverage of the fields in which our alumni work. Yet this placement is only indicative of their careers. Many of our graduates have worked across various fields over the years and some have made radical shifts in their interests and practice. Furthermore, the fields of medicine themselves have become more and more entwined through the decades.

The profiles are followed by a comprehensive list of all current students and staff of the Faculty of Medicine. You will find that we have listed all those who have received a degree from the Faculty of Medicine in our alumni list, including those who received ad eundem gradum or honoris causa degrees. The names that are presented in the list have been drawn from centralised Student Records and reflect the name the university holds for the most current graduation of the student. Regrettably, over the last 150 years, changes in administration of records within the University have occurred and it is inevitable that there will be some errors. Please take this opportunity to notify us of your change of details. On our website you will find a linked form that you can either submit electronically or download to fill out.

My sincere thanks go to all those who have assisted me in the production of this compendium: the members of staff within the Faculty of Medicine, the reunion organisers, individual alumni or their family members – all who have given me biographical information or have shared their recollections with me. Some of the profiles have been drawn from existing sources of biographical reference. I would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of Alyson Dalby, Librarian of the Medical History Library of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians; Di Langford, editor of the Australian Dictionary of Biography; Dr Jim Purchas, editor of The University of Sydney Faculty of Medicine 1956 Graduates Jubilee Book; Professor John Hickie, author of The thinkers: a history of the physicians and the development of scientific medicine at St Vincent’s Hospital, Sydney, 1857–1997; Sally Wilde, author of Joined across the water: a history of the Urological
Society of Australasia; Robert (Ed) Sage, author of An Antipodean’s History of Haematology and Ann Sefton, editor and co-author of The Centenary Book of the University of Sydney Faculty of Medicine – all for allowing me to represent edited versions or excerpts of biographies already published within their own volumes. Other members of Faculty have assisted by providing information about their late colleagues and have reviewed the profiles for accuracy of details after I have compiled them.

This compendium is brought alive by the wonderful array of photographs of our alumni. My thanks go to those of our alumni who have provided us with personal photographs. I would like to particularly acknowledge the support of Alyson Dalby of the Medical History Library of the RACP and Helen Cross Wilson (and colleagues) of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Archives and Museum for not only giving of their time to search for photographs for the Faculty, but for their trust in allowing me to take their historical artifacts away to be scanned by our publishers. Rowena Morgan of the Audio Visual Services Department, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, has provided generous and highly efficient service, as have our own Rare Books and Archives Departments of Fisher Library.

It has been an absolute pleasure for me to research and compile this compendium. I have been uplifted by my conversations and correspondence with graduates and I thank the Dean, Andrew Coats, for the opportunity to work on such a project. I hope that in reading and looking through this 150th Anniversary alumni compendium you gain as much pleasure.

Dr Lise Mellor

Research and Publications Officer – 150th Anniversary
Faculty of Medicine, the University of Sydney
June 2006