

Lady Primrose Potter AC

An honorary Fellowship of the University was conferred upon Lady Primrose Potter by the Chancellor, Ms Belinda Hutchinson AM, at a Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences graduation at 2.00pm on 14 May 2019.

Citation

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present Lady Primrose Potter AC to you for an honorary fellowship of the University.

Today, Lady Potter is being honoured in recognition of her outstanding support for the arts, medicine and sciences in Australia.

Lady Potter is a renowned patron for philanthropy in Australia and has been a pioneer in the philanthropic landscape in our country, with a relentless focus on discovery and excellence. For several decades she has provided an outstanding contribution across many spheres which has influenced the thinking and well-being of the wider community. She holds a special connection with the University of Sydney as grand-daughter of Sir Thomas Anderson Stuart, who founded the medical school.

Having served as life governor of The Ian Potter Foundation since 1993, Lady Potter has championed various issues from science and medicine to the arts and delivered significant support for programs that benefit the wider community. She. Her long-term vision has underpinned the success of the Ian Potter Foundation, which has had an undeniable impact on the creativity and capacity of the nation.

She was founding Honorary Patron of the Melba Foundation, Founding Patron of the Victorian Opera Company and Patron-in-Chief of The Melbourne Opera Company. It is because of her advocacy and those with whom she is associated that the opera scene in Melbourne is thriving. Where state capitals have one opera company, Melbourne has five. She has also served as director and Victorian Chairman of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust, was founding director the Bell Shakespeare Company, director of the Australian Ballet School and is a life member of the Australian Ballet.

In the contemporary art field, Lady Potter has been Patron of the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, is current Patron of The Ian Potter Museum of Art at Melbourne University, Honorary Life Member of the National Gallery of Victoria and was founding benefactor of the Museum of Contemporary Art.

In 1988, Lady Potter was awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia for her service to the arts and to the community. This was followed by a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2003, awarded for leadership and for encouragement of support for critical community growth through fundraising and philanthropy in the arts, sciences, education and social welfare. That same year she was also awarded a Commendatore al Merito della Repubblica Italiana which is the highest ranking honour of the Italian Republic awarded for "merit acquired by the nation" in the fields of literature, the arts, economy, public service and social, philanthropic and humanitarian activities.

Through The Ian Potter Foundation, Lady Potter has been a long-time philanthropic ally of the University of Sydney. Since an initial gift in 1986, the Foundation has gone on to support an array of areas such as cancer and chronic disease research, environmental conservation, treatments for speech disorders, pharmacology, as well as music and the arts, among many others. Recognising the importance of positioning research in a global context, The Ian Potter Foundation has also provided numerous travel grants to academic staff to support participation in training and conferences.

In 2016, The Ian Potter Foundation conferred a generous gift of \$5 million to help fund the establishment of the Chau Chak Wing Museum. The museum will enable the University to display its extraordinary cultural and scientific collections including Australia's largest collection of antiquities, and most importantly will support cross-disciplinary, object-based teaching and research, expanding the impact of the University's collections.

As an invaluable resource for both academics and students, the museum's free admission policy also means that members of the public can access the collections held within. Lady Potter's contribution to the establishment of the museum signifies her direct role in influencing the thinking and well-being of our community. In recognition of this, we look forward to unveiling the inaugural exhibition in 'The Ian Potter Gallery' in 2020.

Lady Potter is a passionate philanthropist who acknowledges the profound effect that advocacy and patronage can have on an establishment like the University of Sydney. We are an outstanding research and education institution today because of the vision and commitment of supporters like Lady Potter.

Chancellor, I present to you Lady Primrose Potter and invite you to confer the title of Honorary Fellow of the University upon her.