

Associate Professor David Hutchins OAM

The honorary degree of Doctor of Veterinary Science was conferred upon Associate Professor David Hutchins OAM, BVSc *Sydney*, FANZCVSc, at the Faculty of Veterinary Science graduation ceremony at 2.00pm on 13 December 2013.

Citation

Chancellor, I have the honour to present Associate Professor David Robert Hutchins OAM for admission to the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Science (honoris causa).

David Hutchins gained a BVSc in 1947 and has achieved and sustained for more than 60 years the highest level of national and international professional recognition for the quality, originality and impact of his clinical acumen and remains an inspiration to many generations of veterinarians.

Immediately after graduation Dr Hutchins was employed as the full time clinician at the University of Sydney McGarvie Smith Veterinary Clinic at Badgerys Creek. At the time there was no evidence base in Australia (and little worldwide) for the teaching of livestock medicine and surgery. Consequently Dr Hutchins commenced his lifelong passion for clinical enquiry and critical appraisal.

Within 10 years of graduation Dr Hutchins had established himself as an unusually astute clinician with expertise in cattle, pig and horse medicine and surgery. During these formative years he published a number of highly influential descriptions of surgical and medical conditions of cattle and horses that are still widely quoted today.

Of extraordinary and special significance, when the University of Sydney veterinary clinic relocated to Camden, he helped design his first large animal practice, a prodigious achievement at the time. He was appointed Superintendent of the Rural Veterinary Centre (RVC) in 1957.

He worked with his clinical colleagues, to build the reputation of the RVC as a centre of excellence, ensuring that successive years of veterinary students were exposed to and gained diagnostic, medical and surgical skills over a range of clinical conditions of livestock and companion animal species. His enduring legacy is the outstanding impact he has had on the more than 3,000 veterinarians he taught.

In 1970 he was appointed Associate Professor in Veterinary Clinical Studies - but he was already 'the prof' to his clients and his students, a term they had applied in recognition of his unique and special clinical aptitude. In 1980 Dr Hutchins demonstrated to the equine world how revolutionary thinking could be applied to the management of long bone fractures in horses. While most surgeons at the time would not attempt the repair of a long bone fractures in a Thoroughbred stallion, Dr Hutchins drew on the best available experience in the human and veterinary surgical disciplines to design and implement a surgical management plan – a milestone in equine orthopaedic surgery that set a new standard of what could be achieved.

Later he designed and oversaw the construction of the Planet Kingdom Memorial Large Animal Operating Theatre Complex which was officially opened on 5 December 1982 and was the world's leading edge facility at the time. Remarkably this was not an isolated example of his outstanding professionalism. Dr Hutchins had many other significant achievements, being the principal driver of improvements in the prognosis and management of equine abdominal crises and the development of the evidence underpinning appropriate fluid therapy in horses.

In 1992 he was awarded the Veterinary Medical and Surgical Award for Excellence in the Equine Veterinary Field, complementing his rare dual registration as a Specialist in Equine Medicine and in Equine Surgery.

While 'the prof' retired from the University of Sydney in 1990 his tireless dedication to veterinary science continues unabated as a consultant at the Randwick Equine Centre.

In 2000 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for "service to veterinary science as an equine specialist and through the Rural Veterinary Centre of the University of Sydney".

Dr Hutchins is a distinguished graduate of the University of Sydney Faculty of Veterinary Science, who continues to have an outstanding career as a highly sought after equine specialist. While his acclaimed clinical acumen is widely recognized and respected, it is his professional mentorship that continues to have an overwhelming and sustained impact on the careers of large numbers of veterinarians. This in turn has had an extraordinary and transformational influence on the development of veterinary science in Australia and beyond.

Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting Associate Professor David Hutchins to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Science (honoris causa), and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.