

Mr Thomas M Hamilton

The title of Honorary Fellow was conferred upon Thomas M Hamilton at the Medicine ceremony held on 23 April 1999.

Citation

Chancellor

Tom Hamilton retired as a senior manager within the New South Wales Department of Health on 3 April 1998. At the time of his retirement he was the Chief Executive Officer of the Wentworth Area Health Service, a vast parish that encompasses Penrith, Hawkesbury and the Blue Mountains. It is during his tenure in this position that he came to work closely with the University, overseeing the development of Nepean Hospital as a teaching hospital in the Western Clinical School which includes Westmead Hospital.

When it was announced in 1990 by the then Minister for Health in New South Wales, Mr Peter Collins, that he intended Nepean Hospital should become a teaching hospital, there was considerable uncertainty as to how this would occur. Mr Hamilton's steady and apparently imperturbable hand piloted the development in ways that led to success. He was unstinting in supporting the University, recognising the importance of building on the high quality services already present, especially in trauma surgery and intensive care, through a series of senior academic appointments. He secured a budget for the appointment of the first senior academics in 1991 and made certain that adequate accommodation was provided for their immediate needs.

He was awarded a \$200,000 grant from the New South Wales Department of Health to pilot problem-based learning for fourth year medical students several years in advance of the graduate medical program which uses this form of education extensively. He won the confidence of the Area Health Board which included the provision of the salary for the Associate Dean of the Western Clinical School. He was also staunch in his advocacy of the need for rebuilding at Nepean which has seen the investment of over \$100 million in capital works as the hospital is transformed. Three years ago he also assisted the neighbouring Western Health Area in which Westmead is located while he acted as Chief Executive Officer there. He resisted blandishments to stay, and returned to Nepean.

The University is deeply indebted to Tom Hamilton for his vision, his tenacity and strength of purpose and his extraordinary patience and personal warmth.

He is a person held in high esteem by the New South Wales Department of Health, his local community and our University. His personal qualities enabled him to achieve his goal of seeing Nepean Hospital grow to become an integral and valued institution with potential to become, in time, a major source of education and research to the greater benefit of the health of the people of Penrith and the Blue Mountains.

Chancellor, I present to you, Tom Hamilton for the conferring of the title of Honorary Fellow.