

Professor Peter Edwin Wright

The honorary degree of Doctor of Science was conferred upon molecular biologist and structural biochemist Professor Peter Edwin Wright, MSc PhD *Auck* HonMD *Karolinska Inst Stockholm*, FAAAS, at a conferring of degrees ceremony held on 17 October 2003.

Citation

Pro-Chancellor, I have the honour to present Professor Peter Edwin Wright for the conferring of the degree of Doctor of Science (*honoris causa*).

Professor Wright is a distinguished Molecular Biologist and Structural Biochemist now resident in the USA. He is currently Chairman of the Department of Molecular Biology at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California. Professor Wright is a former member of staff at The University of Sydney. He joined the staff of this University in 1976 as a lecturer in Inorganic Chemistry in the Faculty of Science. His research career at this University was spectacular and in 1984 he was recruited to the position of Professor at the Scripps Institute to head up a new program in structural protein analysis.

During his period at Sydney, Peter Wright was instrumental in setting up the first high-field Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Facility at the University and in particular applying Nuclear Magnetic Resonance to problems in structural biology and structural biochemistry. This area of research has of course developed enormously since that time, to the extent that it now underpins large research programs in Chemistry, Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, Proteomics, Biological Science and Medical Sciences. The Nobel prize in Chemistry was awarded in this field in 2002. The University of Sydney now operates one of the leading sites for advanced NMR studies in Australia and Internationally.

Professor Wright is the author of more than 300 scientific papers in leading international Journals. His work is at the forefront of structural molecular biology and his laboratory in La Jolla is now considered one of the two leading laboratories for protein structure analysis in the world. Professor Wright is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and he holds honorary positions at the Salk Institute in the USA and the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. He is the Editor in Chief of the Journal of Molecular Biology and holds positions on the Editorial boards of at least seven other major international journals in the area of molecular biology.

Professor Wright has maintained strong links to the University of Sydney. He still collaborates with research groups here (in the School of Chemistry) and is a frequent visitor. He is a superb speaker and communicator and has always been willing to deliver seminars and lectures at Sydney when he is in Australia. He has also been a solid supporter of our graduates and a number of our PhD students have spent time in his laboratories as part of their research programs and some of our graduates have gained experience from postdoctoral work at the Scripps Institute.

Professor Wright is a truly outstanding individual. When he left this institution in the early 1980s, it was a significant loss to the University. However, it was not a total loss. Professor Wright has always acknowledged his roots at Sydney and he continues to be an excellent ambassador for the University and Australian Science.

Pro-Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting to you, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science (*honoris causa*), distinguished scholar, and educator, Professor Peter Wright.