

## **DR DAVID JAMES ASIMUS**

### **Citation for the conferral of a Doctor of the University (*honoris causa*)**

Chancellor, I have the honour to present David James Asimus for the conferral of the degree of Doctor of the University (*honoris causa*).

David Asimus was born in Tumut in 1932. Between periods at boarding school and university, he grew up in the Tumut and Gundagai region of rural New South Wales. He was educated at Barker College in Sydney, where he was school captain, and at The University of Sydney where he attended St Paul's College and graduated with a Bachelor of Economics.

While a student at The University of Sydney, he gained a rowing blue and represented New South Wales in the Kings Cup in 1953 and 1955. Soon after graduating and returning to the land David Asimus was awarded the prestigious Nuffield Foundation Travelling Scholarship in 1958.

Until he retired from the land in 1999 David Asimus was a grazier operating a property at Book Book near Wagga Wagga. He was Chairman of the Australian Wool Corporation and the International Wool Secretariat from 1979 to 1988. During this period he led the wool industry to a position as Australia's premier export earner. Following his retirement from the Wool Corporation he served as a member of the boards of Austrade, Wesfarmers Ltd, BHP Ltd, Delta Electricity, Australian Eagle Insurance Company, Rural Press Ltd and the Industrial Bank of Japan, Australia Limited.

For his services to the wool industry and research, David Asimus was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1984 and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science from the University of New South Wales in 1985, and an honorary Doctor of Agricultural Economics from the University of Sydney in 1997.

In addition to his national and international directorships David Asimus has been an active member of the community having been: the Foundation Chairman of the Apex Club of Gundagai; a Director of the Tumut Cooperative Dairy Company; Chairman of the Marcus Oldham Foundation; Chairman of the Rural Leaders Foundation; and a member of the Council of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.

In all his activities David Asimus has enjoyed the strong support of his wife Jane whom he married in 1960. They have two children, a son Sandy and a daughter Heidi, and four grandchildren.

David Asimus' relationship with Charles Sturt University began in 1991 when he was installed as the Foundation Chancellor of the University. He saw the role of Chancellor as similar to that of chairman of a large corporation. This involved performing public and ceremonial functions for the University and ensuring that the Board of Governors, now the Council, and University management functioned harmoniously and effectively.

He has certainly performed these functions with distinction. In particular, his presence at graduation ceremonies has made these important public occasions especially memorable for the University's graduates and their guests. The speaker often ruefully remarks on such occasions that the graduates are unlikely to recall a single word of their graduation address. Few graduates however will have forgotten

the warmth with which the Chancellor greeted them when they crossed the stage to receive their award.

David Asimus' enjoyment in his role and his pride in the emerging University under Professor Blake's leadership were palpable. He sought no greater reward than its success. In David's own words: "In general terms I would like to think that perhaps my most important role was as a confidant, a conscience - sometimes warning, sometimes encouraging, sometimes admonishing and often, quite correctly, being ignored but occasionally making a difference".

The relationship between the University's Council and management has been, as David Asimus hoped it would be, harmonious and effective. This is due, in no small way, to his leadership and extensive experience in business and public service.

Charles Sturt University was created from the amalgamation of the two leading regional colleges of advanced education in New South Wales. In a little over ten years it has developed into one of the most innovative, dynamic and successful of Australia's universities and arguably the best regional university in Australia. David Asimus can take considerable personal pride for this outstanding success. During his stewardship the University was adjudged to be the Australian University of the Year in 1997 for its commitment to first generation university students.

Chancellor, Charles Sturt University is delighted to confer the award Doctor of the University (*honoris causa*) for exceptional service to the University, to business, and to agriculture, on a distinguished Australian, its Foundation Chancellor, David James Asimus.

**Dated this Twenty Sixth Day of November Two Thousand and Two**