

Chancellor

Dr Mark Loane, AM is an exemplary eye surgeon, humanitarian and sportsman, who learned to save lives at The University of Queensland, meanwhile striking terror into the hearts of his rugby union opponents.

In 1973, while studying Medicine and Surgery and playing for the UQ Rugby Football Club, Dr Loane caught the eye of national selectors and was recruited to the Australian team, the Wallabies. As a second-year student, aged 18, he became the youngest Wallaby forward since World War II, and probably the youngest ever.

For the next decade he juggled his academic and clinical duties with his on-field exploits. As well as playing for and captaining the UQ “Red Heavies” and the Queensland Reds, he was a Wallaby in 28 Tests – including six as captain. Memorably, in his first test as skipper, in 1979, the Wallabies conquered the New Zealand All Blacks to win the Bledisloe Cup, for the first time in Australia in 45 years.

At the end of 1982 he retired from rugby to specialise in ophthalmology (eye surgery), and was awarded the prestigious Cedric Cohen Medal for the best pass in Australasia for a part 1 examination. After completing his training, he undertook a fellowship in corneal transplantation and external eye disease at the Flinders Medical Centre, Adelaide, and then a fellowship in glaucoma at the University of California, San Diego.

He returned to private practice in Brisbane in 1990 and also began a habit which continues to this day – of servicing communities throughout remote Queensland. In 1999, convinced that people in isolated areas deserved the same standard of eye care as people in major First World cities, he founded the Cape York Eye Health Project. He heads a team of health professionals who provide eye health checks, glasses, specialist consultations, high quality eye surgery and laser treatments to the great majority of residents of sparsely-populated Cape York Peninsula.

The Cape York Health Project has become a paradigm for other remote area services in Australia, and it led to Dr Loane being appointed chair of a national Indigenous and remote eye health service for five years. It is for his service to Indigenous communities, in particular, that he was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2011.

He has served the community through many other organisations, including Guide Dogs Queensland, and he continues to inspire and mentor young rugby players.

He was key to the inception of UQ's Mark Loane Medal, which provides an annual scholarship to an outstanding United States college player to visit UQ and be part of the UQ Rugby Academy for 10 weeks.

He has a long-standing presence in the Australian and Queensland Rugby Union Halls of Fame, and he now has a presence in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra. A photograph commissioned with funds from philanthropist and arts patron Patrick Corrigan AM, shows him

seated in a locker room, wearing scrubs and in a posture reminiscent of Pierre-Auguste Rodin's *The Thinker*. It links his passions for medicine and sport with another of his interests: art. As the photographer, Joachim Froese commented: 'The doctor has never left the change room.'

Chancellor, I present to you Dr Mark Loane, Member of the Order of Australia, Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery of this University, Doctor of the University *honoris causa* of University of Sunshine Coast, Doctor of the University *honoris causa* of Griffith University, Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists, and Fellow of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons, for the award of Doctor of Medicine *honoris causa*, bestowed by the Senate of The University of Queensland.