

2015 UQ DECEMBER GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Friday 18 December 2015 – 2.00pm
UQ Centre, Union Road, UQ St Lucia Campus

Faculty of Business, Economics and Law

CITATION FOR MR BILL BOWNESS

Chancellor,

Mr Bill Bowness is a businessman and outstanding philanthropist who has reinvested his hard-won personal and business success into life-changing opportunities for others.

After graduating from Brisbane State High School in the early 1960s, Mr Bowness began working in a bank and was encouraged by his employer to attend night classes at The University of Queensland. He completed studies for a Bachelor of Commerce in 1967 and moved to Melbourne, where he continued in finance and then branched out into property.

In 1976 he founded his own company, Wilbow Corporation, which he built into one of Australia's largest privately-owned property development operations. Melbourne-based, it had offices in Brisbane, the United States and New Zealand. Since selling the original business in the 2006, Mr Bowness has been Chairman of Wilbow Group, which has a range of investments in Australia and controls a property development corporation based in Dallas, Texas.

Mr Bowness spoke with a stutter until he was in his thirties, and describes the situation of his childhood and youth as "health-induced poverty". Now, he is determined to give opportunities to current and future generations of young people who have the talent and resolve to study and achieve through education, but are hindered by finances, geography or family circumstances. The Bowness Family Foundation, which he established with his daughters Natasha and Kelly, endows UQ Young Achievers scholarships for such students.

As well, the family's generosity enabled the UQ Telerehabilitation Clinic, an Australian first offering innovative support for children and adults who have speech and language disorders, physical disabilities or musculoskeletal problems, but who have difficulties accessing expert therapists by traditional means. It is also helping train the next generation of health practitioners to apply new technologies to patient care.

Mr Bowness encourages philanthropy not only within his family, but also amongst his successful business peers. He generously gives funds, time and advice to numerous causes.

In his adopted city of Melbourne he chaired the board of Monash Gallery of Art for 15 years and continues as a member of the gallery's foundation, as well as the foundations of the Australian Ballet and the National Gallery of Victoria. He has been awarded life membership of the National Gallery of Victoria and the Urban Development Institute of Australia.

Mr Bowness serves on property advisory committees for Monash University and Latrobe University, and has been on the boards of various public companies and statutory authorities, including the Australian Grand Prix Corporation and Defence Housing Australia.

Chancellor, I present to you Mr Bill Bowness, Bachelor of Commerce of this University, Fellow of the Society of Certified Practising Accountants, Fellow of the Australian Property Institute and Fellow of Australian Institute of Company Directors for the award of Doctor of Business *honoris causa*, bestowed by the Senate of The University of Queensland.
