



AND GLADLY TECHE

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

FIRST GRADUATION CEREMONY

21 MARCH 1970

THE CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS

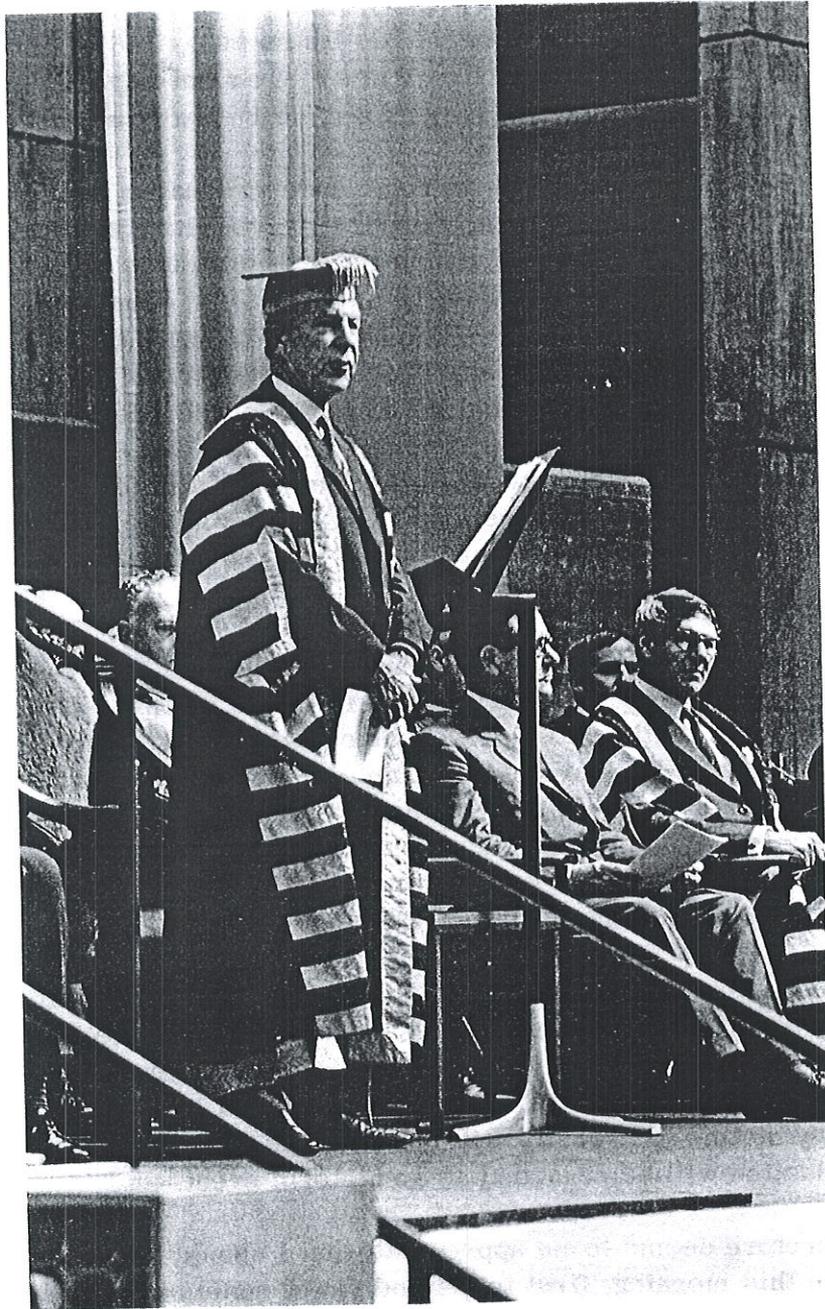
Occasional Address given by the Chancellor,
The Right Hon. Sir Garfield Barwick,
G.C.M.G., Q.C., at the First Ceremony
for the Conferring of Degrees, 21 March 1970.

This University received its first undergraduates in February 1967. Today I have admitted to their several degrees its first graduates. Before the University began teaching its undergraduate members, a tremendous amount of intense thought and work had been expended by a very devoted group of people — the members of the Interim Council who became under the University's statute the First Council of the University and those they called on for advice and counsel. Their original thinking and willingness to follow new paths and to adopt novel expedients set the pattern of teaching in this University to which I wish this morning to make some reference. As the Vice-Chancellor has well said elsewhere, "The University will always be in the debt of the members of the First Council".

On 31 May 1967 the University held its first major ceremony in this place, "a ceremony to mark the beginning of teaching in the University". His Excellency the Governor of this State attended, and as well as addressing us, unveiled a commemorative plaque which may be seen on the wall to my left in this courtyard. I remember stressing in the remarks I made on that occasion that this University is to teach and that for this purpose it would gather together distinguished scholars devoted to teaching as the fulfilment of their scholarship.

Today we see the first fruits of the endeavours of those teaching scholars over the intervening three years. Before me are this University's first graduates and whilst at the moment we may not gather the full impact of the day's events, I am sure that in later years, as the history of this University unfolds itself in due perspective, this first graduation will be regarded as an historic event.

It therefore seems to me appropriate that I should detain you for a brief while this morning, first to remind you of some of the distinctive features of our pattern of teaching and then to relate the achievements of these graduates to that pattern, for they represent a fulfilment of some of the educational aims and the pattern of teaching, which the University has pursued and applied during the years they were undergraduates.



The Chancellor delivers the Occasional
Address

Allow me, before going further, to say that the University has continued its policy of gathering here distinguished scholars willing to join with enthusiasm in the quite stimulating adventure which the University's pattern of teaching represents: scholars who feel the transmission of their knowledge and experience and the giving of counsel and encouragement to the student to be amongst their most satisfying experiences. The appreciation and gratitude of this University for their co-operative efforts which I express will be endorsed I am sure by each and every graduate who is seated here.

This University regards itself as part of, not set apart from, the community whose needs for trained persons of integrity and courage it desires to fulfil, and upon which, indeed, it depends for support. Accordingly it is always pleased when contact between it and the community is maintained and when new contacts are formed. It feels that the endeavour to provide such trained personnel is not inconsistent with its encouragement of scholarship and the conduct of research for the extension and improvement of knowledge. Thus, in its pattern of teaching, it has sought flexibility in the courses of study which the student may pursue and to provide where it can a unity of knowledge in any given area of subject matter, an integration rather than a fragmentation where the fragments remain as bright pieces of glass not aggregated into a coherent, meaningful and illuminating design. In the case of professional vocations which involve practical application of what has been learnt, the University seeks to end the dichotomy between theory and practice and so far as possible to marry the two in contemporaneous teaching.

Now may I condescend to some detail of some of the particular methods by which these broad aims have been implemented by the University staff and administration.

First of all, the University opted against the traditional division of courses by Faculties. It is presently formed of a College of Arts and Sciences within which it has a number of Schools, some ten in all. Thus a student is not required to enter a Faculty to be confined to the courses it provides, all centred upon and restricted to a particular discipline. Here the student selects his principal academic interest — to use the jargon of the day — the subject in which he or she intends to major. This naturally associates the student with a School which becomes his academic base. The student is free, however, to construct a programme of study which may include courses outside that School and indeed across the whole board of the University's offerings. But this does not mean

that the student may put together an ill-assorted and incoherent group of courses. The programme of study must be approved by the Head of the School with which he is to be associated. In the construction of his programme, he has the benefit of the advice of the staff of the University, right from the very day he first attends to enrol. He is thus advised to choose courses which, though outside his School, and in a sense diverse, are all relevant to his main interest and within his capacity as a student.

This flexibility in the arrangement of a programme of work allows on the one hand of a high degree of specialisation and on the other of a substantial degree of what might conveniently be termed general education. But as well, it allows a substantial degree of unity of understanding and knowledge to be obtained. Other aspects of the topic than that with which his School deals may be studied by the student. In this connection I should also mention that the University has provided courses of less than a year's duration, thus extending the scope of this flexibility in the building of a programme of study. They are demanding and rigorous and not merely introductory or in any wise superficial. Thus, with this maximum availability of courses, there may properly be a concentration of interest by the student, or for good reasons a spread of interests.

Now may I pause to indicate how this flexibility has worked in the case of these our first graduates.

First, you will have noticed the various names of the Schools whose Heads have presented the graduands to me today. This indicates the wide range of the major interests pursued by these students. Each, however, has followed his individual need and with the advice of his academic adviser has followed an approved but possibly wide-ranging course of study. About one-third of the graduates admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Arts has taken one or more of the general education courses and almost all of them have included in their programme of study courses of less than one year's duration, courses to which I have already referred and described as demanding. Others have, of course, more closely confined their interests in the programme of study pursued.

The University decided that its first degree, no matter what the School in which the student majored, should be the degree of Bachelor of Arts. It was felt that no longer did such a degree as B.Sc. or B.Ec. really convey useful information as to the course of study followed and

the knowledge acquired by its possessor. But, though each graduand for a first degree in the College of Arts and Sciences is admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Arts — which also fails to communicate the particular range of the graduate's training and knowledge — each such graduate today received two documents, one a testamur of his degree of Bachelor of Arts, the other a degree transcript — which is a computer print-out showing all that he or she has attempted and has achieved in this University. Physically, it is enclosed in a transparent plastic skin, bonded to the paper, and is thus durable and, in the remote event that it should be attempted, proof against tampering. Thus each such graduate, by the degree transcript can fully inform those seeking his or her services of his academic attainments.

Speaking thus inferentially of employers and employment leads me to express this University's view that the community needs to be assured that its trained employees keep abreast of requirements and of the times. Being of this view, the University has from its beginning followed two paths. First, it has concerned itself with original research leading to the expansion of knowledge in a number of relevant fields. Second, it has particularly concerned itself with the education of students beyond the level of a first degree and encouraged its students not to be satisfied with the primary degree but to persist in study to obtain a higher, i. e. postgraduate, degree eventually, if not immediately upon attaining a primary degree.

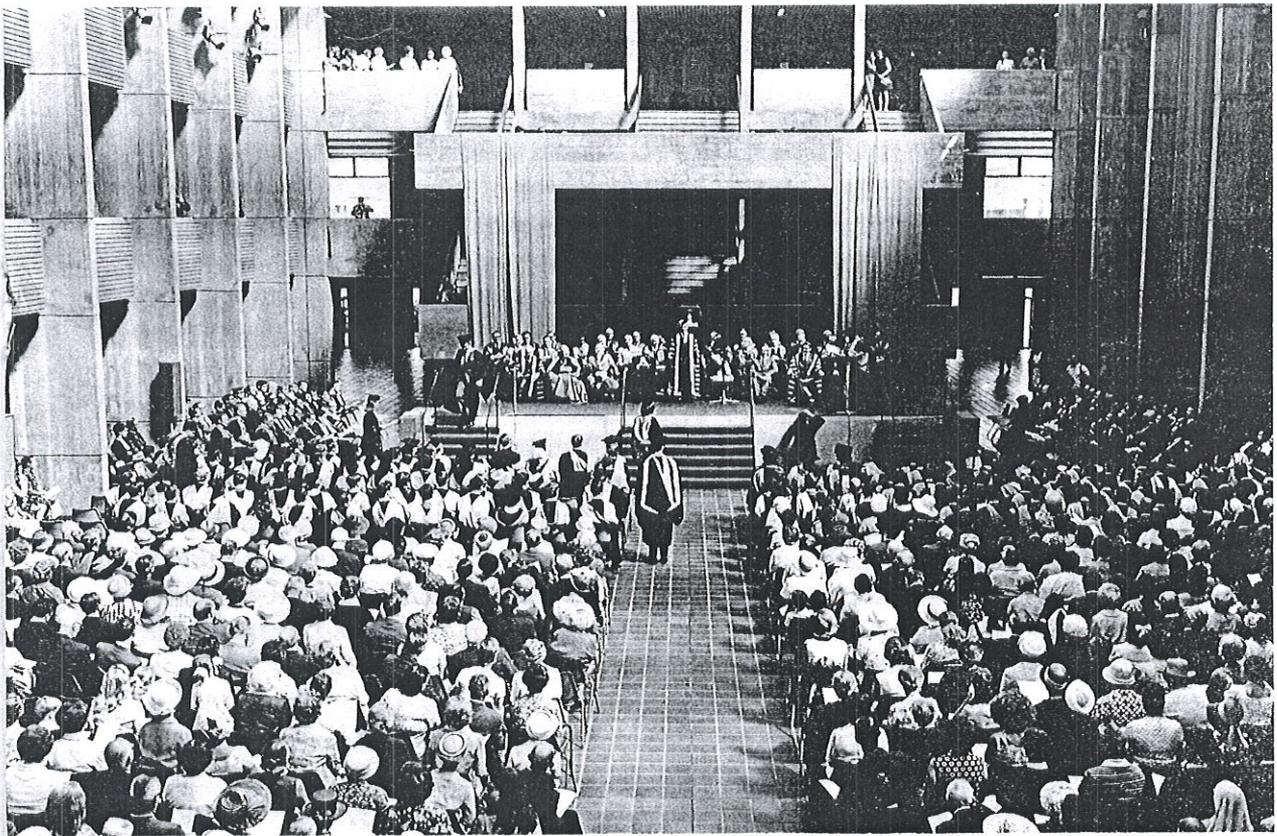
This policy is reflected in the fact that 24 of those admitted to degrees this morning have taken the degree of M. A. or M. Sc. upon completion of three years of a stiff course for teachers in mathematics which has involved them in attendance at the University each Saturday morning. This course has ensured for them both a mastery of mathematics and an easy confidence in teaching senior secondary classes in an enlightened and effective way. The list of graduates this morning further includes two secondary school science teachers who have been admitted to the Master's degree after completing a special programme involving original research and formal instruction in education and in chemistry. This programme has been mounted by the School of Chemistry and the School of Education in collaboration and represents a unique experiment in interdisciplinary work. It is proposed to extend this kind of collaborative work to other Schools, particularly science Schools such as those of Biological Sciences and of Earth Sciences.

Generally, the graduates admitted today to higher degrees illustrate what I have earlier said as to the flexibility of course arrangements at

this University. Their programmes have ranged from a programme consisting almost entirely of original research to a programme consisting entirely of course work. Thus are the needs of the community met, both in variety and in continuing study, represented by the higher degree courses.

May I now pass to an allied matter, the pursuit of honours degrees. The University has realised that students new from school, even now with the Wyndham plan operating, need time not merely, as it were, to find their feet but to mature to the point where their best may be done in the area in which they have come to realise they have most capacity. This feature of later maturation is, so far as I may express a personal opinion in so rare a company, a matter of some concern. Perforce, we eliminate many at the point of matriculation who may not have so far developed at school as to be ready to profit by an education in University and at its level but who may do so a little later — too late to be undergraduates straight from school: and, unless they are attracted to later part-time work, perhaps too late altogether. Our only present answer for them is the pursuit of part-time and off-campus study — features of this University of which we have reason to be proud. I will not have time to touch this morning upon that aspect of our work but it is worth mentioning at once that whilst the majority of today's graduates have completed their degree courses by full-time study in the University, some of the graduates have completed their programme by various combinations of day and evening and external study. I am sure the staff and administration would not pretend that the arrangements necessary to be made for these less usual combinations of study are easily made. They undoubtedly cause administrative difficulties. But the community needs graduates and the University regards it as a responsibility to remove, rather than place, impediments in the path of serious students.

Realising, as I have said, that students new from school may not be fully ready to realise from the inception the extent of their capacity in relation to the courses offering, but in particular in relation to honours programmes, the University has not required students to commit themselves early and perhaps irrevocably to an honours programme. They are allowed to keep open as many options as possible for as long as possible, thus giving them time to realise their full capacity as it develops during their courses of instruction in the University. A consequence of this policy is that of the graduates admitted today to the degree of Bachelor, one-third has already enrolled in this



A general view of the ceremony in the Courtyard, Building E7

The Chancellor congratulates Dr Joan E. Kirkby (English Studies),
one of the two candidates awarded the degree of Ph. D.



year, 1970, as candidates for the honours degree of Bachelor. This the University appreciates as an indication of success in its endeavour to enliven the interest of the student in scholarship and the continuing pursuit of knowledge. Along with excitement to take a higher degree, this encouragement is felt by the University to be a step towards satisfying the need of the community for continuing study on the part of its University-trained personnel.

I would now desire to call attention to the University's aims and policy in the matter of teacher training. I cannot doubt that as of this time, teachers are amongst the most important professional group which serve the community. The University in recognising that fact has made particular endeavours in the teaching of graduate teachers, in the teaching by external study of science teachers and by its particular pattern of teacher education in the School of Education.

I have already mentioned that amongst the graduates admitted today are graduate teachers. Our part-time study facilities encourage such work and, as I mentioned earlier, special courses are mounted to suit the needs of graduate teachers who desire to proceed to higher degrees. I will not pause to expand upon our external teaching in science. It has been a very great success. Suffice it to tell you that over 350 science teachers participate in the courses, attending the University throughout their school vacations, working daily long hours in the laboratories. The University justifiably expects that the teaching of science in the secondary schools will profit greatly from the external courses which it conducts.

But it is in connection with the University's programme for a combined B. A., Dip. Ed. degree that I would desire to occupy a few moments. Under arrangements current elsewhere, a student intending to be a graduate school teacher will first take a primary degree in his subject and thereafter take a one-year course in a teacher training college. Thus his academic studies are divorced from his practical professional training. The atmosphere of the University is lost whilst the graduate receives his professional training and gathers his professional experience in a different place, with teachers and in a school perhaps with whom and with which he has but a brief association. This University has developed a concurrent programme of teacher training. The student's academic training will proceed along with his professional training and his professional experience. As he learns in his chosen academic school, he will also be learning how best his knowledge thus gained can be communicated to those whom in due course it will be his

work to teach. His academic study and his experience of school life and of the classroom will be steadily concurrent and his total advancement consolidated. The aim is to produce scholar teachers. As a means of attaining this end, it is proposed to second to the University a group of practising teachers who have gained distinction in their profession as good teachers and to retain them for a period of three years before replacing them for succeeding periods of three years by successive groups of like distinguished teachers. Should any of these teachers desire whilst attached to the University staff to take a higher degree, they will be free to do so. But whether they do so or not, they will participate in the training of the undergraduates in the effective teaching of their subjects and in the handling of pupils. The University will thus seek to associate scholars and teachers in the teacher training programme. The existing flexibility of courses within the College of Arts and Sciences will aid much interdisciplinary training and assist to afford that appreciation of the unity of knowledge of which I earlier spoke. There will thus be a form of troika — if you remember the phrase from another day — in the programme of teacher training. The scholar who can provide the advances in knowledge, the educationalist formulating and offering solutions for the educational problems and the teacher familiar in a lively way with the classroom and able to communicate his great experience in the practical conditions and constraints to be found in the daily work of a teacher. The diploma cannot be separately sought by a member of this University. It must form part of a combined degree, the work of a full four-year programme. This you would rightly think is a most complex and an imaginative programme. Already it has aroused great interest in educational circles. The University believes it will be a tremendous contribution to education in this country and, as well, increase the number of scholar teachers available to work in the most significant areas of the teaching profession.

Time does not permit me to refer to others of our hopes and aims. The University is vastly disappointed that it was not supported by the State Government in its willingness to undertake the teaching of law in this triennium. But when it does begin that teaching, the University is of a mind to do so with the same flexibility and resourcefulness as I am sure you recognise in the teaching so far undertaken and with the same desire for width rather than narrowness of the area of knowledge to be included in the student's programme of study. The University realises that as law touches ever wider areas of personal and community life, the lawyer must be prepared on a wider basis than the black

letters of a law book for the more widely useful function he will be called upon to perform.

May I lastly on this aspect of my address say something as to the growth rate of the University. The pressures of the community for undergraduate teaching are understandably great. But wisdom dictates that the vital contributing factor in the permissible growth of a University's undergraduate membership is the availability of academic staff of the requisite standard and quality, in which description must be included the capacity to teach. This University has already had occasion to review its projections of the growth of its student population. On that review it reduced its targets. It may well be that in times of financial stringency it may have to do so again. But the University in any event will not depart from its present policy of seeking staff of high calibre who can be integrated into effective teaching teams. Only as it succeeds in this endeavour can a growth rate be maintained.

Now may I turn to the graduates. So far I have been speaking of the importance of this day to the University. I hope I have not thus far wearied you — telling you of things you already know. But it is a most important day for each of you and for your parents and friends. First, allow me to congratulate you on your success. I am no stranger to the task of learning. It is with me daily — and on present indications will be with me for yet some time. I know something of the loneliness of the concentration of a student. Consequently I praise you for the expenditure of concentrated effort over the past three years. I offer you my best wishes for continued success in your chosen work. I hope you find an outlet for your knowledge in your chosen avocation and that you do not suffer the sadness of being compelled to work in some other area where your complete interest cannot be deployed.

As graduates of this University I would expect of you at least two things, one that you will feel one with the community and not as superior beings apart from it and, two, that you will maintain a continuing interest in the acquisition of knowledge. I feel the University will not have fully succeeded in your education if at the end you lack the urge to know, the desire for completeness of understanding, something always elusive and always yet to be attained.

Lastly, you are the first graduates of this young University. It has yet to make its reputation. Already it is well known and well regarded. But its reputation will depend upon several factors of which

the standing of its staff in world terms is most important. Another is the performance of its graduates, whether in places of learning elsewhere, or in employment here or abroad. I think it may be a little unfair to make the point that, for some time, until the graduates are more numerous, the burden of making this University's reputation must weigh heavily on you, its first graduates. But, if unfair — as it may be — let me allow myself the luxury of saying it to you. I hope many of you will return to further study in the University, if not immediately, still in the not too distant future. I know some of you are already minded to do so. But in any case, as members of Convocation as you now are as graduates, I trust you will maintain your interest in and your contact with this University. By your continued interest in — and, as you prosper, by your support of — the University you will participate in maintaining the continuity of its scholarly teaching.