

MURMUR

ALUMNI MAGAZINE • SPRING 2024

It's his birthday...
and ours!

MU Murdoch
University



MURMUR

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Contents

**Racing for a cure**

MND has devastated Assunta Melecca's family. But she's doing all she can to help tackle this insidious disease.

**The naming of Murdoch University**

Discover how it was nearly called Menzies University.

50 YEARS

Find out more about our 50th Anniversary:

www.murdoch.edu.au/50years



A message from the Vice Chancellor

Anniversary address from Professor Andrew J Deeks.



Capturing the genesis of Murdoch

Acclaimed filmmaker Daryl Binning documented the creation of Murdoch University in the early 1970s.



10 Outstanding Alumni

Profiles of a few exceptional Murdoch alumni.

Acknowledgment of Country 2

From the editor 3



Evolution of a home of learning

Snapshots of a university taking its first steps.



Magical Worlds: Children's books inspired by global adventures

"Trees can be portals. Ghosts become friends. Wishes can manifest."



Acknowledgement of Country

Murdoch University acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation as the traditional custodians of this country and its waters and that Murdoch University stands on Noongar Country.

Murdoch University pays its respects to Noongar elders past and present and acknowledges their wisdom and advice in teaching and cultural knowledge activities.

From the editor

It's probably safe to say that the vast majority of alumni reading this don't remember when Murdoch as a suburb or university didn't exist and the area was just covered in pine trees. Such was the situation in the early 1970s, when the go ahead was given by State Parliament for Western Australia to develop its second university.

This month is the 50th anniversary since the inauguration of your university - 17 September 1974. A day that saw the flamboyant Governor General, Sir John Kerr, arrive with a horse guard parade at a very different looking Bush Court. The formalities took place on the 100th anniversary of the birth of Sir Walter Murdoch, the university's namesake.

Guest of honour Sir John Kerr laid the survey mark at the centre of the campus. The mark is made with a disc of granite from Rosehearty, Scotland - the birthplace of Sir Walter Murdoch.

As a consequence, the centre of this issue of *Murmur* is a celebration of our 50th anniversary. It includes a fascinating account of how the university came to be named, which was only finalised minutes before the first meeting of the University Planning Board in 1970. We have profiles of some of the leading alumni lights who have graced these grounds in the last half century, and a pictorial spread from the early days. A time when long socks were everywhere, hard hats were scarce, the sun was your friend and asbestos a construction staple!



The anniversary section closes out with a feature on filmmaker Daryl Binning. A man who flew planes over the area with one hand, while filming construction progress with the other! Despite sobbing like most kids at the death of Bambi's mother, the young Daryl was immediately fascinated with the magical light of the Disney movie coming from the projection booth. His filming career, that began with 8mm home movies, ultimately saw him trawl the jungles of New Guinea, jump into the hysteria of Beatlemania and ultimately, document the years of groundwork that took place before Murdoch first opened its doors. The resultant film '*Murdoch - Open for Learning*' paints a vivid picture of a different time, but one where you can see how inclusivity and access to education principles were as strong as the foundations being poured. You can watch the whole film at goto.murdoch.edu.au/OpenForLearning

Bookending the anniversary stories are a feature on alumna and author Lui Sit, whose books celebrate the wondrous imagination within childhood, and the story of Murdoch donor extraordinaire Assunta Meleca. Her story, that opens this special issue, charts the devastation that Motor Neurone Disease has had on her extended family. There were more hands-over-mouth moments for me in that discussion than perhaps any I've had in, funnily enough, around 50 years.

Happy Birthday to us!

Michael Sampson
Editor

A message from the Vice Chancellor



“A 50th anniversary allows us to examine our legacy, celebrating five decades of academic excellence, research breakthroughs, and contributions to society.”

50 years ago this week, Australia's then Governor General, Sir John Kerr, stooped to lay the foundation stone at the inauguration ceremony of Murdoch University in the heart of Bush Court.

In the five decades since September 1974, Murdoch has been transformed from a three-building, fledgling university with 500 students to a highly renowned, global centre of learning, research and innovation.

So why make a fuss of our birthday?

Well, institution birthdays are like human birthdays, offering not just a chance to celebrate, but a chance to reflect. Reaching this landmark gives Murdoch a unique window to consider the journey, growth and contribution of our university. It offers a chance to look back on our achievements, challenges, expansion and our place in the world.

Like a traditional birthday, it provides a way to show gratitude for the people who have supported you and valued your individuality, as well as some time to acknowledge and appreciate these relationships.

Birthdays are a personal celebration of who a person is, and our birthday here at Murdoch is a celebration both of who we are, and what we have become. An acknowledgment of our unique identity, qualities, and contributions to the lives of others.

Birthdays mark the passage of time, serving as milestones. They enable you to keep track of growth, achievements and the progression of life stages. At Murdoch, we have this time to consider and document our history, enhancements, and evolution into a mature, contemporary, ground-breaking university.

Birthdays also offer a moment for renewal and future reflection. They signify a new beginning, offering a chance to start afresh, embrace new opportunities and set new goals and aspirations for the future. At Murdoch, we have this moment to both recommit to our foundational values and set a course for how we want to improve in the years ahead.

So, the Murdoch University 50th Anniversary celebrations arguably mirror the elements of those traditional, individual, candle-blowing rituals by providing an opportunity to celebrate, take stock, reflect, and note significant people and significant moments.

It allows us to honour the founders, past leaders, staff and alumni who have all played a part in enhancing our place in local history and our place in the world.

A 50th anniversary allows us to examine our legacy, celebrating five decades of academic excellence, research breakthroughs, and contributions to society. It's a chance to reflect on our founding principles and how they have consistently been the bedrock that has underpinned our growth.

Over our five decades, Murdoch University has graduated more than 100,000 students; built a thriving Veterinary School now ranked in the global top 50, and opened campuses locally in Mandurah and Rockingham, and globally in Singapore and Dubai.

We are undertaking world-leading research through our phenome centre; and helping solve critical issues regarding food security, our environment, health care, and the Indo-Pacific region. We continue to expand our knowledge and that of our students across all major disciplines – engineering, science, mathematics, law, business, allied health, IT, humanities, Indigenous Knowledges, education, the arts, media and social sciences.

For as long as there are complex problems to solve, and a striving by humanity for better ways to live, prosper and nurture our shared planet, universities will not only exist but thrive. But it is of course not just global challenges that a university helps tackle. At the local level, a university is constantly shaping lives. It can have a profound positive effect on an individual by providing the education, skills, and critical thinking necessary to build a life of purpose and reward.

And let us not forget that birthdays are of course unapologetic opportunities for celebration and fun and a break from routine. As part of our 50th anniversary celebrations, Murdoch will be announcing many events and programs for you to attend over the next twelve months. It will offer you chances to reconnect with old friends and lecturers, visit old haunts, all while seeing how far your alma mater has come. I look forward to seeing you on campus at one of these celebratory occasions and sharing a toast to our anniversary.

At 50 years old, Murdoch University is coming of age. We look forward to continuing to adapt, to learn from – and to serve – our community. In return, we look forward to sharing all we have learned, for the betterment of humankind, for a very long time to come.



Professor Andrew J Deeks
Vice Chancellor and President



The background is a vibrant, abstract composition. It features a glowing DNA double helix structure that curves across the frame. Bright, multi-colored light trails (yellow, orange, red, green, and blue) streak across the scene, creating a sense of motion and energy. The overall color palette is dominated by warm tones like orange and yellow, with cooler blues and greens in the upper and lower portions. The sky at the top is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

Racing FOR A CURE

Although by profession a visual arts teacher, Assunta Meleca could have been a detective. It was through her insight and joining the dots in periodic family deaths that led her to realise her family were carriers of a gene mutation that can lead to inherited Motor Neurone Disease (MND).



The trail of deduction first began back in 1986 when her paternal grandmother, and her grandmother's sister, both passed away. The family became aware that the sisters, in different countries, had both succumbed to a disease they had never heard of, a disease called MND.

Twelve years later, Assunta noticed her father developing strange symptoms and acting on a hunch she began her own research in the then, early days of dial-up internet. She concluded to her mum, "I think Dad might have MND and I'm concerned it might be being passed genetically through the family."

Generally, MND is believed to be caused by a combination of environmental, lifestyle and genetic factors. Around 1 in 10 cases are 'familial', meaning the condition is inherited.

For people who have an MND-related genetic mutation, their children have a 50/50 chance of inheriting that MND-causing gene.

Assunta went with her father to see a specialist at the Mount Hospital in Perth and her fears proved true – he had MND. The family asked if tests could be conducted to see if her father was a carrier of the gene mutation. At the time, a genetic test for only one gene was available and the results were negative, but unknowingly, this would turn out to be false hope.

"I remember discussing the result with a nurse at the time. She said, 'Go live your life, you have nothing to worry about. Your dad is not a carrier, so you and your siblings are not carriers' and so the four of us left with hope for our futures," said Assunta.

The problem was that back in 1999, SOD1 was the only gene known to cause MND. Assunta's father passed away later that year and Assunta and her three siblings carried on with life, albeit periodically nervous at every twitch, every stammer, and every stumble they made.

In 2006, her uncle (father's brother) called her and said he too had been diagnosed with MND, which amplified the anxiety. He passed away early the following year, not long after the initial diagnosis. This naturally reignited anxiety for the whole family.

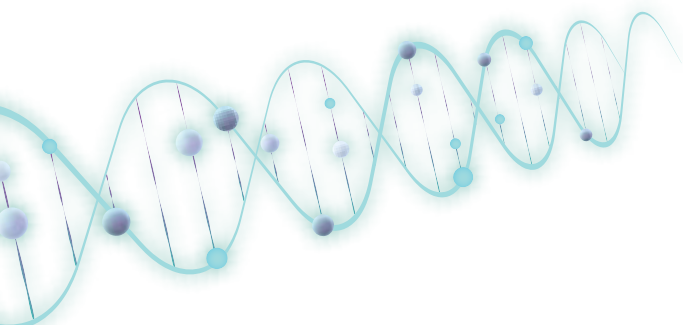
"By the time my uncle was diagnosed I already had two kids. I thought My God, what have we done!? I would look at them every day and be so stressed thinking that I might have ruined their lives," she said.

So, by this stage, it was four family members on the paternal side confirmed to have developed MND. Almost a decade on, came the next hammer blow.

"It was around 2016. I had a 30-minute commute to my job each day at St Hilda's Anglican School, and most mornings I would chat to my sister Caterina on the phone for a catch up. One particular day, I noticed she was mispronouncing words. I knew. I remember pulling up at the school and thinking... My God, it's happening again!"

It was. However, additional MND genes had been identified and tests for these were now available. Caterina got tested and it was confirmed that she carried an MND mutation. This is when everything changed. That same year, Assunta's cousin was also diagnosed. Though ten years apart in age, both ultimately passed away within months of each other.

"By 2016, intense efforts were finding many more MND gene mutations, including an expansion of part of the gene called C9ORF72 that is the genetic variation affecting our family," said Assunta.



This explained why the medical advice given to Assunta's family in 1999 had proved to be a false dawn.

It was at this point Assunta realised that she had to do something. Her first step was to get tested; she needed to know her fate. Predictive genetic testing is available to relatives once an MND gene mutation has been identified in the family.

The test is known as a 'predictive' test as it informs a person whether they do or do not carry the family faulty gene, and therefore whether they have an increased risk of MND over their lifetime. Before testing, genetic counselling is required to help the person decide if proceeding with testing is right for them.

"I decided that I couldn't keep living with this unknown overhanging my life. I was living like I had it anyway, so what did I have to lose? I told my husband I was doing the test, and it took around four interminable months to get the result."

Assunta took the day off and went in for the results with her husband. She gave the medical staff the permission they required to open the envelope and read the result to her.

"Assunta Meleca does not carry the gene mutation."

Understandably, they both collapsed in tears. Years of unrelenting anxiety released in one simple sentence. An instant awareness that her life would not be cut short and more importantly, her children were free of any risk of the family disease.

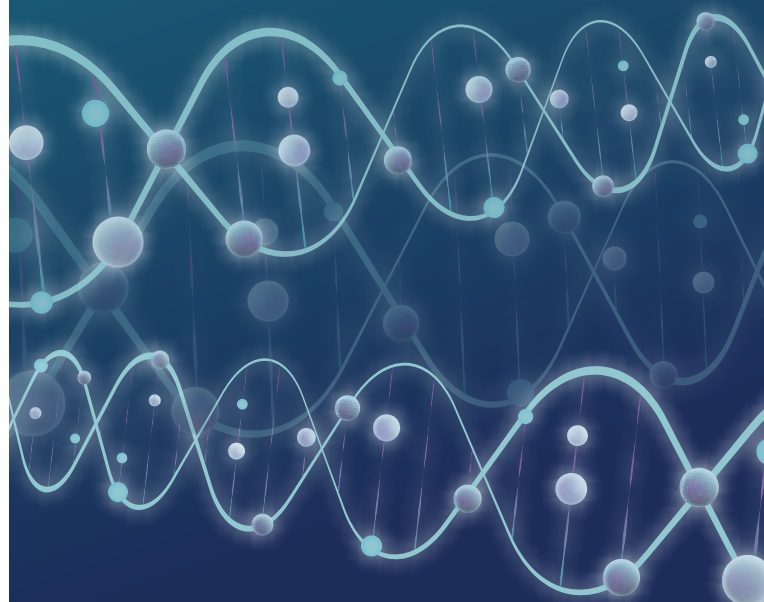
The result cemented Assunta's desire to do all she could to help tackle the disease for her family and others living with the risk that they too might succumb. "I just thought I have to do something, without really knowing the best way. I wasn't a scientist, I was a teacher," she said.

Assunta loved teaching, but couldn't juggle everything, and felt it was her calling to leave the profession and give her all to try and fight the disease that was ripping through multiple generations of her family.

Initially taking long service leave from her job, she decided that she could help by establishing a charity to raise funds for MND research. Knowing nothing about how to go about this, the universe appeared to bring the right people to her to realise her vision.

"I remember going to a cafe in Subiaco and bumping into an old friend, Anita Knowles. Her accounting firm is nearby, and she was grabbing coffees, and asked how I was, and I said 'Oh, terrible actually' as I had just had the news about my sister. I told her that I wanted to establish a charity to fund MND research and she replied that she was looking for a way to give back to the community. She said, 'Let's do it!' and is still the Director of Finance for our charity."

It was at this point Assunta realised that she had to do something. Her first step was to get tested; she needed to know her fate. Predictive genetic testing is available to relatives once an MND gene mutation has been identified in the family.



Assunta decided to call the charity Racing for MNDi, with the 'i' standing for the inherited form of MND and the racing reflecting the race for a cure. The point of difference being that our research works with inherited forms as a starting point in helping uncover the clues to find answers for all forms of MND.

"In the beginning, a company called Australian Audit helped us learn everything we needed to put the charity in place. I went hunting for Board members from different fields. I soon realised I needed a researcher on the MNDi Board. I met a friend of a friend at a Trinity College Auxiliary event who turned out to be medical scientist! Within seconds, Dianne De Santis agreed to join the team."

Volunteers helped Assunta establish branding, design, a logo, and helped organise the first fundraising events. The early profile received an incredible boost when Formula One racing driver Daniel Ricciardo agreed to become the Founding Patron of Racing for MNDi. Looking for a way to support MNDi's first Soirée, Daniel agreed to make a special announcement at the event; that he would be donating a brand-new Aston Martin to be auctioned! An incredible gesture that helped the charity cement itself on the Australian stage.

A couple of days before the Soirée, Assunta had still not prepared the content of the key speech she planned to deliver. Once again, the universe sent a helping hand her way. She was at her mother's house and saw an old photo. It was her sister's wedding photo and in the frame with her sister and new husband, was her late father and grandmother. The picture became the bedrock of the speech, encapsulating how MND can decimate a family, captured on a happier occasion, with no clue as to the genetic nightmare that lay ahead.

As MNDi was established, Assunta began networking in earnest, attending as many community events as she could. Before long she was introduced to Professor Matt Bellgard who worked at Murdoch University as Professor and Chair of Bioinformatics and was developing patient registries. Ultimately, MNDi provided critical seed funding for an MND registry, MiNDAUS, that is now in operation in Australia.



RIGHT: Wedding Photo (1982), Assunta's paternal Nonna (second from left), Sister (Bride) and father (second from right).
Photo credit: John Whitfield-King

BELOW: Assunta with Daniel Ricciardo and Christian Horner at the Aston Martin auction (2018). Photo credit: Tess Follett



This was the partnership Assunta had been waiting for. Over recent years, Racing for MNDi has subsequently raised over a million dollars to help fund the pioneering research being done by Professor Sue Fletcher and her teams.



ABOVE: Assunta with Prof. Sue Fletcher

Professor Bellgard subsequently put Assunta in touch with Professor Sue Fletcher. Professor Fletcher is an internationally recognised RNA therapeutics scientist, molecular biologist and Emeritus Professor at Murdoch University. She has been working on pioneering research for various neurological diseases including Duchenne muscular dystrophy and MND. They are working to better understand MND and are developing experimental drugs designed to reduce the effects of the gene mutation.

This was the partnership Assunta had been waiting for. Over recent years, Racing for MNDi has subsequently raised over a million dollars to help fund the pioneering research being done by Professor Sue Fletcher, Dr Ianthe Pitout and their team and collaborators.

Each year, the Murdoch Research team meet with Racing for MNDi to report on progress and outline the research programs they are looking to fund for the next year. They present proposals to the MNDi Board, who then determine potential contributions and fundraising proposals for the months ahead.

For its first five years, Racing for MNDi grew and increased its impact year on year, but was obviously hit hard by the recent pandemic with all events having to grind to a halt. Following the world opening again, Assunta is steering the charity to the next phase of its evolution, which means moving from the current DGR2 status to DGR1 status for the charity to enhance fundraising capabilities and the possibility of major corporate support and partnerships.

In 2021, following in her father's footsteps, Assunta successfully stood as a Councillor for the City of Bayswater. Her father, Frank Drago, who has a reserve named in his honour, was a long serving manager of the City of Bayswater's Parks and Gardens team, prior to becoming an elected council member. Assunta may have had incredible fortune to have not received her father's MND gene, but she also feels blessed to have evidently inherited his drive, networking skills and desire to serve the local community.

"It's strange how things play out. When I began my teaching career my dad said I would be good for the Council and that I should stand, but I didn't have time and said no. Then years later, I was getting sworn in, with his photo on the Council wall alongside me."

She feels that his spirit fuels her desire to do all she can to make a difference.

"Maybe in some ways it is survivor's guilt, but in many ways, I think a lot of it comes from my dad. He was very well known in the local community, was an incredible networker and liked to help everyone and sometimes I think he is still helping drive me on. But overall, it's been the circumstances. I was compelled. I loved teaching but I thought look, this is way bigger than me, and I've just got to do something."

THE NAMING OF MURDOCH UNIVERSITY

by K.J. Townsing

A trawl of the Murdoch archives has unearthed some intriguing treasures of late, such as a typed document created in December 1973 by K. J. Townsing, then Under Secretary for Western Australia. In the document, Townsing records the process by which Murdoch University came to be named. It includes other name options that were initially considered, and the information presented to the WA Premier at that time, Sir David Brand, who had the final say. Townsing's original document is reprinted in full below and the ultimate Premier message is shown overleaf...

As Under Treasurer of the State, Member of the Senate of the University of Western Australia and Pro-Chancellor, I became deeply involved in the processes which led to the establishment of the State's second university.

On the 15th June 1970, I addressed a minute to the Premier, the Honourable Sir David Brand, recommending the setting up of a Planning Board to initiate and implement plans for the second university. I put forward the names of persons whom I considered to be suitable appointees to the proposed Board and also its terms of reference. Cabinet approved my recommendations on the 23rd June 1970.

Although detailed and careful consideration had been given over several years to the question of new university development in Western Australia, I was aware of only one reference to a name for the new institution. In a paper dated February 1968 and titled "A New University", M.N. Austin Professor of Classics and Ancient History in the University of Western Australia commented as follows:-

"When we come to the naming of our second university, let us not fall back on that of some local worthy, however well he may have served his own generation, but rather follow the example of that great educational entrepreneur William of Wykeham, who called his second great foundation, now some 500 years old, simply New College. We need a New University, or, if we must compromise, at least let it be something in the nature of a Brand New University.

"Whether or not our modest Premier would care for such posthumous fame

It is not surprising that little consideration had been given to naming the new institution as much of the debate had been on whether it should be completely autonomous ab initio or whether it should be established in the first instance as a College of the University of Western Australia.

In the course of framing my recommendations to the Premier, I arrived at the conclusion that it was desirable to decide as soon as possible, on a name for the new institution and after considering various

"A very suitable name would be Murdoch University. Sir Walter Murdoch was a foundation professor of the University of Western Australia and is a former Vice Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor and Chancellor of the University of Western Australia. He is a distinguished scholar and man of letters."



possibilities came up with a short list of names which strangely enough all began with the letter M. The list was:-

Mitchell
Menzies
Melville
Murdoch

Sir James Mitchell had been Premier and Governor of the State and Sir Robert Menzies was a former Prime Minister. Lord Melville was Secretary for the Colonies around the time the State was founded and the area in which the new university was to be built had been named after him.

I finally decided to put forward the name of Murdoch and in this respect, my minute to the Premier dated the 30th June 1970 on Treasury File 161/70 reads as follows:-

"The second university will need naming before long to prevent common usage giving it a title not intended, e.g. Somerville or Melville.

"A very suitable name would be Murdoch University. Sir Walter Murdoch was a foundation professor of the University of Western Australia and is a former Vice Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor and Chancellor of the University of Western Australia. He is a distinguished scholar and man of letters."

I sent my minute into a meeting of Cabinet which was held on the day it was written but a decision on the naming of the institution was deferred.

In the days that followed I had several talks with the Premier during the course of which we discussed the four Ms. He was inclined to narrow the choice to Murdoch or Menzies.



As the first meeting of the Planning Board was to take place at 4 p.m. on the 9th July 1970, I was anxious to see the institution named beforehand but that day dawned without a decision being taken.

The Chairman of the Planning Board, Professor N.S. Bayliss, called on the Premier in the morning of the 9th July. I was present and mentioned the desirability of naming the institution that day but the Premier was not disposed to do so. He mentioned the possibility of inviting the Planning Board to suggest a name.

During the course of the discussion, Professor Bayliss asked the Premier for a message which he could read at the Board's first meeting scheduled for that afternoon. The Premier asked me to draft a suitable message.

I was aware that Sir Walter Murdoch's health was failing and that it was necessary to move quickly if the new university was to be named after him during his lifetime. I therefore decided to write the message around his name notwithstanding the fact that a decision in the matter had not been taken.

It was about 1 p.m. on the 9th July when I placed the message before the Premier. A copy is attached.

The Premier immediately raised the point that Sir Walter had not been consulted and accordingly the university could not be named Murdoch without his permission. I suggested that he could be spoken to on the telephone and obtained Sir David's agreement to ring his home address in South Perth.

When Lady Murdoch answered the call I told her that Sir David wished to speak to her and handed the telephone to the Premier. Sir David asked if he could speak to Sir Walter but Lady Murdoch said that he was too ill to take the call but she could convey a message to him.

Sir David then stated the purpose of his call which was to seek Sir Walter's permission to name the new university after him.

After several minutes, Lady Murdoch returned to the telephone and told Sir David that Sir Walter was deeply moved by the gesture and that he considered it a great honour.

The message was then signed by the Premier and was handed to Professor Bayliss by my secretary shortly before the start of the first meeting of the Planning Board.

The message was read out at the meeting and so began the life of Murdoch University shortly before the death of the very distinguished man after whom the institution was named.

(K.J. Townsing)

C.M.G., I.S.O.

Under Treasurer for Western Australia

December 1973



ABOVE: Sir Walter Murdoch with wife Lady Barbara Murdoch at their South Perth home

OPPOSITE: Official letter from WA Premier Sir David Brand sent to Murdoch Planning Board

T. 161/70

9th July, 1970.

Dear Professor Bayliss,

The first meeting today of the Planning Board for a university south of the Swan River is the beginning of a new chapter in the story of tertiary education in Western Australia.

I would like to thank you and your colleagues for agreeing to undertake an important task which I am sure you will find both challenging and rewarding.

You are being asked to lay the foundations of an institution which in years to come will play an important part in the lives of many thousands of students who in their turn will contribute to the development of this State and the welfare of its people.

A university should be given a name in keeping with the high standards expected of it as a place of scholarship and learning and of service to the community. I can think of no more appropriate name than Murdoch University and the Government has decided that it shall be so named.

Sir Walter Murdoch is a man who has been prominent in the life and learning of Western Australia for more than half a century. He was a foundation professor of the University of Western Australia and is a former Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor and Chancellor of the University of Western Australia. He is a distinguished scholar and man of letters. His name gives dignity to our new university and I trust that the quality of its graduates will add further lustre to this name.

I wish your Board every success in the task which lies ahead of planning and bringing into being Murdoch University.

Yours sincerely,

PREMIER.

Professor N.S. Bayliss, C.B.E.,
Chairman,
Planning Board,
Murdoch University.



10

Outstanding Alumni

Over 100,000 alumni have graduated from Murdoch University over the last half century. That's a lot of mortar boards flying in the air! With that large number, and with so many going on to build successful and rewarding careers, it is a challenge to summarise such a broad talent pool. However, there are some leading lights whose achievements, community service or pioneering work has led to public recognition. Here are ten profiles of some notable individuals who you may not know lie among your global alumni family...

1



Zahra Al Hilaly

LLB/BCommun 2023

A Campaign and Policy Strategist at NAPCAN, Zahra Al Hilaly has already achieved some remarkable milestones in her 24 years.

She helped deliver Christmas Island's first leadership and advocacy summit for young people, which led to the creation of the Christmas Island Youth Association, encouraging young people to speak out about issues that affect them. Zahra became the Chairperson of the WA Government Youth Council, a Duke University Faith for Our Planet Fellow, and is part of the UN Women 30 for 2030 cohort, a United Nations consultant supporting gender equality initiatives across regions. She is also a published author, with work that featured in Vogue, Gucci, and Al Jazeera.

Zahra won the title of Under 25 Asian Australian of the Year in 2021, made the 2024 Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia List, and was named one of the youngest-ever Australian Women in Excellence recipients in 2023.

Regularly speaking out on issues including human rights, gender equality and refugee rights, in her current role as a policy strategist at NAPCAN she is currently leading National Child Protection Week.

Zahra has spoken globally across many decision-making arenas, from the United Nations headquarters, panel discussions with former US presidents, and workshops with princesses and princes!

2

Isabelle Adams

BEd 1982, MEd 1987

Isabelle Adams holds a distinguished place in Murdoch University's history as its first Aboriginal graduate. Graduating from Murdoch's very early days, Isabelle's journey is a testament to resilience, determination, and the power of education in breaking barriers. Born into a world where opportunities for Indigenous Australians were severely limited, when she started at Murdoch Isabelle was working full-time and was married with four young children. She used to listen to lecture tapes while she was cooking and do assignments when her children were in bed, usually staying up into the small hours.

With fellow Aboriginal student Dr Mara West, Isabelle was given the opportunity to establish an Aboriginal Advisory Council by a Pro Vice Chancellor. They were instrumental in setting up an Aboriginal support unit in a little demountable on campus which ultimately evolved into becoming the Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre. The Centre encourages increased participation in tertiary education by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through outreach programs, enabling courses, student support and scholarships.

Since graduating from Murdoch University, Isabelle has dedicated her life to the education and empowerment of Indigenous Australians in families, communities, organisations and workplaces.

Her hard work and dedication in her field was recognised when she was awarded a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary



International, inducted into the Department of Education's Aboriginal Education Awards of Achievement Hall of Fame, and received a Warrior Award for International Indigenous Education.

In 1998 she founded and still operates a consultancy business which builds strong foundations for successful program outcomes for community, corporate and government organisations.

Isabelle has also earned her place as an advisor to both national and state governments on issues affecting education for Indigenous Australians and is an active participant on numerous committees and councils. She is the current Chairperson of the new WA Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Council, which provides a collective representative voice for Indigenous Australians across WA on matters relating to education and training in schools and TAFE colleges.



Adam Bandt, the leader of the Australian Greens, has had a distinguished career marked by his dedication to social justice and environmental sustainability.

3

Adam Bandt

LLB/BA 1996

Adam Bandt, the leader of the Australian Greens, has had a distinguished career marked by his dedication to social justice and environmental sustainability. A graduate of Murdoch University with degrees in Law and Arts (1996), Bandt's time at the university played a significant role in shaping his perspectives and career trajectory. His education at Murdoch provided him with a broad understanding of law and its context, enabling him to explore diverse subjects such as feminist legal theory, which was integral to his formative years as a student.

Before entering politics, Bandt worked as an industrial lawyer, advocating for workers' rights and fighting against unfair dismissals and workplace discrimination. His legal background gave him a strong foundation in addressing systemic

issues and promoting equitable policies. In 2010, Bandt was elected as the Member for Melbourne, becoming the first Green to win a seat in the House of Representatives at a general election.

Under his leadership since 2020, the Australian Greens have continued to push for ambitious climate action, social equality, and economic justice. Bandt's advocacy is not only rooted in his legal expertise but also in his commitment to creating a sustainable and fair future for all Australians. His work has significantly influenced Australia's political landscape, making him a prominent figure in the country's environmental and social movements.



4

Professor Josh Byrne

**BSc 2000, BSc (Hons) (EnvSc) 2003,
DipHort, PhD (EnvEng) 2017**

Josh Byrne, an acclaimed Australian horticulturalist, has made a significant impact on sustainable gardening and urban design. Known for his role on ABC TV's Gardening Australia, Byrne combines his passion for plants with a commitment to environmental stewardship.

Byrne's journey began with a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Environmental Science from Murdoch University.

Early in his career, he recognised the need for sustainable practices in urban settings, leading him to focus on integrating ecology with horticulture. His work is characterised by innovative approaches to water conservation, energy efficiency, waste avoidance and the use of native plants for urban biodiversity.

As a presenter on Gardening Australia, Byrne has become a household name, educating viewers on sustainable gardening practices. His segments feature practical tips on water-wise gardening, organic food production, and soil health. Byrne's approachable style and deep knowledge have inspired many Australians to adopt more sustainable practices in their own gardens.

Beyond television, Byrne is a respected researcher, author and consultant. His projects often explore the intersection of horticulture and sustainable design. Notably, he was involved in the development of 'Josh's House', a groundbreaking demonstration project near Fremantle, Western Australia. This sustainable home showcases best practices in energy efficiency, water management, and garden design, serving as a model for sustainable living. As Director of Fremantle based Landscape Architecture and Sustainability practice, Josh Byrne & Associates, he applies these principles to large-scale urban development projects.

Byrne's contributions extend to academia and public policy. He has authored numerous journal papers and industry guides on water sensitive design and sustainable urbanism, and is Dean of Sustainable Futures in the Faculty of Humanities at Curtin University where he supports learning and teaching, research and engagement activities. His expertise is frequently sought by government and industry, particularly in the areas of urban design and environmental sustainability.

Through his various roles, Byrne has significantly influenced public perception and practices regarding urban sustainability. His work emphasises the importance of designing urban spaces that are not only beautiful but also environmentally responsible.

Professor Wendy Carlin

BA 1979, DipEd 1979

Professor Wendy Carlin was part of the University's very first cohort of 500 students in 1975.

A renowned economist and a Rhodes Scholar, whose career has profoundly influenced economic thought and education. Known for her expertise in macroeconomics, Carlin has made significant contributions to both academic research and practical policy discussions.

Carlin's academic journey was deeply influenced by her time at Murdoch as she took advantage of combining breadth (such as an independent study contract on the origins of the Israel-Palestine conflict) with depth in maths, statistics and economics. Completing a Dip Ed alongside her degree built the practical and disciplinary inputs she has drawn on for her globally recognised contributions to economics education. Her scholarship to Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar further honed her analytical skills and deepened her understanding of economic theory. She completed her DPhil in Economics at Oxford University, focusing in her dissertation on questions of economic growth and income distribution using the case of the transformation of the post war West German economy. This laid the foundations for a career interest in large-scale transitions from one economic system to another.

As a professor of economics at University College London (UCL), Carlin has distinguished herself as an innovative educator and a leading researcher. Her work often bridges the gap between theoretical models and real-world economic issues. One of her major contributions is in the field of macroeconomic modeling, where she has developed frameworks that better capture the complexities of modern economies.

Carlin is perhaps best known for her role in the development of the CORE (Curriculum Open-access Resources in Economics) project. This initiative aims to revolutionise the teaching of economics by providing a comprehensive, open-access curriculum that emphasises empirical data and real-world applications. Top researchers around the world have been mobilised to contribute to the project by showing students how economics can contribute to solving the most pressing problems we face. CORE has been adopted by universities worldwide, making the subject more accessible and relevant to students.

Beyond her academic achievements, Carlin has played a pivotal role in economic policy discussions. She has served as a consultant for various international organisations, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank as well as the UK's Office for Budget Responsibility. Her insights have informed policies on economic transition, development, and macroeconomic stability.

Throughout her career, Carlin has published extensively in leading economic journals, covering topics from economic reform in Eastern Europe to modern macroeconomic theory. Her influential textbooks, co-authored with David Soskice, are widely used in economics education and by policymakers, providing a comprehensive guide to contemporary macroeconomic theory and practice. Currently Vice President, she will be the first woman President of the International Economic Association.



Dr Craig Challen SC OAM

BVMS 1987

World renowned cave diver Dr Craig Challen SC OAM graduated from Murdoch in 1987 with a veterinary science degree and went on to co-found and build the Vetwest group of animal hospitals in 1993. Many a Murdoch alumnus enjoyed veterinary opportunities with placements and employment in this practice over the subsequent years.

In his spare time Dr Challen became a cave diver and explorer. In 2011 he made a record-setting 194 metres deep dive while caving in New Zealand. In 2020, he made a second record-setting return visit to the Pearse Resurgence in New Zealand and extended the Australasian depth record to 245m with his long-standing dive partner, Adelaide anaesthetist Richard Harris. His adventures continue with a recent 284m dive in South Africa.

In 2018, Dr Challen and Dr Harris were called upon to spearhead the effort of an international group of cave divers to rescue 12 children and their football coach from 2.2km inside the flooded *Tham Luang* cave in northern Thailand.

Using previously untested techniques, over three days the boys were anaesthetised and extracted from the cave via a three hour dive. Despite there being initially little hope of success, all 13 people survived the rescue after 17 days trapped underground.

The successful rescue of all the boys and the coach became a global news story and Craig was awarded the Star of Courage for his unwavering and selfless bravery following the operation. In 2018, the King of Thailand appointed Challen as a Knight Grand Cross (First Class) of the Most Admirable Order of the Direkgunabhorn. That same year Murdoch University awarded Dr Challen an Honorary Doctorate and in 2019, Dr Challen and Dr Harris were named joint Australians of the Year.

6





The Hon Roger Cook MLA

BA (PAdmin) 1992

Roger Cook, a prominent figure in Western Australian (WA) politics, currently serves as the Premier of WA. Cook has a rich background in public service and has been a dedicated member of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) for many years. His ascent to the premiership is marked by a steadfast commitment to health, economic development, and social justice.

Cook's educational background is rooted in the humanities and management, holding a Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration from Murdoch University and a Master of Business Administration from Curtin University. In 1986, while at Murdoch, Cook was elected as a student member of Senate. Six months into his tenure he resigned from the position in order to move to Melbourne and take up his new appointment as President of the National Union of Students.

After graduating, Cook worked in the offices of a number of Labor MPs, including Stephen Smith, Jim McGinty, and Chris Evans. He served as state president of the Labor Party from 1999 to 2000. Cook later became involved with Aboriginal advocacy groups, serving at various times as a policy coordinator for the Western Australian Aboriginal Native Title Working Group, as CEO of the Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation, and as government relations manager for the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council. From 2004 to 2008, he was state manager of CPR, a public relations firm which is closely associated with the Labor Party.

Cook entered the political arena in 2008, when he was elected as the Member for Kwinana in the WA Legislative Assembly. Within weeks he was appointed Deputy Leader of the Opposition, a role he held until 2017.

In 2017, the Labor Party won a landslide victory, and Cook was appointed Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Mental Health in Premier Mark McGowan's cabinet. His tenure as Health Minister was characterised by substantial reforms and improvements in the healthcare system. Cook was instrumental in the implementation of the 'Sustainable Health Review', which aimed to create a more efficient and sustainable healthcare system in WA. His leadership was also pivotal during the COVID-19 pandemic, where his proactive measures and clear communication were widely praised for keeping WA relatively safe and minimising the impact of the virus. He also played a key role in the passage of voluntary assisted dying legislation in 2019.

Following Mark McGowan's surprise resignation in June 2023, Cook was elected unopposed as the leader of the WA Labor Party, and subsequently, the Premier of Western Australia.

His premiership has been marked by a continuation of his predecessor's policies with a strong emphasis on economic diversification, particularly in renewable energy and technology, aiming to reduce WA's reliance on the mining sector. Cook has also focused on addressing housing affordability and boosting infrastructure projects to support the state's growing population.



8

Dr Kuruvilla Mathew

PhD (EnvSc) 1982

Dr Kuruvilla Mathew has made an outstanding contribution throughout his career as a professional engineer to the field of environmentally-sound technologies, and in particular in their deployment to improve living conditions in developing countries and Australian indigenous communities. Specifically, his expertise is in water supply and waste management systems as well as renewable energy technologies.

In 2015, Dr Mathew was bestowed the honour Fellow of International Water Industry in recognition of his many years of service to the water industry. Recently in 2023, he was also awarded the Australian Water Association Lifetime Achievement Award acknowledging his service.

Dr Mathew himself has overseen the research, development and deployment of several important water technologies for developing communities, including the solar powered desalination unit, the hydrogen sulphide water test kit and the evapotranspiration wastewater disposal method. For his research contribution that led to the invention of the solar powered reverse osmosis desalination unit, he was able to secure a patent along with Prof Goen Ho and Dr Don Harrison.

The desalination unit has been used in Indonesian islands and is very useful for Pacific and Indian Ocean Islands. The onsite bacteriological test kit developed as part of Dr Mathew's research at Murdoch has been used in Nepal and many Aboriginal communities.

Dr Mathew has had a distinguished career of service to Murdoch University, starting in 1977. Some of his roles

include, Director of the Environmental Technology Centre (Assoc. Professor) 2005–2006; Senior Lecturer in the School of Environmental Science 2003–2005; and Lecturer in Environmental Science, 2000–2002.

Dr Mathew has published 69 refereed papers and 155 conference papers in the fields of water supply, wastewater management, and solid waste management and energy efficiency. He was involved in the supervision of 14 Honours students, 2 Masters students, 2 MPhil students and 10 PhD students. He was instrumental in bringing research funds of approximately \$6,000,000 to Murdoch University. In 2015, Dr Mathew was honoured for his services to Murdoch University and professional excellence when he received Murdoch's Distinguished Alumni Award.

The focus of Dr Mathew for much of his career has been on the plight of the poor and those in developing communities. From an engineering perspective his passion was to work for people in remote Aboriginal communities and developing countries.

He also inspired many of his friends, students and research staff to do the same and through this work they were able to undertake an impassioned approach to their work, studies and research. His service and commitment to Murdoch University and to our communities was recognised by the highest honour in 2024 when he received the Order of Australia Medal. Dr Mathew vividly addressed Murdoch's core values of equality and social justice.

9



The Hon Dr Geoffrey Gallop AC

MPhil (SocSc) 1979

Geoff Gallop is an Australian academic and former politician who served as the 27th Premier of Western Australia from 2001 to 2006. A gifted student, Dr Gallop completed his undergraduate degree at UWA and his Master of Philosophy at Murdoch, before heading to Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar.

By 1983, Dr Gallop had published numerous academic articles and lectured in social and political theory at Murdoch and UWA. Dr Gallop's political career began with his election to the WA Legislative Assembly in 1986, representing the seat of Victoria Park. A member of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), he quickly ascended the ranks, holding various shadow ministerial portfolios. In 1996, he was elected leader of the WA Labor Party, positioning him as Leader of the Opposition.

In the 2001 state election Dr Gallop led the ALP to victory, ending the eight-year tenure of the Liberal-National Coalition government. As Premier, Dr Gallop's administration focused on social reform, economic development and environmental sustainability. His government introduced significant policies, including labor market reforms, educational initiatives and healthcare improvements. Notably, Dr Gallop championed the redevelopment of Perth's urban landscape and infrastructure, enhancing the city's functionality and draw as a tourist destination.

Dr Gallop's tenure also saw the introduction of the 'Gallop Government's Drug Summit', which aimed to address WA's drug issues through comprehensive community consultation and policy recommendations. Additionally, his government implemented measures to protect WA's unique environment, such as the creation of new marine parks and conservation areas.

In 2005, Dr Gallop led the ALP to a second electoral victory, reinforcing his government's mandate. However, his tenure was cut short when he resigned in January 2006 due to a diagnosis of clinical depression. His decision to step down and publicly discuss his mental health struggles was widely praised for raising awareness and helping to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.

After retiring from politics, Dr Gallop took up a position as Director of the Graduate School of Government at Sydney University from 2006 to 2015. He has been supportive of a range of civil society institutions seeking a better society, most notably the Global Commission on Drug Policy and the New Democracy Foundation. He is now a Emeritus Professor at Sydney University.



Dr Mara West

BA (CompLit) 1985, BSc (SustDev) 2008

Dr Mara West, proud Yamatiji woman from the Gascoyne Muchison area of Western Australia, has made enormous contributions, in both government and private sectors, to the welfare and development of Aboriginal people in WA for over 50 years.

Mara was raised under the 1905 Act whereby her parents' lives were dictated by horrendous government policies. She was fortunate to not be a member of the Stolen Generation and spent her early years growing up on a sheep station outside of Carnarvon. Mara began her education at a small mission school, where she walked four kilometres with her sister each day to receive an education. It was during this period she made up her mind to make a difference on behalf of Indigenous people.

An Indigenous leader in education, Mara has made significant strides in transforming educational landscapes and advocating for the rights and recognition of Indigenous communities. She has been at the forefront of initiatives aimed at integrating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into mainstream education systems.

Mara's early experiences shaped her understanding of the critical need for culturally relevant education. Her academic journey was marked by a deep commitment to bridging the gap between traditional Indigenous wisdom and contemporary educational practices. Dr West worked closely with communities across the State setting up satellite training centres to ensure Aboriginal people have access to a wide range of education and training in their own communities/towns ensuring they remained on country near family. She was also a member of the WA Aboriginal Education Consultative Group which provided advice and guidance to all education and training providers across the State.

Encouraged by her parents to pursue higher education, Dr West chose Murdoch University in 1981, viewing it as a place that was inclusive of not only the diversity of people, but also the diversity of thought and practice. She became the fourth Aboriginal person to graduate in 1984 from Murdoch University. She was also pivotal in setting up the first Murdoch University Aboriginal Advisory Committee alongside Murdoch's first Aboriginal graduate Isabelle Adams. Together they also created the Aboriginal Employment Strategy, and the Aboriginal Education Unit, now known as the Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre.

Currently the Chair of the HEAL (Healthy Environment and Lives) WA Aboriginal Steering Group, Mara has devoted her five-decade career to changing perceptions of Aboriginal people and closing the gap in health and social issues. As a leader in the community, she is regularly involved in advisory groups, committees and conferences to ensure there's always an Aboriginal voice at the table.

In September 2023, Murdoch University awarded its highest honour, the degree of Doctor of the University (honoris causa), to Mara West in recognition of her significant contribution to the welfare and development of Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

Dr West's vision is for everyone to walk together to make a better Australia for everyone, especially for children and all the generations to follow.

Other notable alumni



The Hon. Justice James Edelman

BCom 1998

Justice of the High Court of Australia, a highly respected judge, esteemed scholar and teacher, and well-regarded author.



Tim Hammond

LLB 1999

A barrister specialising in asbestos litigation as well as workplace and catastrophic injury cases. Tim was a former Federal Member for Perth (2016 – 2018), and Shadow Minister for two portfolios.



Bill Hare

BSc (Hons)(Phys) 1983

Founder and CEO of Climate Analytics. A physicist and climate scientist with 30 years' experience in science, impacts and policy responses to climate change and stratospheric ozone depletion.



Glen Kelly OAM

BEnvSc 1994

A distinguished advocate for Indigenous rights and environmental stewardship in Australia.



Heston Kwong

MBA 1998

Assistant Director at Department of Health, Hong Kong Government, who was instrumental in managing the Territorial response to the recent pandemic.



Dr Stephen Van Mil

BVMS 1984

Originally working in veterinary practice, Stephen's broad career arc has encompassed TV presenting, feature film production, establishing animal and wildlife charities and developing sanctuaries and mobile animal hospitals.



Jenna Woods

BA 2016, MAbPolSt(Res) 2019

Dean, School of Indigenous Knowledges, College of Law, Arts and Social Sciences, Murdoch University.



Evolution

OF A HOME OF LEARNING

14 kilometres from the Perth CBD, on land donated by UWA and acquired from the State Government, Western Australia's second university steadily emerges. Over the following pages are some photographs from the Murdoch archives that show the transformation of a pine plantation into an institution forging a new path in higher education...

1973



ABOVE: Aerial shot of Murdoch site prior to any construction

TOP RIGHT: University Secretary Dan Dunn shows staff and their families the campus location

RIGHT OTHERS: Foundation staff and their families attend a ceremony for the symbolic felling of the first tree. First Vice Chancellor Stephen Griew shown in orange shirt



1974

Construction begins

The first three buildings are created near the highest point of the whole campus and enveloping the newly created, infamous Bush Court.



ABOVE: First buildings going up. Library and East Academic and West Academic buildings

LEFT: Aerial of campus 1974. Refectory and Amenities building under construction

OPPOSITE: Kim E. Beazley Lecture Theatre (351) under construction, Library east wall showing

BELOW: First buildings up and South Street 1974





The Inauguration

Just over a year before he became globally known as a key player in the Whitlam dismissal, Governor General Sir John Kerr presides over an inauguration ceremony for the new university.



RIGHT: Sir John Kerr at the Inauguration

BELOW: Inauguration Book Signing 1974



The Hon. Sir David Brand signs the guest book watched by Dame Elizabeth Murdoch, Lady Barbara Murdoch and Vice Chancellor Stephen Griew. Sir David was Premier of Western Australia when the decision was made to establish Murdoch University.

1974



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:
Inauguration photographs.
Police Horse Parade accompanying
the Governor General 1974



1975

First students

The University is officially open for business and the first cohort of 510 students arrive together with Foundation Professors to cement a new university's commitment to inclusive education.



TOP: First Student Guild
ABOVE: Students in MU Library 1976

1976



ABOVE: Veterinary buildings September 1976
LEFT: Student Lectures in Kim E Beazley Theatre, Jim Sim at lectern



ABOVE: Daniel McGill with Stagecraft Students 1977 enacting a Greek Tragedy



1977

The early years

As student enrolments grow, construction continues to expand including the creation of Australia's fourth Veterinary School.

1978



ABOVE: 1977 MU Club Societies. Peter Cook sitting, Peter Newman standing



ABOVE: Child Care Centre April 1978
BELOW: School of Veterinary Studies 1979

1979





ABOVE LEFT: Student Administration Reception 1980



ABOVE RIGHT: Wolves Football Club Coach Ian Ross with Murdoch University players July 1982

BELOW: Chinese Garden November 1983





ABOVE: Communication Student Demonstration in Radio Studio Open Day 1986

LEFT: Student Susan Sly unpacks at new Student House 1984

By the mid-1980s student numbers hit the 5,000 mark, the University expands its subject range to include Computer Science and the Student Village welcomes its first residents.

BELOW: New computer in University Secretary's Office 1988



CAPTURING THE GENESIS OF MURDOCH

In the early 1970s, the newly established Planning Board, tasked with developing Murdoch University, were looking to document the process in a short film. That film, entitled *Murdoch – Open for Learning* is an incredibly rich portrayal of everything that was happening behind the scenes to establish WA's second university.

Commissioned to make the film, which charts the first Planning Board meeting through to the 1975 Orientation Day, was local filmmaker Daryl Binning. Now 85, but still as busy as ever with film and writing projects, Daryl popped into the Alumni office to share details of his amazing life story behind the camera.

Daryl was born in North Fremantle in 1939, the eldest of three brothers. He left school the day he turned 14 and within a few months picked up an electrical apprenticeship. Still a licensed electrician today, it is a trade he has often drawn on for his main vocation.

"As a lad I was interested in electricity, flying and movie making. There weren't too many jobs in flying and there was no local film industry, so I opted for the apprenticeship," said Daryl.

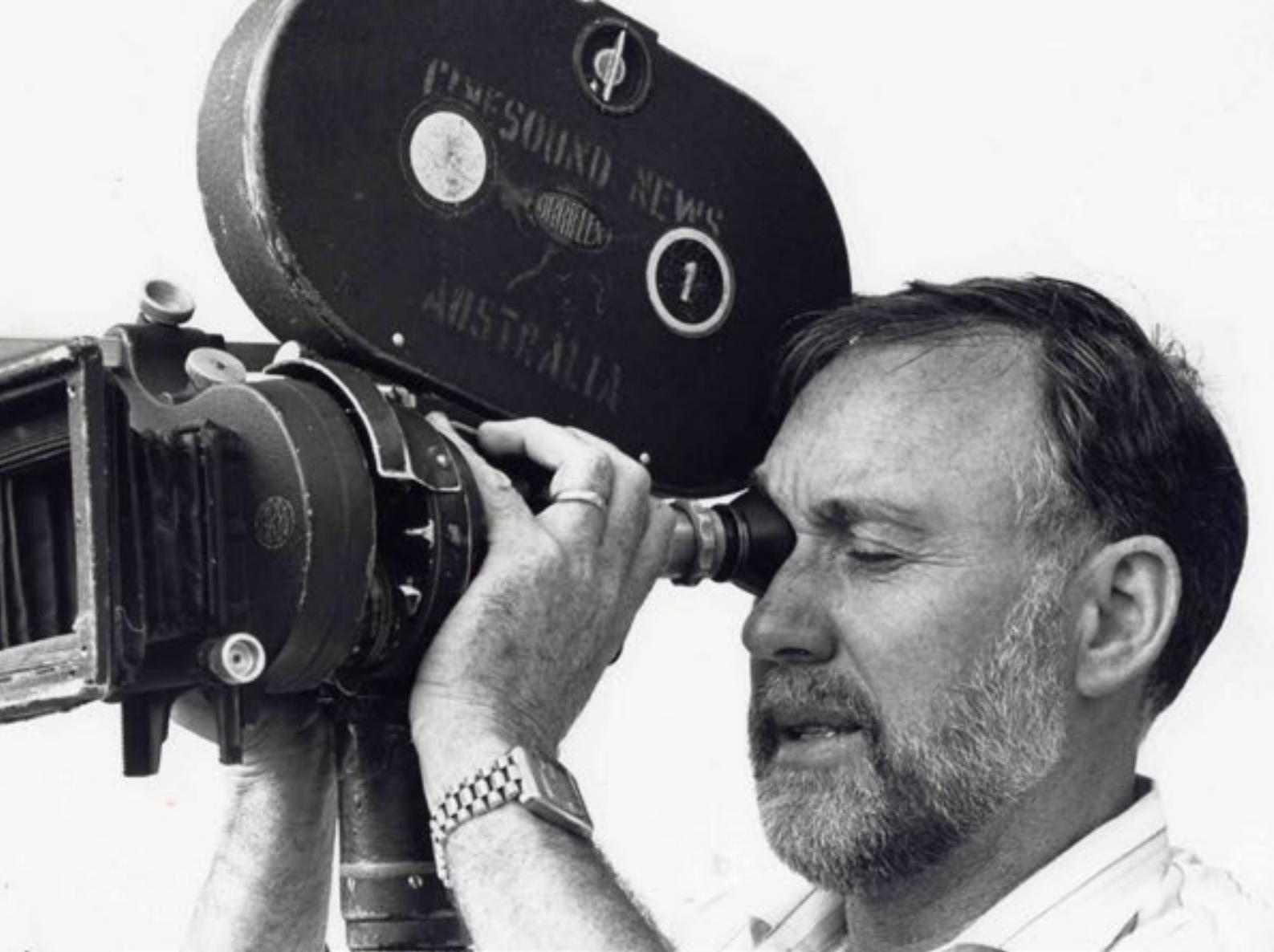
However, his passion for film remained and as a teenager he started shooting 8mm home movies. This progressed to making (in his words) 'corny and boring mini documentaries.' The early work evidently revealed his talent as Daryl was soon employed by the Department of Supply in Perth for his first paid filmmaking job.

At the tender age of 19, Daryl found himself shooting for the United States Navy, working with a survey team from Stanford University. It involved a technical team of scientists looking for a site on which to put up a radio station so they could communicate with submarines.

Roaming through northern WA, Daryl filmed them as they conducted ground connectivity surveys, looking for the right soil conditions to be able to bounce a signal up and down to the fleet.

The subsequent footage led to Daryl securing a filming role with the Aeronautical Research Laboratories (ARL) which were based in Melbourne. The ARL did research for all facets of the Australian Armed Forces, all top-secret work at the time. His main project was filming development of the Ikara missile system, which was test fired at Woomera, South Australia, but he also worked on civilian aeronautical projects.

After a year in Victoria, Daryl returned to WA and got engaged and learnt how to fly, before promptly accepting a government role in Papua New Guinea. His job was to establish a Government Film Unit and record all the activity taking place around PNG in the lead up to independence. This included projects such as filming the Tuberculosis patrol that swept through the region testing locals for the disease for the Department of Health.



ABOVE: Daryl shooting cinema newsreels in the early 1970s
BELOW: Filming the distribution of UN information material in preparation for PNG independence



Finding the length of time between shoots a challenge, Daryl bought himself a 16mm camera and spent the weekends filming news items he thought would be of interest back in Australia. He sent reels to Channel 7 in Perth and other capital city stations as well as international news outlets.

A news reporter for a Sydney paper was not happy with Daryl's prolific output and put in a complaint that Daryl's freelance work was threatening his livelihood. Within a few weeks, Daryl was called before the local Administrator and told that if he didn't stop sending his news films out, he would be fired from the public service.

He decided to leave and take a job at Channel 7 in Sydney. They were looking for an A grade cine cameraman to join their local news team, but they had to start in three weeks! He promptly asked fiancée Wilma back in Perth if she could organise their wedding within two weeks. She somehow pulled it off and a week later the newlyweds flew to Sydney to begin their new life.



Daryl found himself filming many exciting events such as the turbulent anti Vietnam war street protests and the arrival of The Beatles. The fab four were staying at the Rex Hotel in Kings Cross and Daryl took his camera into the thronging masses to record the fleeting balcony appearances and the resultant hysteria.

Before long, Daryl and Wilma decided to head back to New Guinea, establishing the country's first film production business, Films New Guinea. They had their first child there before returning to Perth in 1967.

The couple bought a house in Alfred Cove and Daryl's first association with the Murdoch area occurred as he walked among the rural area's pine plantations and also viewed the region from above when flying through. Now with a well-developed eye for potential filming projects, Daryl noticed the small story in the paper regarding the announcement of the new university. Within a few months local film makers were asked to tender for the film commissioned by the Planning Board and Daryl was successful.

"The brief was essentially to make a 20 minute film about the development of the university up to the opening, including the inauguration ceremony itself," said Daryl.

Starting filming in 1971, Daryl recorded a vast range of footage. He flew across the site to take aerial footage of construction progress. He filmed ditches being dug, water diviners scouring the campus for H₂O, Planning Board meetings at local motels, and the first buildings being constructed. Although filming was relatively infrequent, Daryl developed a close association with the chief Architect, the late Gus Ferguson, who gave Daryl the heads up whenever anything significant was occurring at the site and worthy of recording.

He was very much a one-man band, typically turning up at the campus with camera, tripod and a set of lights. For the inauguration itself, Daryl had to improvise.

"I didn't have the budget to allow a full crew. So, for the speeches I couldn't synchronise sound shots of the speakers and I had to use cutaways," said Daryl.



Daryl found himself filming many exciting events such as the turbulent anti Vietnam war street protests and the arrival of The Beatles.



Ultimately, Daryl's film, *Murdoch - Open for Learning* captures how Perth was in the 1970s (no hard hats, a sea of long socks and lots of smoking!) and is a nostalgic slice of the conceptualisation, planning, design and building of Murdoch University. The charming film is available for viewing at: goto.murdoch.edu.au/OpenForLearning

After the project was completed, Daryl continued to be around the film industry in WA, though the advent of video tape saw him transition more into the lighting side of the industry. His association with the biggest bands in history continued. Two years after Murdoch opened, Daryl was working on the filming of *Abba: The Movie* at the Perth Entertainment Centre. Closing out the world tour of the Swedish supergroup, one of Daryl's daughters was ecstatic not only to be around the band, but to be given all the costume jewellery from the tour that eventually became the centrepiece of Lasse Hallström's 1977 movie that encapsulated Abba mania.

TOP: Having a bit of fun while working at Aeronautical Research Laboratories

ABOVE LEFT: Filming at the Port Moresby Tally Room in the elections leading up to PNG independence

ABOVE RIGHT AND OPPOSITE : Daryl today

Daryl's incredible career, which first ignited watching *Bambi* on a big screen as a small boy, culminated with being accredited with the Australian Cinematographers Society (ACS) in 1972 and then in 2004 the ACS inducted him into their Hall of Fame. Earlier this year, the renowned cinematographer was awarded an Australia Day Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for his services to the film industry. A fitting honour for a completely self-taught maestro of the moving image.



An illustration of a child with brown hair, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and yellow pants, standing with arms outstretched looking up at a large open book. From the pages of the book, several magical creatures emerge: a purple butterfly-like creature with green spots, a yellow creature with large black eyes and a long body, and a small blue creature with a white hat. The background is a soft gradient of light blue and green.

Magical Worlds

Children's Books Inspired by Global Adventures.

Alumna Lui Sit was born in Hong Kong, emigrated to Perth when she was three, and now resides in the UK. Murdoch was a significant part of her life in the 1990s when she completed two degrees – firstly a BA in Politics, Philosophy and Sociology before embarking on a BA in English. She worked as a barista in Sir Walter's Café and oversaw many a successful event as a Murdoch Guild Activities Officer.

Since graduation, her employment path has been a diverse one, including spells as an ice cream seller, dim sum waitress, marketing consultant, and environmental campaigner. Lui loves to dance. She has tried and studied so many styles that she has qualified as a dance anthropologist! Now feeling settled in her vocation as an author, Lui is about to publish her first children's book and also writes short stories, non-fiction and memoir. Time to find out more about her peripatetic and colourful life...

“Middle grade reading age is a time where ‘impossible’ things are still possible, and magic is believed. Kids of that age still see the extraordinary in the ordinary.”



You studied Politics, Philosophy & Sociology (PPS) in the mid-90s. What made you come back and complete the Theatre & English course?

I really enjoyed studying PPS at Murdoch – the calibre and interdisciplinary focus of the degree was unique in Perth at the time. Prior to studying PPS at Murdoch, I had attended another university to study humanities and found the approach dry and formulaic. When I switched to Murdoch, I revelled in the fact that the focus to learning was – what do you think and why? As opposed to – this is what you should think. I thought – Yes! This is what I thought university would be.

The courses I was exposed to via PPS, such as Ecofeminism, Environmental Ethics, Reading & Writing, and Women's Studies really had a profound effect on me, so much so that these themes emerge now in my children's books. I enjoyed studying that degree so much. I wanted more but didn't want to specialise via honours, so I did Theatre & Performance Arts instead. I have a dance performance background and I was also studying for a Certificate of Dance at WAAPA and volunteering as a dance mentor for DADAA (WA) at the same time, these activities being complementary to the degree. Helena Grehan was my course leader, and she was very supportive and a real advocate for what she was teaching. I thought I would be getting a BA double degree from Murdoch but somehow ended up with two BAs! Afterwards, I thought I was done with study, but ever the student, I ended up getting a MA in Dance Anthropology from Roehampton University and a Graduate Certificate in Creative Writing from Birkbeck University in the UK.

What was it about Murdoch that resonated for you and meant that you worked and studied here for a long period?

Apart from the excellent tuition I received, I also worked at Murdoch, first at Walters Coffee Shop (apologies to all that suffered my indescribably bad coffee making skills) and then as the Murdoch Guild Student Union Activities Officer. So much of my life, both as a student and employee was based around Murdoch. I loved it, as the campus had a real sense of grassroots community cohesion during those years which I felt very much a part of. The degrees I studied encouraged discussion and execution of ideas which made for a stimulating environment. I also just really love studying. Those are some of the reasons why I hung around for so long.

What was it like studying creative writing with Deborah Robertson and what were some of the key things you learned about writing in that period?

Taking the Reading & Writing course with Deborah Robertson was a major influence on me becoming a professional writer today. It was my first experience of having my writing constructively critiqued by others in a feedback group format and also providing feedback to others. The expectation of rigour, excellence and endeavour in those sessions was inspiring, stimulating, scary and challenging. The exposure to so many other writers through the pieces compiled for us in the excellent Reading and Writing readers (I really wish I still had mine – I think about them often) was phenomenal. Deborah was a fantastic course leader. She encouraged us to think about writing in a professional way and conduct ourselves as writers, even if we did not consider ourselves as such at the time. I learned many things about the craft and art of writing, but a really valuable lesson was to not dial it in creatively. You should try to push yourself, always.



PHOTO: Rebecca Cresta Photography

What were some of the professions you worked in prior to full time writing and how did you make it to your current vocation?

In short, I have worked in the arts, higher education, charity and publishing sectors both in London and Australia since graduating from Murdoch. I've worked in a wide variety of roles from events manager, publishing project editor, university programmes manager, syllabus and dance development officer, film and television courses coordinator, touring manager – and this is just for starters. Basically, a lot of my career involved enabling other people to be creative.

When I hit my forties, I decided to be creative myself and start writing a children's book, for which the character had been in my head for about two years. I had always written but mostly kept it private. This time I told everyone I knew that I was writing a book so that I would have nowhere to hide and have to finish it. I didn't start with the aim of having it published, I just wanted to learn what it was to write a book to the best of my ability. Well, what I learned is that it is incredibly hard. It took me six years, with a tremendous amount of support along the way from my family, writing friends and various UK writers' schemes for underrepresented writers.

Things started to snowball when I won the 2022 FAB Prize. Shortly after, I signed with my literary agent who sold my debut children's middle grade book in 2023. This book, *The Land of the Last Wildcat* will be published in May 2025.

I was also working already on another book with Storymix, a UK children's book packager, where I write under a pseudonym. This lower middle grade book will be published in June 2025.

What is it you enjoy about writing for children?

The age group I write for is termed 'middle grade' which is roughly 7-11 years old. I write for this age because for me, it was the books that I read at this time in my own childhood that deeply affected me. You know, the type of book you get to the end of and go back straight to the start to read it all over again! And then you do that about 20+ times straight because you do not want to leave the world of that story or the characters that have become your friends.

Middle grade reading age is a time where 'impossible' things are still possible, and magic is believed. Kids of that age still see the extraordinary in the ordinary. Trees can be portals. Ghosts become friends. Wishes can manifest. It's a wonderful age to write for, especially if you believe in these things yourself still, which I do. Another aspect is that my characters in my children's books are mixed race, Chinese-British or Chinese-Australian. I never saw myself in any books that I read growing up and neither did my daughter. Despite us being generations apart, kids publishing is slow to address the diversity of its audience and so I enjoy being a part of changing this fact.

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