

MURMUR

ALUMNI MAGAZINE • SPRING 2025

Ted Talks!

MU Murdoch
University



MURMUR

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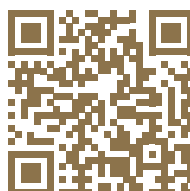
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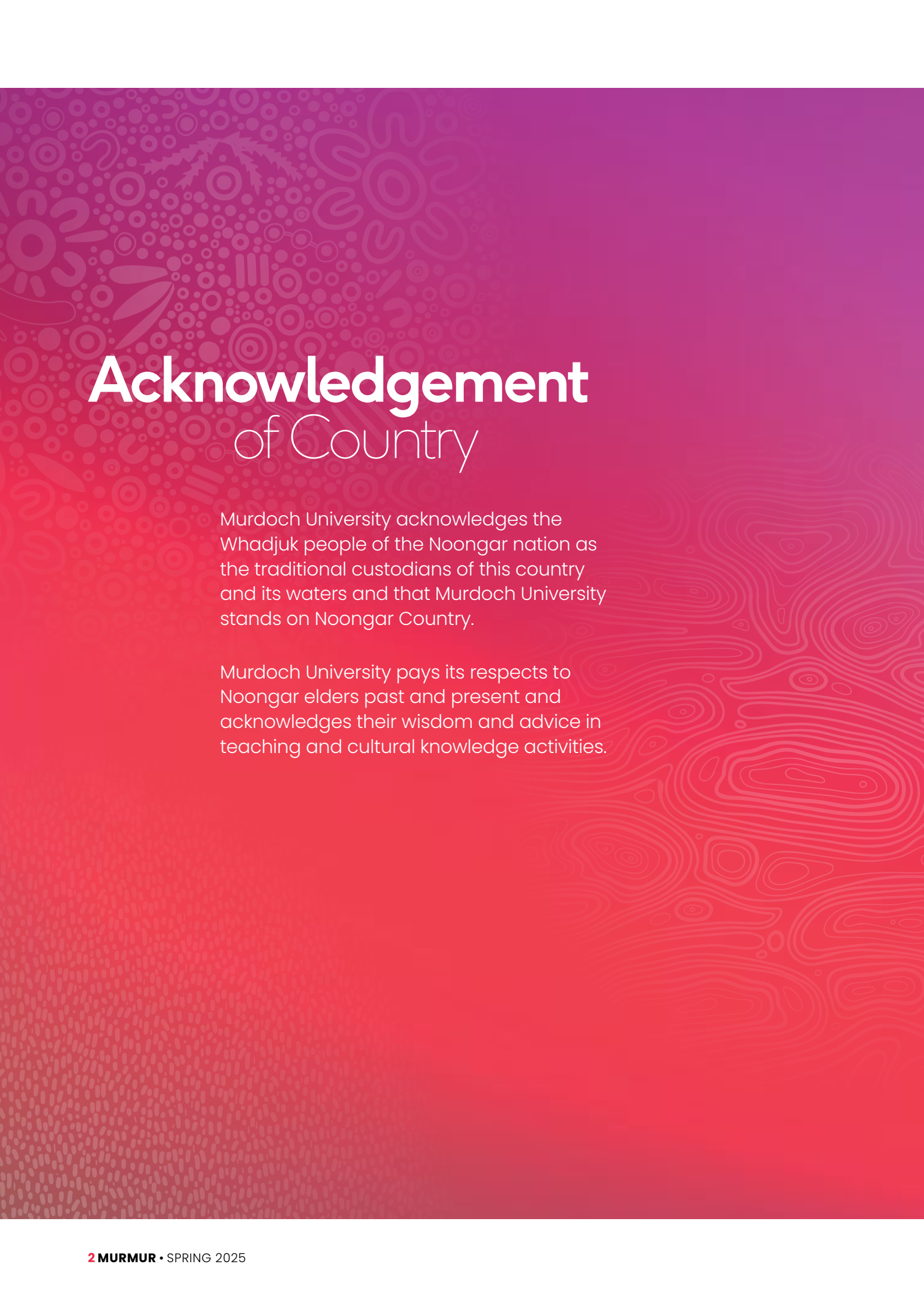
Bridging Then & Now

A Q&A with Murdoch University's last remaining Foundation Professor.



Slices of history

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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 1974. Picture yourself as a high school student in your final year in Western Australia. Two professors you have never heard of are talking to you and your classmates about why you might consider attending Western Australia's second university. One still unfinished, with barely a flyer to distinguish itself. It has no national or global ranking, no reputation to consider, no alumni, no reviews – just a clear concept that it hopes to be different to what has come before in the tertiary landscape.

It is thanks to such students, who listened to the visiting academics and said “Ok, yes I will give it a try” that you are reading this. 510 Foundation students who decided to take a punt on a new, unproven university and walk through its doors in February 1975. Enjoying no tuition fees thanks to recent Whitlam Government reforms, there would simply be no Murdoch without these trailblazers. Their personal choice enabled a platform to be laid, enabled academic and professional staff to establish solid, early foundations and a fledgling university was thus able to take its critical first steps.

Over 115,000 students have since followed in their footsteps and taken their skills, passion and knowledge to all corners of the world. We celebrate those first students in this issue of *Murmur*, pioneers who unwittingly laid a path for so many to follow. You will discover some of their personal reflections from a time when the nation was changing rapidly, politically, socially, and culturally, and the median price of a house in Perth was \$18,850!

This issue also features the last of the Foundation Professors still with us, Professor Brian Hill, who set the course for the School of Education, stayed for the next 25 years and laid the groundwork for a school that continues to produce endless waves of inspirational educators half a century on.

Naturally it is a challenge to condense 50 years into 50 pages and find nostalgic treasure for all. Some of you passed through before the place even had a



computer, while others had their graduation walk filmed on a phone. Some of you would have seen an overhead projector as high tech, while others had AI as their friend, so it's a broad church to tailor content for.

Hence the inclusion of a timeline that lies at the foot of every page, marking some of the landmark breakthrough moments as your university evolved, and a smattering of archive photography, touching as many decades as possible. We chart the various incarnations of the student mag *Metior*, from broadsheet black and white, through to blog. I hope one of the visuals or personal tales takes you straight back to your own unique set of vivid personal memories of Murdoch, and gives you a window to reflect on how your alma mater shifted your own world.

It's only fitting that I conclude by introducing Ted Powell, our smiling cover star. A man who was starting his professional career in Hong Kong the same year Murdoch started its first lecture. It is thanks to his vision and incredible philanthropic gift that one of Murdoch's foundation schools – the School of Veterinary Medicine, can now build on its global reputation. One of the largest gifts ever given to an Australian university will enable us to build a new vet school, double the number of vets we can train and enhance all animal research. Now that's some birthday present for an institution taking a moment to celebrate middle age.

Enjoy.

Michael Sampson
Editor

A message from the Vice Chancellor



“As our 50th anniversary year draws to a close, so too does a period of celebration and gratitude for our university – a community of caring people doing good in the world.”

A past to be proud of, a bright future ahead

As our 50th anniversary year draws to a close, so too does a period of celebration and gratitude for our university – a community of caring people doing good in the world.

Over the past year, we have welcomed Premier Roger Cook to launch our anniversary celebrations; named a garden after our foundation landscape architect Dr Marion Blackwell; hosted an historical exhibition in the Geoffrey Bolton Library; reconnected with alumni at events in Australia and around the world; welcomed our Foundation students back to campus; and witnessed two esteemed Murdoch alumni deliver the Sir Walter Murdoch Lecture – the Hon. Tony Buti MLA in 2024 and High Court Justice James Edelman AC this year.

We have unearthed the stories that define Murdoch University's history: from the reflections of our only living Foundation Professor Brian Hill – who appears in this issue of *Murmur*; to the experiences of our early students; the campus' development over time; our growth as a truly global university; and our broad and impactful contributions to society through research, teaching and engagement.

We have celebrated our founding commitment to the environment and conservation, social justice, and inclusion – and to the values we hold: authenticity, integrity, respect, inclusivity and openness.

In the midst of these reflections on our past, an extraordinary endorsement of Murdoch University's future arrived in the form of a \$100 million gift from Western Australian businessman and philanthropist Ted Powell, who graces the cover of this edition of *Murmur*.

The size and scope of Ted Powell's gift – the largest of its type for any Western Australian university and among the largest ever received by an Australian university – will allow us to undertake a once-in-a-generation transformational project for Murdoch, a new building to house our iconic School of Veterinary Medicine.



50th anniversary celebration Hong Kong

One of our foundation schools, Murdoch's School of Veterinary Medicine is already ranked in the global top 40, but a new, larger and more technologically advanced building for the School – standing alongside our award-winning academic building Boola Katitjin – will allow us to educate more veterinarians; treat animals of all species in the most modern facilities; provide better care for animals in Western Australia; and participate in pioneering research to help animals worldwide. It will also be the first step in our ambitious Campus Development Plan, releasing the old veterinary school buildings for renovation and repurposing.

With this announcement, I can think of no better way to conclude our 50th anniversary year.

I take this opportunity to thank Ted Powell for his incredible act of generosity – as I thank each and every member of our Murdoch family, including our global alumni family, for your ongoing commitment to building a brighter future, together.

Professor Andrew J Deeks
Vice Chancellor and President



50th anniversary celebration London



50th anniversary celebration Melbourne



FIRST STAFF HIRE

Staff were employed to work at Murdoch University many years before the doors ultimately opened. The third employee taken onto the books was Geoff Field, originally hired for the Murdoch University Planning Board in 1970.

ABOVE: Geoff Field 1975

OPPOSITE AND NEXT PAGE: 1978 – An original document with list of Murdoch staff from 1970 – 1973.

1967

Proposed university site earmarked

1970

2nd WA university announced as Murdoch University

1972

Murdoch University Act proclaimed in Parliament

1972

Stephen Griew appointed first Vice Chancellor

1973

10 Foundation Professors commence duties

EARLY MURDOCH STAFF

An asterisk denotes that the person has since left Murdoch.

		commencing date
1970	S. Higgins*	20 July
	Dee Cahill	2 November
	Geoff Field	30 November
1971	Dan Dunn	1 January
	Di Kenneddy*	7 January
	M. Gibson*	2 February
1972	Jenny Cooper*	21 February
	C. Redpath*	14 June
	Stan Ballinger*	16 August
	A. Barrow*	4 September
	Stephen Griew*	1 October
1973	George Buick	2 January
	Sioux Green	24 January
	Nada	5 February
	Chris Bagley*	12 February
	Evelyn Bugna	26 February
	Margaret MacLeod*	13 March
	Walter Berentzen*	22 March
	Ian Tweedie	1 April
	Brian Cosgrove*	2 April
	John Frodsham	15 April
	John Raser	5 May
	Graham Blanksby*	7 May
	Bill Anthony	21 May
	Ann Chadwick	4 June
	Des O'Connor	11 June
	Bob Dunlop*	15 June
	Wendy Anderton	18 June
	Donna Hasset*	18 June
	Hugh Malcolm	18 June
	Thelma Richardson	18 June
	Mavis Jones	25 June
	Alex Robertson	28 June
	Geoff Bolton	1 July
	Jack Loneragan	1 July
	Choo Frodsham	2 July
	Tricia Cawley	2 July
	E. Jones*	6 July
	Frank Morey	16 July
	Pat McHattie	1 August
	Norm Chandler	13 August
	Mrs S. Hamdani	3 September
	Martin Thomas*	3 September
	Ted Johnston	17 September

commencing date

1973 Jenny Gamble*
Ray Campbell
Pat Clifford
Charlotte Welton
Andrew Bain
Jenny Nicholls*
Malcolm Traill
A. Dare*
Melanie Harris
V. James*
Jim Campbell*
Diana King
Anne Cox
Jim Parker

18 October
19 November
19 November
22 November
26 November
26 November
26 November
3 December
3 December
3 December
10 December
12 December
17 December
19 December

Numbers of new staff :
1970 - 3
1971 - 3
1972 - 5
1973 - 47
1974 - 108
1975 - 200

10 November 1978



ABOVE: 1977 - The winning men's 5-a-side-soccer team comprising Murdoch University Administrative Office staff. L-R: Peter Eves - Account's Clerk, John Hutchinson - Administrative Officer, David Harrison - Buyer/Stock Controller, Norm Chandler - Accountant, Bob Collins - Senior Groundsman, Geoff Field - Finance Officer, and Richard MacWilliam, Senior Administrative Officer. Photo by Peter Walden.



Geoff Field and his wife Lynette

At that time the University was just bush with no easy road access. The first employees in fact had to move into an office building on Stirling Highway in Nedlands. As the numbers grew, they ultimately moved to the Noalimba Migrant Hostel which was closer to the site.

There were many varied tasks to Geoff's role, including picking new staff up from the airport. But a key responsibility was to establish the first parts of the new university budget and give it to the State Premier of the time, Sir David Brand.

"Funding was a problem early on. Our initial proposed budget would allow for the University to open in February 1974. Unfortunately, in 1971 there was somewhat of a credit squeeze and when the Brand Government looked at our prospective budget for the next couple of years, they said no. They couldn't afford it, and it was knocked back. We were asked to come back with a budget with the university opening now in 1975 and that's what we eventually managed to achieve," said Geoff.

He was instrumental in controlling the budget of the new university for the first 15 years. The principal costs being land clearing and building construction, though staffing costs naturally expanded as the university grew.

"I managed the university budget with the Vice Chancellor for several years after opening,"

said Geoff who remains connected to Murdoch 55 years on through his and his wife Lynette's involvement with the Banksia Association.

1973

Murdoch University constituted

1973

Senate members appointed and meet

1973

Six Schools established

1974

Justice Wickham elected Chancellor

1974

18 postgraduate students commence



On a frosty New Year's Eve in 1950, on a council estate in the northern edge of Liverpool, UK, a boy was born who would one day help shape global finance practices and leave an incredible philanthropic legacy in Western Australia.

The world Ted Powell was born into was modest, but he carried within him an appetite for something more. That hunger would take him from post-war Britain to the bustling expat world of Hong Kong in the 1970s, to the boardrooms of Asia, and ultimately to Perth, where he has just become Murdoch University's most generous benefactor.

Ted Powell grew up in Fazakerley, a suburb better known for grit than glamour. "When I was growing up as a kid there, there were a lot of people striving to get back on their feet after the war," he recalled.

School, by his own admission, was not his strong suit. He crossed Liverpool each day to attend the city's Catholic grammar school, an hour each way, only for his parents to move ten minutes from the school the summer that he finished!

"I was pretty average at school. I got one A level," he said with disarming honesty. "But once I got to Liverpool Polytechnic, I started waking up."

New subjects not previously in his school curriculum ignited Ted's quest to learn.

"I began studying stuff that interested me - economics, law, administration, even accounting. It was just more pertinent to me, and I really enjoyed those subjects."



1974

Inauguration ceremony
17 September

1974

Murdoch Art Collection established

1974

Library building completed

1975

First 714 undergraduate students commence

1975

Dr Harold Schenberg donates 11 artworks to the Art Collection



1975

HRH Princess Anne and Captain Mark Phillips visit campus

1976

University emblem approved by Senate

1976

Student enrolments reach 1,489

1977

First Guild President elected: Mark Ames

1977

First graduation ceremony



Armed with a Higher National Diploma and a professional qualification as a Chartered Secretary, Ted's first job was with Widnes Corporation. The role was bureaucratic: a young committee clerk, responsible for taking minutes at Council Sub Committee meetings. But it was also eye-opening.

"It probably gave me a cynical view of politics listening to the local councillors," he chuckled. "I learned that at an early age."

Soon he moved into industry, working for a while for the Dutch chemical giant Akzo, in Kirkby. But by 24, with professional qualifications in hand, he was itching for change. "I was qualified, single, living at home and I wanted to get out, see the world, and do my own thing."

He considered London a bit of a rat race and so decided to look further afield. Soon enough an overseas post opened up: a corporate secretary role in Hong Kong, with international accounting giant Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co (now KPMG). In June 1975, he boarded a flight east and stepped into the subtropical heat of the densely populated city, then still under British jurisdiction.

"I loved it from day one," he says. "There were loads of young expats there. Football was my game, so naturally I got straight into that. Everybody who was there was in Hong Kong for their career. Nobody had local family ties, so your nucleus became a large group of friends of a similar age. As a result, there was a great social life."

1978

Glenn Willson appointed Vice Chancellor

1978

Psychology course commences

1978

John Patterson elected Guild President

1979

Vet School opens

1979

Des Fleay elected Guild President

At this point it wasn't just his career that took off. A year earlier, on a weekend in Liverpool, he had first met Dee, who ultimately became his wife. After a year apart, he returned and asked her to join him out east. She agreed, and they began a partnership that would span 47 years.

At KPMG, Ted worked in corporate services, looking after companies' statutory compliance. It was great experience, but not suitable for the long term.

"I just had a desire to do my own thing," he said. "My skills were in corporate management and corporate services. I knew the rules and regulations and I knew what I could handle."

There was another arm to his skillset too, something for which he had received no formal training.

"One thing I was never taught was how to sell. And I discovered I was basically very good at it. I'll also say that my other strength is that I'm pretty well organised. I guess no one teaches those things. You learn them through experience."

After working independently for a few years, and surviving a brief business partnership with a Canadian lawyer that went south, Ted found himself at 36 with little money, but plenty of ambition. He decided to sit down and write a business plan.

"One element was for a corporate service set up, and the second, was for a new business called Offshore Incorporations. The idea behind Offshore Incorporations was I had the contacts by then in all the various offshore centres – the Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands etc. The idea of that latter business was just to market company sales to lawyers, accountants, and bankers in Asia. They served many sensible, commercial uses. What happened was that side of the business far exceeded my expectations."

The timing could not have been better. In 1984, the British Virgin Islands had introduced new legislation allowing the easy creation of international business companies. Although many professionals in Hong Kong were aware of the change, Ted was the first to seize the opportunity.

"People knew about them. But I was the only one who got out there and promoted it. I made it a business."

In an era when big accounting firms could take weeks to process the appropriate paperwork for an offshore company, Ted had established companies lined up and ready to go.

"They cost USD \$750 and could be delivered round to a client's office in half an hour.

Hong Kong was an instant place, with instant needs.

Everybody wanted everything done yesterday. I was working six or seven days a week in those days, but it was rewarding."

The model worked incredibly well. Offshore Incorporations grew rapidly, becoming the focal point for offshore services in Asia. By the early 1990s, political upheaval in China

and the opening of its economy also brought new waves of additional clients.

"For the first 18 months the company was just me, but by the time I sold it in 2004, it was 120 people. I had trust licences in six different offshore jurisdictions. I had offices in Singapore and Taiwan as well as Hong Kong."

By the early 2000s, Ted and his partners began to ask the inevitable question: did they want to keep working for another decade?

"We decided to sell the business before we got too old and whilst there was still plenty of upside to the business."

The Carlyle Group, a US global investment firm, became the buyer.

"One thing I was never taught was how to sell. And I discovered I was basically very good at it. I'll also say that my other strength is that I'm pretty well organised."

1980

Sir Ronald Wilson elected Chancellor

1980

Gordin Aplin elected Guild President

1981

First female Guild President elected: Veronica Cook

1982

University Medal established

1982

Mandy Gillet elected Guild President

For Ted and Dee, it was time for a new adventure. They had visited Australia during the 1990s and fallen in love with it. In 2005, they settled in Perth which was slightly better placed than the east coast for their frequent travel to both Asia and the UK.

"We thought Australia was a great place to come," said Ted.

Once settled in Perth, Ted embarked on a new project: The Richardson, a luxury boutique hotel in West Perth. Opening in 2006, it thrived for several years, even weathering the global financial crisis. But by 2012, competition from new hotel chains and the rise of Airbnb made business challenging. After 11 years, Ted and his partner sold the hotel to the aged care provider Oryx Communities.

Having achieved outstanding success in the corporate world, Ted and Dee turned their focus to giving back. They established the Ragdoll Foundation in 2010, which became the beneficiary of their wills and their vehicle for philanthropic endeavours.

This is when Murdoch University first entered Ted's orbit.

"One of the requirements when you establish a foundation is that you need to bring in what was described as "a person of note" to be a director. Hence, I was introduced to Terry Budge who at the time was the Murdoch University Chancellor. Terry was instrumental in helping set up our scholarships which are still continuing."

Since its inception, more than 150 Murdoch students have earned their degrees with financial support from the Ragdoll Foundation.

Letters from scholarship recipients remain one of Ted's great joys.

"It's just very rewarding reading those letters and knowing you are making a difference."

Ted also provides philanthropic support to The Salvation Army, and Leadership WA. The latter is a not-for-profit,

apolitical organisation founded in 2004, focused on leadership development across Western Australia. He also supports Coodanup College in Mandurah.

"The latter came about through Emeritus Professor Andrew Taggart, who I met through Murdoch. He is one of the Board members of Coodanup College. I give them a bit of support, and they use the funds to give prizes to students undertaking their ATAR. It gives them a bit of a lift. Their numbers are going up and up and it's working really well."

Retirement, philanthropy and playing golf with mates was a lifestyle that was progressing smoothly for Ted, until April 2024, when his world shifted off its axis.

Dee, his partner of nearly half a century, passed away suddenly after a short illness on Anzac Day.

"It just ticks all the boxes as a great project for Murdoch, great for the students, a boost for the industry and for the reputation of the University."

"It was so sudden that we didn't even really get to talk about what was happening at the end," lamented Ted.

Over the next few difficult months, Ted decided he needed to get his business and financial affairs in order.

"Dee and I didn't have any children, and should anything happen to me, I didn't want to leave the directors of Ragdoll to have to make decisions as to what to do with my assets."

It was around this time that Ted had a meeting with Murdoch University Vice Chancellor, Professor Andrew Deeks. When Ted enquired as to what Professor Deeks might do with a large donation he responded immediately with conviction.

"Invest in a new Vet School," he said.

Thus, the idea first emerged. The more he evaluated the proposal, the more Ted was certain that it was the perfect project for a large philanthropic gift.

"It just ticks all the boxes as a great project for Murdoch, great for the students, a boost for the industry and for the reputation of the University," he said.

1982

First Aboriginal student, Isabelle Adams, graduates

1983

Student Village opens

1983

Student enrolments reach 3,169

1983

Michael Jesser elected Guild President

1984

Historic Farrington Road community protest blockade



The \$100 Million donation will enable Murdoch's existing Vet School to be replaced by a 9,600sqm state-of-the-art facility

It took a few months for Ted to liquidate assets and on 7 August 2025 it was formally announced that Murdoch University would receive a \$100 million gift from Ted – one of the largest gifts ever received by an Australian University!

The funds will enable Murdoch's existing Vet School to be replaced by a 9,600sqm state-of-the-art facility large enough to support a 50% increase in the number of vet students who can be trained in Western Australia.

The new facility will:

- Support next generation world-class teaching and research at WA's only veterinary school and animal teaching hospital.
- Upgrade and expand the ageing veterinary school to continue to meet modern standards and best serve the WA and Australian community.
- Train more veterinarians, addressing critical workforce shortages in WA and nationally.
- Build on Murdoch University's demonstrated strengths in livestock, equine, wildlife and conservation, animal care and welfare.
- Support more cutting-edge research into animal health, welfare and disease.

On the day of the announcement, the media focused a little on his late wife's love of cats and how that may have influenced Ted's thinking. Although it resonated and underpinned his ultimate decision, for Ted it was also about the project's vision and impact.

"In addition to the increase in the number of vets that can be trained, it is the impact on veterinary research that I feel is so important too," said Ted. He knows the gift will reverberate for many years. Not just in the lives of students, animals and animal owners, but in the reputation and capacity of Murdoch University itself.

Following the interview, Ted was jumping on a plane and heading to Europe to watch his beloved Liverpool football team, a club he has followed for over 60 years. As he watches on from the Merseyside stands, he can be confident that his true legacy will soon be built here in WA – in the vets trained, the animals cared for, and the lives changed for decades to come.

1984

Bonita Mason elected Guild President

1985

Computer Science course commences

1985

Peter Boyce appointed Vice Chancellor

1985

Lila Carlton-Doney elected Guild President

1985

'Closed Mondays' sculpture commissioned for 10th anniversary

FIRST IN THE DOOR

The very first students to walk into Murdoch University in 1975 were a diverse cohort. Only 46.7% were under 23 years of age, compared with the national average of 70.7%. 33.9% of students were 30 or older, against a national average of 10.2%. 47% were women compared with the national average of 34%. Clear signs that Murdoch University was a non-conformist institution from the get-go, with a bedrock of maximising accessibility.

But what was it like at the start when the infrastructure consisted of just two academic buildings, a library and a sandy Bush Court? Well, who better to tell us than some of the foundation students. Enjoy some of their personal memoirs from a time when Perth was a big country town with growing city ambitions and national debate was stewing around the Vietnam War, Aboriginal rights, feminism, and the environment.



1986

20,000+ people attend Open Day

1986

Student enrolments reach 4,624

1986

Graham Giffard elected Guild President

1987

Jacky Easter (Sem 1)
Kurt Rogers (Sem 2)
elected Guild President

1988

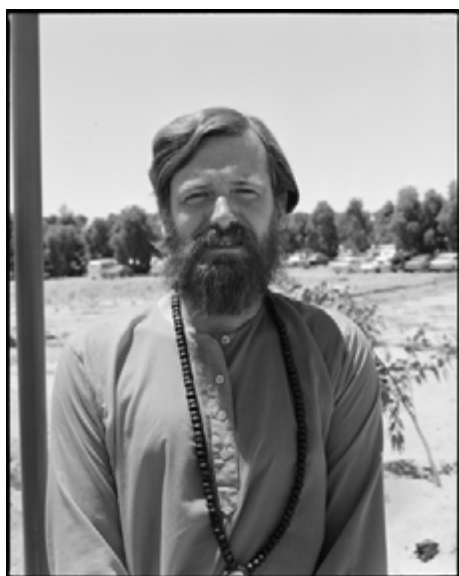
Aboriginal Education Unit (later Kulbardi) opens

I am so delighted to know Murdoch Uni will be celebrating a significant milestone by turning 50 this year. I do have very fond and happy memories of being a foundation student. I was in fact a foundation mature age student.

I clearly remember how I had to walk across the sandy Bush Court and then across some wooden planks to get to the enrolment desks where the staff were working frantically in the open air in front of the library.

Talking of the library, I remember how helpful the staff were in holding sought after books held on 'reserve'. My favourite haunt after evening tutorials was the Coffee Shop run by the Student Guild where I had my favourite vanilla slice.

Professor Geoffrey Bolton always held my attention, and I still remember my first Economics lecture by Prof. Alex Kerr, when he told us that the modern day "market" was the For Sale section of the daily newspaper. My guiding light was Robert Reece who later became Professor of History at Murdoch, and my first Tutor was Kim Beazley who was in fact younger than I! I also recall the Buddhism lectures by the colourful Harry Aveling who used to rock up in the saffron robes of a Hindu Sanyasi (*Editor Note: While at Murdoch, Harry subsequently changed his name to Swami Anand Haridas*).



Swami Anand Haridas – Senior Lecturer in Southeast Asian Studies – School of Human Communication



Bob Reece (in blue) – Lecturer in Social and Political Theory – School of Social Inquiry

I enjoyed every moment on campus, meeting and engaging in lively chats with many bright young people who sparked in me an enquiring mind. The greatest gift with which I was blessed with by studying at Murdoch was philosophy, the philosophy of life – finding the next exciting thing to learn about. In that regard, I am happy to vouch that one is never too old to learn new tricks. When Covid hit and boredom began to set in during those days of lockdowns, the Spirit of Murdoch came to my rescue – "learn something new Tom!"

With not a musical bone in my body, I ventured into learning to play the piano.

My talented granddaughters volunteered to be my teachers and to their credit, today at 80 I can manage to hammer out Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata, a couple of Preludes by Chopin with a few false notes to boot. To Murdoch University, Happy Birthday and to all the erudite men and women who make up the academic team that powers it on, in the words of the Bard I say sincerely:

"Thanks, and thanks and forever thanks."

Thomas Pavey
BA Peace and Conflict Studies 1980

1988

Student enrolments pass 5,000

1988

Asia Research Centre established

1988

Ken Thomas elected Guild President

1989

Legislation to merge UWA and Murdoch blocked in the Legislative Council

1989

Paul Stevenage elected Guild President



Horst Ruthrof – Lecturer in Literature – School of Human Communication

Bush Court, the library, the sense of building a learning community for its first adventures into Australian academia, the people of our 1975 campus and the zeitgeist of 1975 in Western Australia have remained with me in the 50 years since I was a first-year student. I became active in the student groups from the Karate Club to the discussions (and eventual decisions) about the structure and form of a brand-new student body, a Student Guild.

Starting as a Biology student in my first semester, I listened deeply to a guest lecturer, Horst Ruthrof, speak of epistemology and the work of Jurgen Habermas and decided that day to transfer from Biology to the social sciences. Several decades later, at another university in another state, I would undertake a doctoral study inspired by the theory of Habermas and I owe that to Horst Ruthrof's guest lecture to science students in 1975!

During that doctoral study, I came to value and appreciate the experimental pedagogies of teaching and learning at Murdoch University in 1975, a persistent influence in my own research and writing about pedagogy and social change in the next 50 years. I

have now worked in eight universities around Australia, and the idea of a living and creative pedagogy started for me at Murdoch University.

Another staff member whose inspiration I came across again several decades later was Candi Peterson when I had the opportunity to teach Lifespan Development at the University of South Australia – she authored the textbook we used to teach this to first year students. She had been among my academic influences teaching me in 1975, and I still have an interest in understanding the lessons she offered in my first year at Murdoch.

I retain intense memories of the physical space of Murdoch in 1975: Bush Court (a bare, sandy plot), the library, the lecture theatres, the refectory and the bush walks through to Bibra Lake.

In 1975 the political scene in Western Australian included Premier Charles Court, a conservative leader who reminded us in the local newspaper, The West Australian, that girls and women did not need a tertiary education and his idea was that Murdoch University



Candi Peterson – Lecturer in Human Development – School of Social Inquiry

1990

Anthony Iheakanwa elected Guild President

1991

Economics and Commerce building completed

1991

Student enrolments reach 8,114

1991

Office of Alumni Relations and Development established

1991

Justin O'Malley elected Guild President

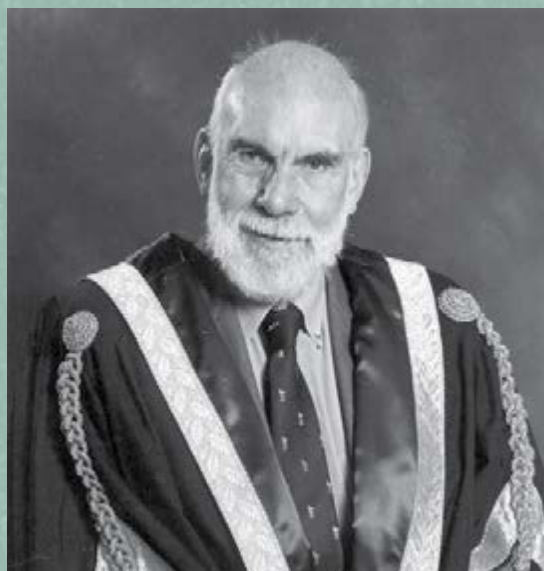
was radicalising the youth and young women of the state. In that same year in Federal politics, we experienced a constitutional crisis and the dismissal of the Whitlam Government. 1975 was a powerful year for someone like myself, in late adolescence, a young working-class woman, meeting new and diverse people constantly, and immersed in student debates and learning to reflect and consider science and the nature of scientific truths and reasoning; philosophy, linguistics and culture; and state, national and global politics. I remember it as one heck of a learning journey, intense, head-spinning, vibrant, and full of discovery and astonishments.

Amidst such dynamic and vibrant learning, what stands out is the continuous nature of learning and discovery; the need to actively create an ethos from within our participative and constantly emerging community; and a strong sense that both societal, collective and individual growth is entwined, both painful and delightful at the same time.

I had the chance to return to Murdoch University as a staff member in 2018, and to revisit Bush Court, the library, those early lecture theatres and offices, the refectory and to discover the expansion of campus facilities and natural environments. I met bilbies on campus at dusk while leaving, saw native trees and shrubs and gardens on campus, and as in 1975, I rejoiced in the flora and fauna of an Australian and Murdoch University's natural landscape. I saw that buildings had been named after people who taught me in 1975-1978 and made an effort to wander through the gardens taking photographs and looking at the architecture and natural landscape.

Memory can be powerful and persistent: I vividly recall the physicality of the campus landscape, the people I met and befriended; the staff who inspired and influenced me while encouraging me to think deeply and reflexively; and the excitement of launching an adolescent into lifelong discovery and exploration of what community is and can be, of what it means to be an active, engaged citizen in Australia. I have since read, enjoyed and been inspired by some of Walter Murdoch's writings!

**Dr Ann Lawless BA, GradDipEd, PhD
MU – BA General Studies 1978**



Professor Geoffrey Bolton

Your request made me search through lots of old stuff and brought back many special happy memories. I have found an old copy of Murdoch News from October 1975 with a photo of Professor Geoffrey Bolton on the front page. What a great asset to Murdoch he was. He, along with several others, changed my life.

I think I attended the first Environmental Science lecture ever offered in WA and possibly Australia. I must thank the late Professor Desmond O'Connor, and Professor Peter Newman, for introducing me to the beautiful flora of Western Australia. Our first tutorial was in Bush Court and none of us students knew the tree species! Sadly, I suspect that if you asked students now the lack of knowledge would be similar.

Lyn and Walter Bloom showed me that I could do mathematics. I even attended a tutorial in the Vice Chancellor's office above the library!

Basically, I was taught to learn.

**Nancy Scade (Hindmarsh)
BA History 1979**

1992

School of Law established

1992

First Intouch newsletter printed

1992

Andy Fitzgerald elected Guild President

1993

Theological Library and Worship Centre campaign launched

1993

Anita Gardner elected Guild President

Murdoch 1975. What an extraordinary time to be an inaugural student at Murdoch University! I'll never forget sitting in the Swanbourne High School science lecture theatre, towards the end of my final year in 1974, waiting to hear two people speak about this new university, Murdoch. I had a few ideas about what next after school, but these two, Dave Hitchens and Horst Ruthrof, left me determined to get into Murdoch. I wanted to do Communication Studies become a journalist, or film maker or writer and here was a university that offered me that. I was excited at last!

It was a time where for most of my female friends, the options and expectations were teaching, nursing or secretarial work. My parents had me lined up to work in a bank and that wasn't for me! Thankfully, I was accepted into Murdoch and couldn't have been happier to escape that outcome.

These were heady days. The days of Whitlam and access to free tertiary education (without which I would not have had access to a university education) and his unforgettable dismissal in November 1975. The end results of the Vietnam War in '75, with drafted brothers and neighbours having returned in '72 and still living the terror of that. A time when Vietnamese refugees were arriving legally to Australia, before they were called 'boat people'. The rise of feminism, gay rights, Native Title and Black Rights movements, environmental activism, the anti-uranium movement, demonstrations and political street theatre. In '76 the introduction by the WA Charles Court Government of the 54B legislation where no more than three people could gather without police permission. A time when rents in Fremantle were cheap and shared housing was possible with only one part-time job.

The lecturers were from around the world and spoke a language I could relate to, although Phenomenology was something I took a little time to get my head around. They challenged us to think, to question ideas and be unafraid of expressing our own. They supported us in our endeavours in ways I doubt the sandstone edifices would have wished. We Murdochians had a reputation as being 'a bit left field', not quite respectable, and we loved it. In its first years, the campus was small and sandy, with brutalist type concrete buildings surrounded by bush and UWA pine forest, no leafy green established gardens or hallowed corridors. It was not in any way a campus held up by heritage or tradition, but one founded on ideas and the desire to learn new ones.

A new ethos.

"We were taught to think and question everything and what a blast that was."

Enrolments to Murdoch were more flexible and applicants were considered on things other than their school leaving results leading to a different student body than you might have found elsewhere. Just out of school, I found myself amongst many mature age students with only about 200 students or so on campus during the day in that first year.

One of those was the mother of a childhood friend from kindergarten and primary school which was interesting, as there was no significant difference, despite the ages, between us when in a tutorial. All ideas mattered and were considered.

As the first cohort we had the chance in those first years to set up the Student Guild, student canteen, decide which services we wanted/needed such as a campus nurse (who was also a mature age student) and run many wonderful lunch-time and night-time gigs with local bands. Funds from the university, Guild members and the events helped to provide the services. A few of us in the Guild decided to publish the first student magazine called METIOR or the Murdoch Empire Telegraph and Indian Ocean Review.

1993

Student enrolments reach 8,387

1993

First female Professor appointed: A/P Cora Baldock

1993

First Singapore graduation ceremony

1994

Adam Bandt elected Guild President

1994

Opening of the Loneragan Building



Rose Wise Pinter

“They challenged us to think, to question ideas and be unafraid of expressing our own. They supported us in our endeavours in ways I doubt the sandstone edifices would have wished.”

Also in those first years, the decision had been made for us all to have a first year which was aimed at broadening our general world and theoretical knowledge with compulsory electives in the social sciences (Social Inquiry). A wonderful way to get our juices flowing and lust for learning to be satisfied, very much the ethos inspired by the University's namesake Sir Walter Murdoch.

Rather than lengthy exams of rote learning, students were required to be assessed by multiple written (not necessarily typed, albeit that was preferred) assignments as well as oral exams. This was no easy task; the level and length of these assignments was at a much higher level than one might have expected in their first or even third year of undergraduate university. For example, 2,500 words on Phenomenology or a 5,000-word essay on the political economy of the novel was not something to be sneezed at! Our minds were stretched and challenged. We were taught to think and question everything and what a blast that was. The library,

reading and vibrant discussion was our resource then. No Googling, computers or AI for us. I don't think I have had so much fun questioning everything I thought I knew, and if there was a struggle the tutors, lecturers and professors were there at every turn to catch us if we fell. The whole cohort of students and academic staff were 'friends' a great big family, both inside and out of the campus. It was a time when all things seemed possible if you put your mind to it.

This was the ethos that sent many of us in that first cohort out into the world less afraid of following our dreams or creating waves. It produced extraordinary environmentalists, writers, academics, thinkers, historians, politicians, activists, artists, and film makers who were on the cutting edge of those times and who still make an impact in this changing world, and I am very grateful and proud to have been a part of it.

Rose Wise Pinter
BA World Literature 1978

1995

Fred Chaney commences as Chancellor

1995

Alison Humphrey elected Guild President

1995

MBA Program launched in China

1995

20 year anniversary celebrations

1996

Murdoch commences teaching Engineering



Alan Barton – Senior Lecturer in Chemistry – School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences

I chose Murdoch University as it offered the opportunity to have a broader rather than a focused education. I wanted a job in industry not in a laboratory or research function. My Murdoch education educated me perfectly for my future career.

I enrolled in the Mineral science programme, Chemistry and Metallurgy. There were only four of us: David Olney, Herb Elliot, Peter Headley and myself. We all graduated. With the exception of Herb who developed an IT career we have all had dominant positions in the chemical processing and mineral processing Industry.

My very first lecture was in the Energy and Life systems unit given by Dr. Laurie Davidson. It was inspiring to someone that had not studied geography, at a latter part introducing the concept of plate tectonics.

On the mineral science program we were very fortunate with an almost 1:1 student ratio. Prof. Jim Parker, Dr. Alan Barton, Dr. Dave Muir, Dr. Ian MacLeod. It is a great pity Prof. Parker's acetonitrile process for copper refining was never commercialised as far as I know. Dr. Ian MacLeod's passion for electro chemistry was contagious; it helped me greatly in my career.

There is one person, not a member of the academic staff, that the university and students were lucky to have, Doug Clarke. Our interaction with Doug was in lab sessions where he was a demonstrator and supervisor. Doug made all of our lab sessions exciting drawing attention to application of the knowledge we were gaining. I still have a copy of Doug's scheme of wet chemical identification.

Friday afternoons if you were lucky, you might be invited to the Vet student's social gathering. It was a great fellowship of the physical science staff and students catalysed with a few frothies.

My career did not start as planned with the downturn in the mineral industry. My first employment was with CSBP and Farmers Ltd at their Bunbury works. I left CSBP and joined Coogee Chemicals in 1988 where I worked until 2006. I had a very exciting career developing a new chemical process, developing a tank terminal for chemical and petroleum products, and developing onsite chemical manufacturing plants to support the hydro-metallurgical mining industry in Queensland. Then finally a dabble in the oil and gas industry when Coogee acquired the BHP Jabiru and Chalace assets from BHP.

I left Coogee to help a friend build a small oil refinery in Malaysia. The feed stock recycled oil, thermally cracking to produce predominantly a diesel product. The intention then was to solve the Australian recycled oil problem by placing two production plants, one at Geraldton and one at Gladstone. We could not negotiate a long-term supply arrangement with the collectors so abandoned the project. We established export markets for recycled oil as an alternative energy source at Christmas Island and Nauru for the drying of phosphate rock. Eventually the waste collectors found a way to deal directly with phosphate miners.

I have spent the remainder of my career general consulting in chemical engineering and Dangerous Goods.

David Bowden
BSc Chemistry 1978

1996

Rockingham campus construction commences

1996

Steven Schwartz appointed Vice Chancellor

1996

Kelly Shay elected Guild President

1997

Vet Trust established

1997

Singapore Alumni Chapter incorporated



Foundation Professor John Frodsham – Professor of Literature – School of Human Communication

“Lecturers were all of the highest calibre and fountains of specialised knowledge.”

There was an air of excitement when students at UWA heard that a new university was to start enrolling students into courses not available anywhere else in Perth and that it would also cater for external students, whose work commitments did not allow for on campus attendance. Personally, I was interested in Asian Studies with a focus on Chinese.

After enrolment I served on the External Studies Committee under Prof. Geoffrey Bolton and on the Chinese Studies Committee. I particularly enjoyed the spellbinding lectures of Professor John Frodsham, a China expert, among his many talents and interests.

Lecturers were all of the highest calibre and fountains of specialised knowledge. My PhD led to a career change from airport manager to language lecturer and acting Head of the Department of Language Studies at ECU. My Murdoch grounding allowed me to study advanced Chinese at the Beijing Language and Culture University and the National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) in Taipei. In 1977, I led the first Chinese student group on a tour of China. As life member of the Australia China Friendship Society, I have visited China some 15 times. All this was made possible by my studies at Murdoch University. Now, as a 91-year-old, I often think back on my Murdoch experience of 50 years ago. I wish all students and staff great success at this exciting tertiary institution.

Dr. Wolfgang Frick
BA Chinese Studies (Hon) 1981, MA Literature and Communication (1989), PhD Asian Studies (1996).



My favourite memory is from the first few days, sitting in the courtyard in the sun with friends. Not a memory of a particular professor, but I was asked to have lunch with Princess Anne, when she visited the campus. I was also asked to choose the other three students who would be seated for lunch. They gave us three pages of foolscap of protocol rules.

I have warm memories of 1975 Murdoch. I learned it can be good to take a risk on something new.

Carolyn Jonas-Morrison (nee Jonas)
BA Human Development 1978

1997

Kulbardi Centre opens

1997

Student enrolments surpass 10,000

1997

Charles Noonan elected Guild President

1998

Rockingham campus officially opens

1998

Intouch magazine becomes stand-alone print magazine



- A half century of student voices

When *Metior* first appeared on campus in the mid-1970s, it wasn't the polished publication students know today, but the product of a handful of determined voices who wanted to give Murdoch students a platform. There wasn't even a fully formed Guild at that stage - more a loose union of keen students who acted as if they were one. Among them were Mark Ames, Lois Anderson, Jim Sim, and others, who came together to create something that spoke to the issues and ideas shaping campus life.

It was Mark Ames who first secured a modest budget from the University, but everything else was a collective effort. Content, design and editorial decisions were made issue by issue by whoever was willing to contribute, with no staff oversight or censorship.

Lecturers and tutors supported their energy but the work was wholly student-driven. It was initially laid out in the Guild Room using Letraset sheets, Canon typewriters borrowed from friends, and plenty of cut-and-paste ingenuity.

Printing was handled by sympathetic local presses and even the Fremantle-based ACTIV Foundation, while artwork came from students and friends in the wider creative community. What mattered most was persistence. As one of the founding editors Rose Pinter recalls, "It wasn't always easy, but we persisted anyway. It was usually well appreciated and read."

That scrappy, do-it-yourself energy set the tone for what would become *Metior*. The magazine was printed and distributed for 44 straight years, only going digital in August 2019. **Now online as a blog**, *Metior* still carries the original legacy - a voice for students, by students, capturing Murdoch's culture, creativity, dynamism and dissent.

1998

Paula Langley elected Guild President

1998

John Roberts donates over 100 Indigenous artworks to the Art Collection

1999

Phil Harrold elected Guild President

1999

St Ives development approved

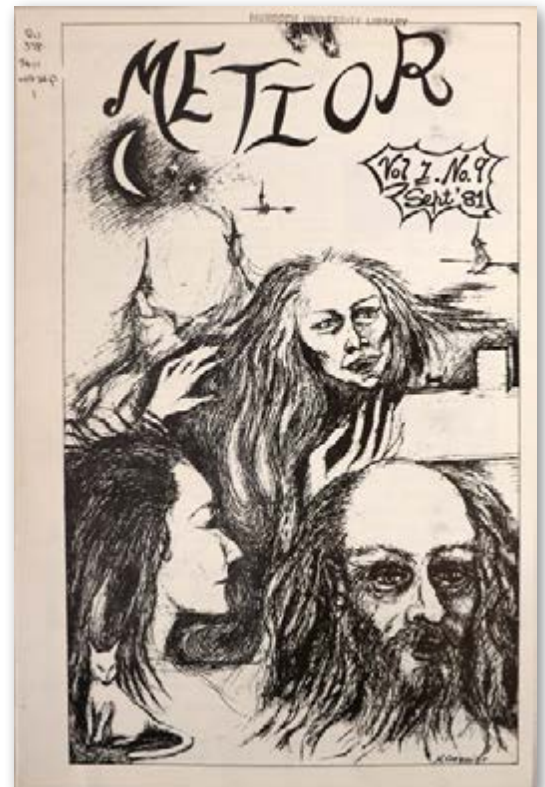
2000

Murdoch College opens

1970s



“It wasn’t always easy, but we persisted anyway. It was usually well appreciated and read.”



1980s



2000

CCIBS opens in partnership with Royal Perth Hospital

2000

Students protesting course cuts occupy Murdoch's Senate Building for nine days

2000

Malaysian Alumni Chapter incorporated

2000

HRH the Princess Royal (Princess Anne) visits the campus

2000

St Ives officially launched

1990s



2000s



2000

Alison Xamon
elected Guild
President

2001

Alumni Careers and
Employment centre
opens on Bush
Court

2001

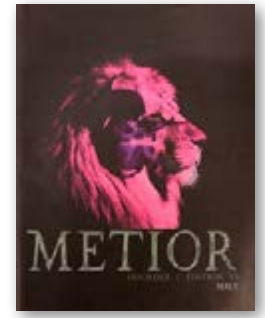
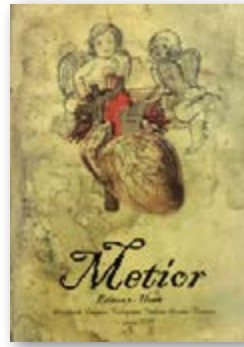
Alisha Ryans-Taylor
elected Guild
President

2001

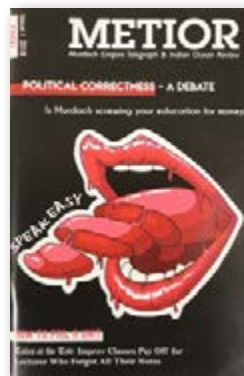
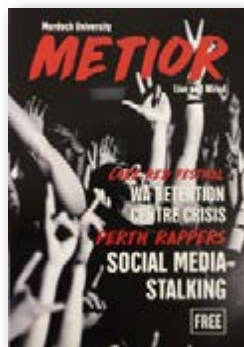
Student enrolments
reach 12,611

2002

Mal Nairn
commences as Vice
Chancellor



2010s



2002

John Yovich
appointed Vice
Chancellor

2002

Geoffrey Bolton
elected Chancellor

2002

Alisha Ryans-Taylor
re-elected as Guild
President

2003

Office of
Development
established

2003

Murdoch co-founds
IRU with five other
universities

Bridging Then & Now

A conversation with Murdoch University's last remaining Foundation Professor.



For this 50th anniversary edition of *Murmur*, we sat down for a chat with Emeritus Professor Brian Hill, the Foundation Professor of the School of Education, who worked at Murdoch for its first 25 years including three terms as School Dean...

So, you're a Perth boy?

Yes, I was born here, in 1934.

And where did you go to school?

Bayswater Primary School, then Perth Modern School.

Did you know then that you were going to go into education?

Given my family's economic situation, it was as well that I was drawn to teaching. The clincher was the availability of teacher's scholarships from the Education Department. I obtained a B.A. in English and History, and a Diploma of Education, from the University of WA. and then proceeded to my first teaching appointment, which was at Albany High School. I also maintained some ongoing part-time graduate study in Education, which continued when I returned to Perth to teach at my old high school.

Then came an invitation from an organisation called Scripture Union to be one of their two travelling secretaries assisting voluntary student groups in the high schools of New South Wales. At first, I was somewhat intimidated by the high competencies of the other travelling secretary, but after my third year on staff, I allayed my qualms by marrying her.

Ah... so that's how you met your wife, Margaret?

Yes. And as I was now also on the brink of accepting an appointment as a lecturer in Education at UWA, our honeymoon consisted primarily of a long drive across the Nullarbor Plain to Perth!

The next big challenge came when Wollongong University College advertised for someone to set up their department of Education studies and took me on. So back across the Nullarbor Plain we travelled. During our Wollongong period I completed a Master's degree with First-class Honours from Sydney University, and reached the point where I was entitled to apply for my first sabbatical leave.

I enrolled for a PhD at the University of Illinois, and we flew there with our three children to take up residence on the campus. Just as I was graduating, I learned that a new university in Perth was advertising

2003

Mal Bradley elected Guild President

2004

Law Building opens

2004

First full-time art curator, Mark Stewart, appointed to the Art Collection

2004

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation donates \$13m for HIV research

2004

Mal Bradley re-elected Guild President



ABOVE: Some of the field caravans in our fleet

LEFT: Brian Hill and wife Margaret 2025.

FAR LEFT: Brian Hill – September 1984. Photo: Peter Walden

“A distinctive vision was coming through in the preliminary university literature. I thought it was a breath of fresh air.”

for foundation staff. It seemed a long shot, but I warmed to the ethos that was being foreshadowed for Murdoch University, and submitted a bid for the Foundation Chair in Education.

When you got the appointment, who were you dealing with at Murdoch?

After returning to Wollongong to begin winding up my affairs there, I was flown to Perth for a consultation of Foundation Professors. Key facilitators were Dan Dunn, the very helpful university secretary, and Stephen Griew, the Foundation Vice Chancellor. They led us through a very daring agenda.

Then, the next year, Margaret and I again drove across the Nullarbor Plain, with our three children (and another in utero!) We arrived in Perth in January 1974.

What was your interest in the Murdoch position? Was it the fact that you understood it was going to try and be a bit different to a mainstream university?

Yes. A distinctive vision was coming through in the preliminary university literature. I thought it was a breath of fresh air. On the Humanities side particularly, there was strong support for it. Opinion on the sciences side was a little less uniform. This showed up when the idea of “Trunk courses” was mooted.

Which were?

These were meant to be first year subjects, each constituting a quarter of the student’s first year load. The idea was to require all enrolled students to include a trunk course during their first year studies, to gain a wider view of where their specialty fitted into the bigger cultural picture.

In many other institutions the students who really mattered were those studying on campus full-time. Part-timers were tolerated, but studying externally was thought by many to be below the dignity of universities.

By contrast, Murdoch was committed to as democratic an enrolment policy as could be accommodated. Given sufficient evidence of potential ability, no applicant should be left out on grounds of age, social class or distance from Perth.

2005

Chiropractic Clinic opens

2005

30th anniversary celebrations

2005

Robert Owen artwork purchased for the 30th anniversary

2005

Freehills Moot Court opens

2005

Banksia Association is launched

You said that in those early days you wanted to marry teacher training with an understanding of teaching at a more scholastic and social level. How did that play out?

Australia-wide, there was a long-entrenched view that universities should only train secondary teachers. And even then, supervision of their teaching practice in schools should be remitted to teachers' colleges.

The Murdoch vision was more egalitarian. In Education particularly, we aimed to bring together teachers working at all levels, involving common understandings of learning processes, and relevant skill-sets. We also wanted to strengthen the association of intellectual understanding of the subjects that students would be teaching with real life in the school classroom.

At one point in the planning year, I approached the Vice-Chancellor to seek support for a modification of my budget to accommodate the building of some specialist caravans. Each would be parked in the grounds of the particular schools involved, and would provide office space in which our supervising staff, called "Tutor-Supervisors", could counsel our trainees, hold seminars as required, and facilitate micro-teaching sessions.

When I put the caravan idea to the VC, his response was lukewarm – money's short, etc.. But when I mentioned that each van would have the university's name boldly printed on its sides, our proposal was given the green light.



School of Education Caravan

Were there other ideas at Murdoch that were considered radical back then?

Linked with the caravan pattern was the way we designed our curriculum and staffing policy. The on-campus study program was organised around the three organising principles of Context, Process and Curriculum.

In Context, for example, the story began with asking what is education? What sort of an institution are we talking about? Is it school? Or home or voluntary club? Units of study drew on philosophical, ethical, historical and comparative aspects of human learning.

In the Process area, relevant scientific disciplines, particularly psychology and sociology, were drawn on to enable the student teacher to understand how and what humans can learn at different ages, and what were the appropriate ways of measuring achievement.

With Curriculum studies, our task was to bring together what to teach and how best to teach it. I believe this three-tiered structure worked well and it was still in place when I retired in 2000.

With the Foundation Professors who were your colleagues in '75, how did you get on as a group?

Initially, as the Murdoch staff were being appointed, there was a lot of "round-tabling". Inter-disciplinary camaraderie prevailed in a way that had not been so evident in my previous experiences of university life. And though the extent of this interaction diminished as each area at Murdoch focused more on its own particular courses and research programs, elements of it endured for the rest of my working life.

Looking back now, were those first five years a special time?

Very much so for me personally. There was a good spirit in the early years. And opportunity to try new ideas and appoint staff who would help you achieve them.

You had more mature students than other universities, did distance learning make higher education more accessible?

I think so. It was particularly helped along by one early appointee. Patrick Guiton was an Englishman who joined us to be the Director of

2005

Peel campus opens

2005

Barbara Whelan
elected Guild
President

2006

Terry Budge
elected Chancellor

2006

Gerry Georgatos
elected Guild
President

2007

Student enrolments
pass 15,000



L-R: Brian Hill, Ted Johnson and Don Smart – May 1979.
Photo: P Walden

“There was a good spirit in the early years. And opportunity to try new ideas and appoint staff who would help you achieve them.”

External Studies. He was approachable, innovative, precise, and worked well with lecturing staff to coordinate the writing of course materials.

How did they assess students for enrolment who were mature or hadn't completed schooling?

Personal interviews were frequently used to determine access into our programs – exploring the applicants' backgrounds and attitudes. Often, the decision was to “Admit them to first year and see how they go.” And a steady stream of competent people moved through the levels.

Was there pressure at the start to increase enrolments?

No more than usual, just a heightened awareness of the general tightening of Federal funding for universities while the Federal Minister, John Dawkins was in office.



The 1975 foundation staff group in Education, photographed in our lounge with its original garish décor.

Standing from left: Sam Hancock (TS), Dr Colin Marsh (SL), Russell Docking (L), Chas Henderson (TS), Brian Hill (Dean). Sitting, from left – Val Kelly (Sec.), Thelma Richardson (Dean's sec.), Christine Nash (TS). TS = Tutor-Supervisor, L = Lecturer, SL = Senior Lecturer.

And you started off with a team of how many in the beginning?

In the first year of teaching, we had about nine staff in the School. Within just three years there were 23.

Did you have to 'sell' Murdoch to potential students?

Before Murdoch opened, the Foundation professors went out in pairs to visit high schools to talk about Murdoch. I was paired with Bob Dunlop, Dean of the Veterinary School. We went to some schools in the southwest, and one day, as we were approaching Albany High School, I said: “Bob, let me show you the room where I first started my teaching career”. Up the steps we went, only to find that the room I had most used had recently been completely burnt out by a delinquent student. “Oh”, mused Bob, “Is that what they thought of you?”

2007

Banksia Association Scholarship established

2007

IIID established with Federal Government grant of \$19.5m

2007

Reece Harley elected Guild President

2007

Learning Common opens

2008

International Study Centre opens in Dubai

The Evolution

1974

Before Murdoch University had a logo, it had an emblem. Captured below by photographer Peter Walden, the emblem combines three scholarly books grouped together. The unique layout evoking a 3D letter M. The emblem had a very short life of around a year as the University was opening.



When it came to the creation of the University's first official logo, a competition was created with ultimately four shield shaped designs shortlisted. The successful design (shown above) was a gold M on a dark red background.

Not long after however, came the idea to include the flower and leaves of the Banksia Grandis within the shield. The idea to incorporate the Banksia came from renowned landscape architect Marion Blackwell who designed the original Murdoch University grounds.

Consequently, at a meeting on 26 February 1976, Murdoch University Senate formally approved the release of the original logo, approving the black and white version shown in the centre of the image above. There was consensus among members and "it was agreed that, while further refinement was necessary, the design was generally acceptable."

2008

Clare Middlemas
elected Guild
President

2008

Mary Moore's
portrait of Emeritus
Professor Geoffrey
Bolton unveiled

2009

Student Village
extensions open

2009

Lotterywest donates
\$5m to IID

2009

Murdoch awarded
\$20m for National
Centre of Excellence
in Desalination

of a Brand



This iconic banksia shield in a shade of maroon remained central to Murdoch's visual identity for over two decades, symbolising its distinct character and connection to its environment.

This adaption of the logo was in place for nearly a decade until the release of the 'Discoverer's Welcome' branding campaign of 2007 which saw new versions of the visual identity appear such as the one shown below. The red and green became lighter with an elevated saturation on both.



In 1997 the logo went through its next evolution with new colours emerging and red replacing the maroon as Murdoch's principal brand colour. (See below).



During the 2010s, the logo refined further with the removal of the green and gold and the emergence of the two coloured red and white incarnation.

This remained in place until May 2021 when the current logo was launched. The bold new visual identity replaced the banksia emblem with a simplified 'MU' mark to appeal to a younger demographic and reflect the University's modern, future-focused identity. The Banksia Grandis symbol, much beloved by staff and alumni, became the official University crest and still features on some official university documentation.

2025

2009

Basha Stasak elected Guild President

2010

Vet Surgery Teaching Building opens

2010

Murdoch Business School and MIT buildings completed

2010

Alumni Annual Appeal commences

2010

Creepy artwork installed in ECL courtyard



2010

Brendon Stewart
(Jan-Mar) / Brodie
Lewis (Apr-Dec)
elected Guild
Presidents

2011

Gary Martin
appointed interim
Vice Chancellor

2011

Launch of iVEC
Supercomputer

2011

Distinguished
Alumni Awards
commence

2011

Richard Higgott
appointed Vice
Chancellor

Murdoch's new heartbeat



Boola Katitjin. Perhaps the most significant infrastructure development at Murdoch in its half century of operation. The academic building has pushed engineering boundaries to become the largest timber structure building in Western Australia.

2011

School of Engineering and Energy building opens

2011

Brodie Lewis re-elected Guild President

2011

School of Chiropractic and Sports Science building opens

2012

Bec Thompson elected Guild President

2012

Fundraising campaign to purchase Timothy Cook painting launched

Although it has been open since Semester One 2023, we understand many Murdoch alumni will not have set foot in this incredible building. If you are in the Perth area you really should consider paying a visit.

Boola Katitjin, a Whadjuk Noongar name meaning 'lots of learning', stands on country that has been a place of learning for tens of thousands of years. It is Murdoch University's landmark teaching and learning hub. It's a purpose-built, sustainably driven building that has quickly become both a campus focal point and a national exemplar for mass-timber design. The building was conceived to unlock the geographical centre of the campus and provide multiple, flexible, student-centred learning spaces. Goal achieved!

Structurally and environmentally, Boola Katitjin breaks new ground. It is Western Australia's first large-scale mass engineered timber building of its kind on a university campus, using exposed engineered timber to reduce embodied carbon and create unique interiors that use timber, greenery, and open, light-filled spaces to make people feel grounded, calm and linked to the surrounding landscape. The design promotes natural ventilation through tall breezeways, extensive native landscaping and stormwater infiltration, and was targeted to achieve a 6-Star Green Star Design rating.



2012

Student enrolments surpass 20,000

2012

Federal Government awards Murdoch \$5m for student participation in regions

2013

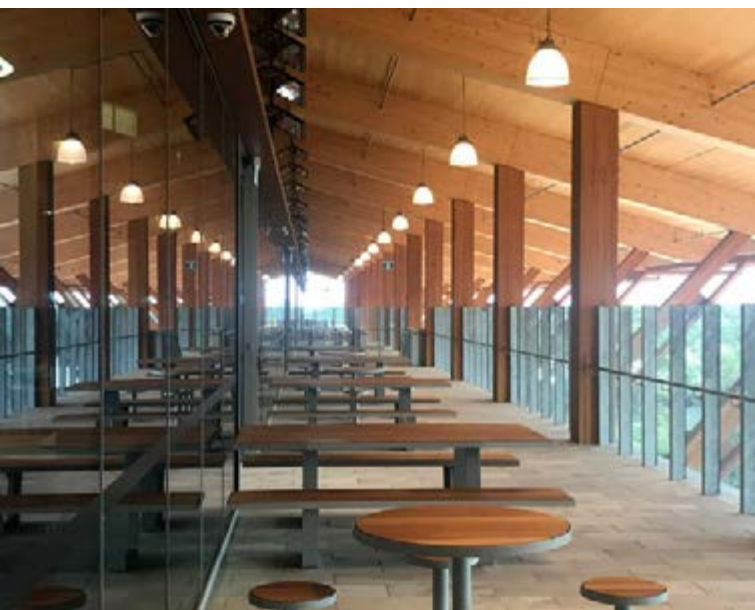
Sir Walter Murdoch School of Public Policy and International Affairs opens

2013

Alumni Annual Appeal Scholarship established

2013

David Flanagan elected Chancellor



Boola Katitjin, a Whadjuk Noongar name meaning ‘lots of learning’, stands on country that has been a place of learning for tens of thousands of years.

On the technology front, Boola Katitjin introduced immersive, tech-enabled learning (including Australia’s early adoption of Technology Enabled Learning desks) and a suite of 21 large, flat-floor teaching spaces, labs and industry collaboration zones designed to support hybrid learning. These features position the building to accommodate a significant proportion of Murdoch’s teaching requirements, while offering long-term flexibility.

Not long after opening, the building began to secure architectural and design awards. In addition to several national awards, it has earned international acclaim, most notably receiving the Higher Education and Research Global Award at the 2023 World Architecture Festival in Singapore. This prestigious honour recognises the building as one of the finest university facilities worldwide, celebrating its innovative use of mass timber, commitment to sustainability, and student-centred design. Design and architecture publications often refer to it as a model for the future of higher-education spaces.

The building has proved immensely popular with students, staff and the Murdoch community from the outset. It is often overlooked how places can make us feel and it’s evident that the building has a special, warm welcoming feel to it that simply makes you happy to stay. There is something about Boola as it is sometimes known, that makes it pleasurable to be in and not just to learn. It is the perfect place to immerse yourself if you want to study quietly, meet a friend, read a book, grab coffee or sushi, have a meeting, work from home without the home, sit and take in the panoramic views, scroll on your phone, watch the digital art installations or simply just sit and take a moment from your day. Why not pay a visit and see if you feel the same?

2013

Dubai Alumni Chapter established

2013

Whitby Falls farm lease signed

2013

Bec Thompson re-elected Guild President

2014

Andrew Taggart appointed Acting Vice Chancellor

2014

Roland Belford elected Guild President

SLICES OF HISTORY



Murdoch University Special Collections has a vast and ever-increasing digital library of photographs from the last 50 years. So, please enjoy just a tiny snippet of campus life since 1975.

2014

Development and Alumni Relations office moves opposite the New Fiona Stanley Hospital

2015

Reconciliation Action Plan launched

2015

First Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander alumni reunion held

2015

Raeesah Khan elected Guild President

2015

Think Murdoch marketing plan launched



LIBRARY STAFF 1977



^ The Bookshop 1975

< Carpenter/Joiner Derek Laing puts the finishing touch to a new sign off the South Street entrance - February 1980

2016

US-based Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for a new treatment for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy developed by Murdoch researchers, which is demonstrating amazing results and heralded as a new frontier in the treatment of DMD

2016

Professor Eeva Leinonen is appointed as Vice Chancellor, becoming the first female to hold the role at Murdoch University



^ Construction of Biological Sciences building 1977



^ Banksia Garden and Amenities Building including The Tavern 1995



^ Patsy Hallen conducting an outdoor tutorial February 1975

2017

Multi-disciplinary environmental research institute, the Harry Butler Institute (HBI) is launched

2017

Murdoch University Library named in honour of Foundation Professor Geoffrey Bolton

2018

Murdoch became the first Australian university to deliver courses in Myanmar



FOUNDATION STUDENTS 1975



2018

The Murdoch-led Australian National Phenome Centre launches, with the goal of transforming the health of millions of Australians and billions more around the world

2019

Murdoch veterinary alumnus and Thai Cave rescue diver Craig Challen named joint Australian of the Year



^ The Library Loans Desk - 1980s



2019

SimLab, the virtual classroom technology developed at Murdoch to train young teachers, won the Educational Technology category at the prestigious AFR Higher Education Awards

2020

Murdoch University secured Athena SWAN Bronze Accreditation as part of the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) initiative



^ Students in Bush Court April 1988



^ Bookshop Manager Bob Litchfield photographing Annette Backshall performing in Bush Court June 1989

∨ The Amphitheatre
- October 1988



2020

Murdoch's Professor Rhonda Marriott was awarded an Order of Australia for her contribution to Indigenous health

2021

Professor Jane den Hollander AO appointed interim Vice Chancellor

2021

The world's first clear solar glass greenhouse opened at Murdoch's new Grains Research Precinct



THE BOOKSHOP 1980S



^ The Bookshop interior -
Orientation Day February 1988



Conducting a tutorial in the
School of Social Inquiry - 1987 >

2022

The Ngangk Yira Institute for Change was launched at Murdoch University to raise awareness of the health gap that exists between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the rest of the Australian population

2023

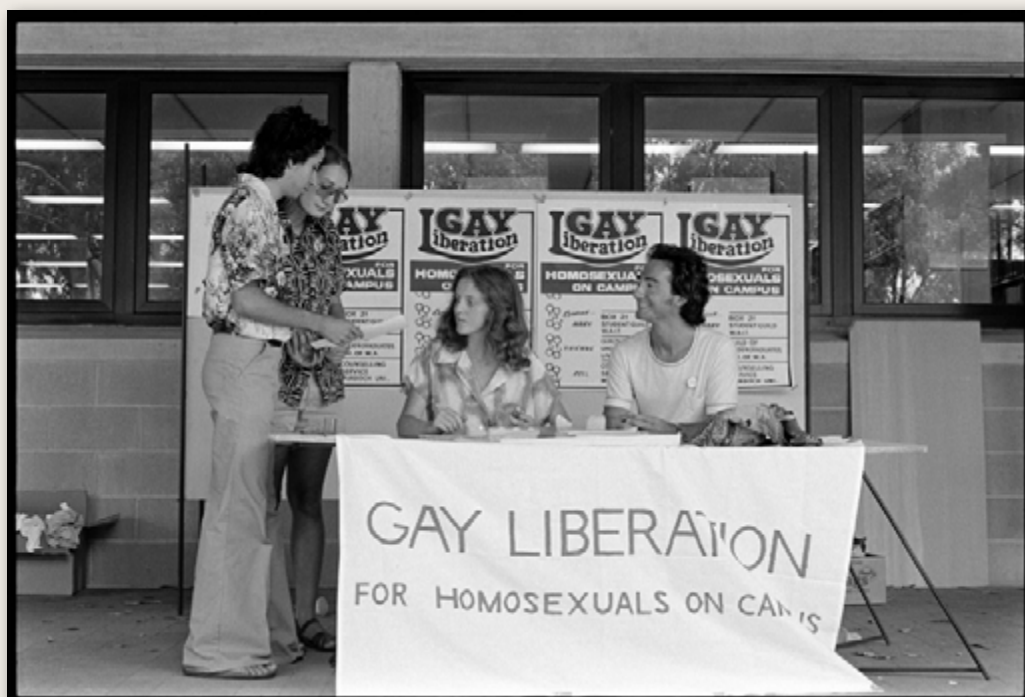
New \$135 million Boola Katitjin teaching and learning facility opens on campus. Numerous global architecture awards follow



Concrete sign
at the South
Street entrance
December 1988 >



Looking east
down the
Broadwalk 1980s >



MARKET DAY 1975

2024

Murdoch University celebrates its 50th anniversary since inauguration

2024

Bower Court renamed in honour of Western Australian landscape architect Dr Marion Blackwell AM, whose visionary designs of 50 years ago helped create the University's renowned 'bush campus in the city'

2025

Murdoch receives largest gift ever given to a WA university to develop new Vet School

**Welcome back
to the Murdoch
University community**

**with a 10% alumni discount
on postgraduate studies.**

Ngala kwop biddi.
Building a brighter future, together.



LEARN MORE