

CHANCELLOR,

I have the honour to present to you for the award of the degree of Doctor of Letters, Honoris Causa, Patricia Ann Miller, Officer of the Order of Australia, Deputy to the Administrator of the Northern Territory.

This award will recognise outstanding service to the Northern Territory community, particularly in the fields of Aboriginal affairs, inter-cultural understanding, the media, education and sport.

Pat Miller was born in Alice Springs in 1947, into a family that has notable associations with Central Australia. Her father, Milton Liddle, was the son of Bill Liddle, a pioneer bushman of Scottish descent. Milton's mother, Mary, was an Arrernte woman. Pat's mother, Polly, was an Alyawarra woman from the country around Hatches Creek and Kurrundi station, north east of Alice Springs.

Pat Miller has always been proud of her mixed descent and she has drawn strength and inspiration from the full diversity of her personal heritage. In particular, she was taught by her gentle and tolerant father to always be forgiving, never embittered. From the quiet strength of her mother she learned to strive to bring about change by the force of example and considered debate, always speaking with a balanced and reasonable voice. She learned her parents' lessons well.

In her early childhood she lived at Angas Downs station and then in Alice Springs. She became an excellent student at the Hartley Street school, then at the Alice Springs High School. She was well qualified for higher education but unfortunately her family's financial circumstances made it impossible for her to undertake post-school education, which was then only available interstate. However, she did undertake further education by correspondence from an institute in South Australia.

While she was still at school she was present when her mother Polly was the subject of a cruel rebuff because she was Aboriginal. Pat then resolved that she would devote her life to the achievement of a better society in which such incidents would not occur. That resolution was made at a challenging time of tension and confusion due to rapid changes in the status of Aboriginal people, changes which caused anxiety and uncertainty in all sectors of the community. The situation called for inspired leadership and Pat was one of the people who provided that leadership, always by example rather than exhortation.

That example was conspicuous as early as 1967, when she was the only Aborigine among fifteen young Central Australian women selected as ambassadors for the region's tourism industry. Since then she has maintained an active interest in the presentation of the Centre as

a visitor destination which can positively project Australian Aboriginality and facilitate inter-cultural understanding.

In 1971 she married David Miller, with whom she has two children, Allan and Steven. In 1974 Pat began attending meetings of the embryonic Aboriginal Legal Aid organisation, then an umbrella group which was striving to deal with the consequences of the departure of Aboriginal people from pastoral stations and their movement into towns, especially Alice Springs.

In 1978 she joined the staff of Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service. She began in a clerical position but in 1982 she became Director of the service, which position she continues to hold. She has always taken a broad view of the roles of the service, encouraging educational and other programs designed to avert the need for individual clients to access legal services.

Her primary concern has always been to help Aboriginal people to live effectively and happily in a post-traditional world, while steadfastly maintaining their Aboriginality. She has re-assured Aborigines that the achievement of personal advances such as literacy or the enjoyment of full legal rights do not mean that Aboriginality has to be abandoned. She has consistently advocated and demonstrated that Aborigines can and should bring their traditional culture with them into the contemporary world. She maintains that when Aborigines acquire wider personal skills and a broader outlook they become more effective as Aborigines and are better placed to conserve their traditional culture.

Pat Miller has always accepted an obligation to be involved in the wider community as a means of breaking down barriers and encouraging tolerance. She has been actively involved in sport as a participant and administrator. She has represented the Territory and Alice Springs in hockey and basketball. She has adopted a leading role in mentoring Alice Springs children and mature age students, particularly in encouraging them to stay at school so that they may gain more choices in life. She was actively involved in the development and running of the Aboriginal Child Care agency when it was first established in Alice Springs.

She has served on the board of the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association for 20 years and on the board of Imparja Television for 16 years, seven of those years as Chairman. She has also served on primary and secondary school councils, the Red Cross Alice Springs committee, the board of the Institute of Aboriginal Development and on the Arrernte Council. Pat is also a Director of the Lhere Artepe Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate Enterprise Board.

In 1995 she was named Aboriginal of the Year by NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islander's Day Observance Committee). In 1997 she received a further award from NAIDOC to recognise her contribution to Aboriginal organisations in Central Australia in the 30 years since the landmark 1967 constitutional referendum on Aboriginal matters.

In 2003 she was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship by Rotary International "in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and

friendly relations among people of the world”.

In 2001 she was awarded a Centenary Medal for service to the community through many organisations and groups. She was named the Northern Territory’s “Australian of the Year” for 2004. Also in 2004 she was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in recognition of her service to the community as a significant contributor to debate on issues relating to native title, social justice, education, legal services, health and welfare and the media.

In 2002 there was widespread community approval and satisfaction when Pat Miller was appointed Deputy to the Administrator of the Northern Territory. She continues to carry out the duties attached to that office with dignity and distinction.

Pat Miller has committed her life to helping Aboriginal people deal with change but always keeping their culture; and to resolving community differences and social issues by participation, leadership and personal example. Her service and her example have been outstanding.

#### CHANCELLOR

In recognition of her notable service to Australia and to the Northern Territory in particular; in acknowledgment of her outstanding example and understanding, tolerance and reconciliation in the whole community; in gratitude for her general and in recognition of her contribution as Deputy to the Administrator of the Northern Territory, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters, Honoris Causa – Patricia Ann Miller