

CHANCELLOR,

I have the honour to present to you for the award of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*
ALAN WALKER.

Ground breaking Australian paediatrician, Dr Alan Walker AM, sadly passed away on April 11, 2007. Alan was the head of paediatrics in Darwin Hospital and Royal Darwin Hospital from 1967 to 1996.

Dr Walker was a determined and well respected paediatrician, both here in the Northern Territory and in many renowned organisations throughout the country and overseas. Dr Walker was a member of The College of Physicians, a Fellow of the Australian Medical Association, a founding member of the Territory's AMA branch, and a councillor with the Red Cross.

In 1967, Dr Walker made a temporary move to Darwin to undertake a two year contract as the first paediatrician in the Northern Territory and never left.

During his 40 years in the Northern Territory, Dr Walker's achievements were vast, and he had a major impact on both his patients and the medical profession here. One major accomplishment was developing Darwin Hospital into a recognised centre of excellence in paediatrics. Undoubtedly, the highest of all of Dr Walker's achievements were the countless children's lives that he saved and healed in his time here.

In 1967 the Northern Territory was faced with a volatile public health situation; Aboriginal infant mortality rates were six times higher than what was considered acceptable in a western country. Five years on, this number had been halved and while there were many people involved in reducing this figure, Dr Walker has been credited with driving such a dramatic fall in infant morbidity.

Dr Walker was one of the first medical professionals to acknowledge the health crisis faced by the Indigenous Australians, and set about improving the health care available to the young of the Aboriginal population.

Through Dr Walker's pioneering efforts the Darwin Hospital was recognised nationally for the work being done to improve the health and lives of Aboriginal children. This in turn attracted much needed doctors and nurses to work in the Northern Territory.

Throughout his career, Dr Walker worked tirelessly to improve the health of children, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, in this part of the world, and improved access to paediatric services. In many ways, the dramatic fall in Aboriginal infant mortality seen since the 1970's

are almost entirely due to his work in setting up excellent hospital care and, in turn, paediatric specialist services in and visits to remote Indigenous communities.

CHANCELLOR,

In recognition of his distinguished medical career in the service of the people of the northern territory, particularly the field of paediatrics, I ask you to admit to the degree of doctor of science, *honoris causa* ALAN COURTENAY WALKER