

CHANCELLOR,

I have the honour to present to you for the award of the Degree of Doctor of the University, Honoris Causa, Leila Valerie Asche, Doctor of Philosophy, Member of the Order of Australia, Dame of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

This award recognises outstanding service and achievement in the field of microbiological science in general, and many notable contributions to the Australian community, and to the Northern Territory and the University including the Menzies School of Health Research.

Leila Valerie James was born at Rupanyup, near Horsham in western Victoria, in 1927. She was educated at several country schools and at Ballarat High School before she enrolled to study science at Melbourne University. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1953. In 1955 she was awarded a Master of Science degree and then in 1975 she won the degree of Doctor of Philosophy for original research work on infections in spinally injured people.

Between 1953 and 1974 she worked as Tutor, Demonstrator and then Principal Tutor in microbiology within the University of Melbourne. Between 1962 and 1970 she also worked as a consultant to industry. She continued her academic work and in 1975 she was appointed Microbiologist in Charge at the Queen Victoria Medical Centre in Melbourne. She also served as Treasurer of the Australian Society of Microbiology; Honorary Senior Lecturer at Monash University and Honorary Senior Lecturer at Sydney University.

She has had a remarkable association with Janet Clarke Hall, a residential college within the University of Melbourne. She was, progressively, a resident student at the college, then resident tutor, President of the Former Students Association, a member of the Governing Council of the College and, in 1986, Chairman of the College Centenary Committee. She is now a Fellow of the College.

Her contribution to microbiology has been recognised by her appointment as national treasurer of the Australian Society for Microbiology for a period of seven years. She convened a Trust which aims to raise funds to provide scholarships for young microbiologists. She also edited six editions of the annual publication "Recent Advances in Microbiology". She has authored more than forty papers that were published in scholarly publications. In 1991 she received the Distinguished Service Award of the Australian Society for Microbiology.

She has delivered many scientific papers to conferences and gatherings. Her most recent contributions in this respect have been a paper on melioidosis in the Northern Territory,

delivered in Singapore in 2005, and a paper delivered in Greece in 2007 on vaccines and litigation related to them.

In 1958 she married the then Melbourne barrister Austin Asche. The couple has two children, Harry who holds a Ph. D., and Wendy, who holds a Masters and is currently a Ph.D. student. The children were both born in Melbourne.

In 1986 Valerie came with Austin to live in the Northern Territory. In that year she was appointed Senior Research Officer within the Microbiology Unit at the Menzies School of Health Research, and Sessional Microbiologist at Royal Darwin Hospital. She held these positions until 1994. During that period and under her leadership, the Microbiology Unit published numerous papers and articles, including the first paper published in the southern hemisphere to report on the isolation of *Chlamydia pneumoniae*. When she retired from this work she was awarded the Menzies School of Health Research Medallion, for outstanding service to the School.

In 1994 Dr. Asche was appointed to the Governing Board of the Menzies School of Health Research and she was a member of that Board until 2005.

In 1993 Austin and Valerie Asche moved into Government House for the duration of Austin's three year term as Administrator of the Northern Territory. During this period Valerie became patron of at least 35 community organisations. Valerie saw that her role was to support, exhort and encourage these organisations.

The wide range of organisations which benefited from her active support included the Country Women's Association, the National Heart Foundation, the Northern Territory Research and Development Advisory Committee, the Ethics Committee of the Northern Territory University, the Legal Aid Commission and the Governing Board of the Menzies School of Health Research. She was a foundation member of both the Museum and Art Galleries Foundation and the Government House Foundation.

She has also served as President of the Australian Federation of University Women and Chairman of the Northern Territory branch of the Australian Society for Microbiology. She continues as patron of the Variety Club and is an active member of Rotary.

She remains the Patron of six Northern Territory organisations and is actively involved with many others. She was Chairman of Community Radio 8 TopFM and Chairman of the Australian South East Asian Rehabilitation Foundation, which sends medical teams to Timor and Flores.

In 2002 she chaired the Task Force on Illicit Drugs in the Northern Territory, commissioned by the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.

For many years she has pursued a keen interest in history, especially the history of the Northern Territory. She has been active within the Historical Society of the Northern Territory and has published three books on the histories of the James and Asche families.

In the year 2000 she was named the Northern Territory's Senior Australian Citizen of the Year, to acknowledge and celebrate her national and international contributions to microbiology and for her active patronage and membership of community organisations. In addition, in 1998 she received the Chief Minister's Women's Achievement Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Northern Territory.

In 2001 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for service to science, particularly in the field of microbiology, and to the community of the Northern Territory.

Now of an age when most people have long been retired, Valerie remains active on behalf of the Northern Territory and committed to its welfare and advancement.

CHANCELLOR

In recognition of her outstanding contribution to the science of microbiology and of her many notable contributions to the Northern Territory community, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of the University, *Honoris Causa* – Leila Valerie Asche