

WILLIAM BRYDEN
CBE, MSc, BA, PhD(Edin), DSc(Tas)

Dr William Bryden died on 16th December, 1992, at Buderim on Queensland's Sunshine Coast at the age of 87. He had lived a full and meaningful life of challenge and great diversity. In the latter years of his retirement at Buderim he was first able to enjoy swimming and surfing on the Sunshine Coast's lovely beaches and playing lawn bowls, until he was sadly attacked by severe arthritis. But in his crippled body there remained an alert and enquiring mind.

William Bryden was born on 30th December 1904 at Martinborough in New Zealand. He graduated at the University of Canterbury as a Master of Science with Honours. He later undertook post graduate studies at the University of Edinburgh where he completed a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in the Genetics Institute. His major contribution to the study of genetics was recognised in 1936 by his election to the Fellowship of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. At the University he was a keen rugby player and was awarded a Rugby Blue. While in Scotland he married a Scots girl, Muriel MacLaren, who gave him unremitting loyal support throughout his subsequent diverse career activities and tended him with loving devotion in his retirement and ultimate disablement. She and their three sons, Peter, Michael and John, have survived him. Peter retired recently as manager of a branch of the Commonwealth Bank in Tasmania. Michael has had a distinguished academic career and is currently Professor of Veterinary Anatomy at the University of Sydney, and John, a PhD in Agriculture, is a private consultant in Auckland, New Zealand.

After completion of his University studies, Dr Bryden taught at several public schools in New Zealand and England before emigrating to Australia and taking up an academic appointment at the University of Melbourne, where he lectured in Zoology for six years. During that period he held office as Warden of the University Union. In 1939 he was appointed Headmaster of Knox Grammar School, one of the most prestigious of Australia's public schools. With his abiding love and understanding of young people and a deep interest in moulding their characters, he made a fine headmaster. He held this post until 1953 when he accepted appointment as Director of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. With imaginative vigour he transformed it into an institution of real scientific and cultural value to the community. Until his retirement as Director in 1972 he held the office of Honorary Secretary of the Tasmanian Royal Society, which had its headquarters at the Museum. He took great pride in his association with the Royal Society as the first Branch of the Society to be established outside the United Kingdom in the 19th Century. In a small community with limited membership, Dr Bryden struck a nice balance between the scientific and historical activities of the Society.

During his time in Tasmania Dr Bryden's breadth of experience, his wisdom and qualities of leadership made him much in demand by numerous bodies in the community. He generously gave his time and knowledge to a variety of community activities including Chairmanship of the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, Chairman of the State Advisory Committee of the CSIRO, Chairman of the State Committee of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, President of the Hobart Repertory Theatre Society, Member of the Great Barrier Reef Committee, Member of the Tasmania University Council, and Member of the Churchill Fellowship Awards Committee. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Tasmanian community he was made a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 1963. In 1972 he was given the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science by the University of Tasmania.

This gentle scientist has left us. But his memory will long be treasured by his family and those of us who were privileged to be counted among his friends, and who had enjoyed the warmth of his friendship and his never failing and infectious sense of humour.

STANLEY BURBURY

*(The Honourable Sir Stanley Burbury, KCMG, KCVO, KBE, Governor of Tasmania
and ex-officio President of the Royal Society of Tasmania, 1973-82)*