

Congratulations!

Professor David Watters OBE: inducted into Membership of the Court of Honour

A graduate of Edinburgh University in 1977, David completed his surgical Fellowship training in Scotland by 1982 and for the next 17 years, had the extraordinary experience of working in South Africa (1982-1984), Zambia (1985-1990), Hong Kong (1991) and finally in Papua New Guinea (1992-2000). He developed into an expert surgeon particularly in surgery of tropical diseases. When appointed Professor of Surgery in Port Moresby, he established a post graduate Surgical Training Program for the national and regional medical graduates from the Pacific. His expertise is demonstrated in his publications including 5 books on Surgery in the Tropics and these books are still relevant to surgical training in the Pacific. In 2012, he was awarded an OBE in Papua New Guinea in the Queen's Birthday Honours, for service to the University of PNG Medical School.

He was appointed Professor of Surgery, University of Melbourne at Barwon Health in Geelong in 2000. This recognised that having worked for 17 years in hospitals with very limited resources; he was still at the highest level of clinical and academic surgery.

At Barwon Health, Geelong, David joined the Endocrine and Colorectal Services and supported clinical research in areas such as the International multi-centre trial on the prevention of colorectal polyps. He has been Divisional Medical Director of Surgery since 2002. He established a quality undergraduate and postgraduate surgical educational program. In line with his past experience he developed his University Surgical Department as a Centre of excellence. He inspired colleagues and trainee surgeons to work in the developing world and welcomed many trainee surgeons from the Pacific Islands and PNG to develop their specialist skills.

David authored and published two books on surgical history: *Stitches in Time* (2013), chronicling two centuries of surgery in PNG, and *Anzac Surgeons of Gallipoli* (2015). He has been a prodigious researcher and author, publishing 85 papers in peer reviewed medical journals since arriving in Australia in 2000, in addition to 83 articles published prior to 2000, reflecting his experience in developing countries.

Through the surgical network he was seen as a talented surgical leader and was invited to join RACS committees such as its Surgical Audit Task-force (2000-2005) and the Victorian Safety and Quality Committee (2000-2005). He was elected to the RACS Council (2007-2016). During this time he was appointed Chair of the International Committee (2007-2012) and then Chair of the Professional Development Board (2012-2014). He was elected Vice President (2014-2015) and then President (2015-2016).

During his year as President he had to deal with the very challenging issue of Bullying and Sexual Harassment by surgeons in some hospitals. As President, David was the spokesman for the Council and started the implementation of the recommendations of the Expert advisory Group.

This started with a public apology. The "Building Respect, Improving patient Safety" was designed.

David Watters' life has always been as an activist. Despite the difficult challenges encountered during his early years in Africa and PNG working in hospitals with limited resources, the patients in these communities were always able to receive the care they needed. Whilst working in a developed country such as Australia, he has not forgotten the problems in the less developed countries. The Global Health Initiative is an effort by interested surgeons and anaesthetists worldwide, to promote simple, safe surgery as a human right for everyone. David has championed this issue within the RACS network over the years that he has been on Council, organised international fora and symposia at the College to progress the Global Health Initiative and has been instrumental in helping the Australian and Pacific representatives at the World Health Organisation (WHO) to lobby for recognition that the lack of simple safe surgery is a greater cause of mortality than most issues of the Millennium Goals such as deaths from HIV/AIDS and Malaria. Currently David is leading a regional program to monitor the progress towards universal health coverage in the Pacific and South East Asian region. This aim is to lobby politicians to recognise deficiencies in their health systems and try to increase funding from internal resources or outside donors to meet the standard for access to simple and safe surgery.

It is with great pleasure that we present Professor David Watters to be inducted into the Court of Honour.

Citation kindly provided by Professor David Scott AM FRACS and Mr Phil Truskett AM FRACS.

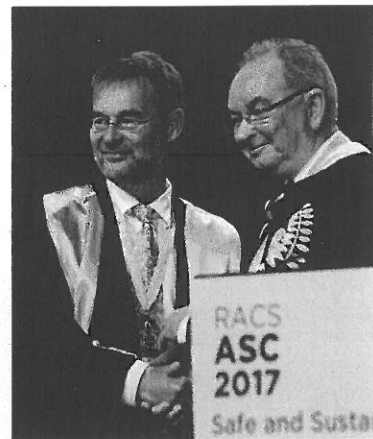


Image:
Past Presidents
Professor David
Watters OBE and Mr
Phil Truskett AM.