



Tribute to Professor Emeritus Kwong Lee Dow AO, AM, FACE

This Tribute prepared by the Old Agriculture Fellows Society (OAFS) at the University of Melbourne is to honour the contribution that Professor Emeritus Kwong Lee Dow has made to agricultural education within his distinguished career as a leading authority in education development and leadership. He has influenced generations of educators and students, and in addition has applied his calm leadership to the Institute of Land and Food Resources (ILFR) during a critical interlude in May 1999 until March 2000.

Kwong was born in Melbourne in 1938 and growing up, spent a lot of time with his grandparents who lived in Shepparton. After secondary education at Camberwell and Melbourne High Schools, Kwong's long association with the University of Melbourne started as a student in 1956, graduating with an honours Science degree in Chemistry in 1959. He undertook a Dip Ed in 1960, started full-time employment in the Education Department in 1961 and completed the BEd in 1963 on a part-time basis while working. He went on to teach chemistry at Melbourne High School and the Secondary Teachers College until his secondment in 1964 to the University's Chemistry School as a team member on a major secondary school curriculum project which led to publication of the textbook – Chemistry, a Structural View.

He officially joined the University of Melbourne in 1966 as a Senior Lecturer in what was to become the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, and then went on to become Professor of Education at the University in 1973 and Dean of Education in 1978 where he oversaw the University's amalgamation with the Melbourne College of Advanced Education in 1989. This major restructure was an extremely challenging exercise, as many staff faced loss of their jobs but Kwong's leadership, capacity to manage change, immeasurable patience and collaborative availability built a new and successful restructured Faculty. Kwong's measured approach through this process led to him overseeing, in 1999/2000, a consolidation year within the Institute of Land and Food Resources (ILFR) after its major amalgamation and first stage of restructuring. His appointment was conducted concurrently with his role as Deputy Vice-Chancellor, to which he had been appointed with responsibility for human resources, in 1998.

The University's Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry had merged with the six colleges of the Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture, and operating as ILFR, was at the second stage of restructuring, which had been derailed by staff backlash. As related in an updated

history of '[Agricultural Education in Victoria](#)': "like each Dean from the 1990s, he was confronted by misreporting in the rural press and lively rural meetings. Ever calm in the face of criticism, Kwong became the face of the University outside Melbourne, strategically mentioning his Shepparton roots to establish regional authority." Kwong's personal qualities coupled with his experience in education and with mergers helped to stabilise the situation. Occupying the office between Deans Falvey (March 1995 to May 1999) and Richardson (March 2000 to February 2005), Kwong's interlude is recalled today for its masterful preparation of the Faculty for its next stage of restructuring.

Kwong returned to his DVC role in full-time capacity in April 2000 and was soon to serve as Vice-Chancellor through 2004, guiding the University's response to the Government's higher education reforms. Among his various other involvements with the University, Kwong has served as a member of Council, Vice-Chair and Chair of the Academic Board, a member of the Council of International House for 20 years (as Chair for seven years), a member of the Board of Management of Melbourne University Press, and Chair of the Board of Management of the Asia Education Foundation. His extramural involvements have included: the Australian Multicultural Foundation Board, the Victorian Universities and Schools Examination Board, the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education, the Victorian Board of Studies and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Kwong has also been appointed to numerous Commonwealth government bodies focused on issues ranging from higher education financing and policy to Indigenous education and was a member of the Australian OECD Advisory Committee on Education. In addition, he has served on the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation, and advised institutions in Singapore, New Zealand, and Saudi Arabia. His wider contributions have been recognised in his appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia in 1984 and as an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2012.

Kwong's legacy is evident in the University's naming a building for him, and in the Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars program that has assisted thousands of talented students. Kwong was recently celebrated at a Faculty of Education Staff and Students' Awards Ceremony for 60 years of contribution to the University of Melbourne. Professor Glyn Davis, Interim Vice-Chancellor, paid tribute to Kwong at the Awards Ceremony.

The OAFs are proud to include Kwong in their ongoing fellowship as one who has contributed to agricultural education.

