

## **Citation for Professor Paul Hughes AM FACE August 2008 Graduation Ceremony**

Chancellor, the University of South Australia confers the honorary title of Emeritus Professor upon retired academic staff holding the title of Professor who have given distinguished service to the University.

Professor Hughes AM retired from the University in June this year following a distinguished 43 year career in Aboriginal Education. Ten of these years were with the University of South Australia and its predecessor institutions.

Professor Hughes has an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Flinders University and a Masters Degree in Education from Harvard University. He was the first South Australian Aboriginal to be promoted to Professor. His career has been as a teacher, leader, policy maker, academic, consultant and researcher on Indigenous education issues worldwide.

Throughout his career, Professor Hughes has influenced and led the discussion on the education of Aboriginal children. He has been a pioneer, delivering keynote addresses focusing on curriculum development in Aboriginal Education and the education of the Aboriginal child in the early 70s.

Paul started the discussion in Australia from an Aboriginal perspective on the lack of participation in, and, quality of the provision of education for Aboriginal children. His passion and commitment to education and the provision of education for Aboriginal people cannot be questioned.

Professor Hughes' remarkable career includes a number of significant achievements. Some of his earlier achievements and milestones include:

- Initiating, in 1976, the first National Conference of Teachers of Aboriginal Children and contributing to the National Inquiry into Teacher Education in 1979.

- Being appointed to the South Australian College of Advanced Education as the Coordinator of the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program, the first Aboriginal program of its kind in Australia. This program was then used as a model for the Higher Education Sector throughout Australia.
- Influencing the commissioning of major research projects on Aboriginal studies that identified the principles which now underpin the ongoing work around Indigenous studies being managed by education systems today.

Paul has also brought the pedagogical issues for Aboriginal children to a higher level of scholarly discussion.

As an Aboriginal academic, Paul has championed the development of the Indigenous academy in the Colleges of Advanced Education and later the University of South Australia as well as at both State and Commonwealth government levels. Professor Hughes' achievements have paved the way for the following initiatives:

- The formation of the University's David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research, employing amongst the largest number of Indigenous academics nationally and providing for four individual business, research and scholarly portfolios to influence our nation's current political, educational and social fabric.
- UniSA becoming a world leader in the development of Indigenous content as a compulsory and assessable component in all undergraduate degrees in higher education.
- UniSA being a significant contributor to global debates on Indigenous Knowledge and thought in higher education.

- The transformation of insular traditional forms of Indigenous Student Support to sector wide responsibility focusing on teaching and learning in the pursuit of academic excellence.
- Indigenous access, participation, retention and success in higher education being influenced by cross sectoral advances for Indigenous peoples nationally, and
- Inclusion of Indigenous indicators relating to three of UniSA's Graduate Qualities ensuring a commitment to social inclusion by our future leaders.

As a scholar, Professor Hughes has published in the areas of research which are dearest to his heart: Aboriginal Education and the education of the Aboriginal child. He is a proven leader in this area and held in the highest regard both nationally and internationally.

It is not surprising that Professor Hughes has been acknowledged with many prestigious awards including:

- The Order of Australia in the 1993 Australia Day honours
- A Citizen of Humanity by the United Nations Human Rights Council
- An Honorary Doctorate from Flinders University
- A recipient of the 1994 UNESCO Comenius Medal for education excellence and
- As an Elder by the World Indigenous Network, Higher Education Consortium.

Professor Hughes has argued that the Indigenous knowledge movement is not, nor has it ever been, just about curriculum. Indigenous knowledge crosses every aspect of humanity and is as important to humanity as the principles underpinning the dominant sources of knowledge of the western world. To fail to understand this is to be less than what humanity can be. This is the legacy of Professor Hughes.

As a member of the University of South Australia, Professor Hughes has contributed more to the understanding of Aboriginal ways of learning, and the development of Indigenous knowledge within the education discipline, than any other academic in the Institution's history, or that of its predecessor institutions.

Chancellor, I present Professor Paul Hughes for the honorary title of 'Emeritus Professor'.