

Mr Gordon Ingaktji Citation

For - Fellow of the University

Chancellor, I am honoured to present Mr Gordon Ingaktji to you for the title of 'Fellow of the University of South Australia' - in recognition of his substantial and continuous support to the University in Indigenous Education.

Gordon Ingkatji was born in approximately 1931 at Lake Wilson (Kirpin) at the western end of the Mann Ranges in the far north-west of South Australia. His father's traditional country was the Kangaroo (Malu) totemic region near Mt Davies in the extreme north-west of the state. His family settled at Ernabella Mission which was established by the Presbyterian Church in the Musgrave Ranges in 1937. Gordon Ingkatji was one of the first children to attend the mission school which opened in 1940.

Two of the significant developments at Ernabella were the implementation of a Pitjantjatjara vernacular language program in the school and the formation of the Ernabella Choir. Mr Ingkatji has been a key participant in both of these developments. As a result of an injury suffered as a young man, his participation in the sheep and industrial activities of the mission was limited. He was taught to type and worked in the office and store. He became involved in teaching the language to staff, in translation work and in the early production of Pitjantjatjara language literature. When Pitjantjatjara Language Summer Schools were commenced at the University of Adelaide in 1968, Mr. Ingkatji was employed as a teacher in these courses. When the Pitjantjatjara language was introduced into courses at Torrens College of Advanced Education in the 1970s, he was involved in course preparation and teaching.

Over the years he has made a significant contribution to the ongoing vitality, recording, teaching and publication of the Pitjantjatjara language. The association of the CAE and later of the University of South Australia with this language opened the way for the development of the Anangu Teacher Education Program, which offers teacher education diplomas and degrees for Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people. Two of Mr Inkatji's daughters are graduates of this program.

The Ernabella Choir developed from the learning of hymns translated into Pitjantjatjara at the Ernabella School. As these children became adults they sang in four-part harmony at local pageants and services. In 1954, Mr Inkatji was a member of the choir which visited Adelaide on the occasion of a visit by Queen Elizabeth and in 1956 when they sang in the presence of the Duke of Edinburgh at the opening of the John Flynn Church in Alice Springs. Mr Inkatji was a leading tenor in the choir when it toured Melbourne, Adelaide and several provincial centres in 1966, Fiji and Sydney in 1979 and Sydney in 1984. He has been largely responsible for a resurgence of interest in the choir in recent years, training and conducting the choir on visits to Alice Springs, and sharing this role during its visit to Adelaide in 2004 for the Adelaide Festival of the Arts.

Mr Inkatji was one of the first group to be baptised at Ernabella in 1952. He later became a church Elder and has played a leading role in the Pitjantjatjara church.

Through this period of immense change for the Pitjantjatjara people Mr Inkatji has maintained his knowledge and responsibilities as a man of authority in Pitjantjatjara social and cultural life.

Chancellor – with great pleasure I present Mr Gordon Inkatji for Honorary award of Fellow of the University.