



2023 Lincoln University Medal

Gillian ('Gill') Reid Ross

The Lincoln University Medal is a unique award among Lincoln University's suite of honours. It was instituted in 2008 by the Lincoln University Council under Chancellor Tom Lambie, and it is given for 'long-term meritorious voluntary service supporting the fabric and reputation of Lincoln University'.

The key words are 'voluntary service'. It is not specifically a career or discipline related accolade, and that's what makes it unique.

The award of this medal to Gill Ross recognises the years of superlative voluntary service given willingly and generously to Lincoln College and Lincoln University as part of her many-faceted association with the institution.

Gill is widely and respectfully known as the wife of Professor Bruce Ross, Lincoln's former Professor of Agricultural Economics, the last Principal of Lincoln College, and the first Vice-Chancellor of Lincoln University.

The wives or partners of leaders, being unappointed, unelected, and with no Job Description of their own, can sometimes, at the start, be perplexed about what is expected of them.

But precisely because there is no Employment Contract, the job is theirs for the making, and Lincoln has been blessed by some fine First Ladies, such as Gill's predecessors, Lady Stewart and Lady Burns. Gill herself stands equal in their ranks.

But, while sharing the lineage, Gill in her time made the job distinctively hers.

Much of her work was, of course, in support of Bruce and his various roles, and for the purposes of an honour it is hard to separate Gill alone from the Bruce-and-Gill partnership.

There is, however, one area where Gill's own individual

voluntary work for Lincoln stands as singularly hers, and clearly meets the criteria for the Lincoln University Medal.

This is her work as first a member, then the Chair, and then the Patron of the Lincoln College/Lincoln University Women's Group.

This group was founded by Lady Burns in her time to provide friendship, support, social interaction and services to the wives, partners and families of Lincoln staff members, postgraduates and international students.

Gill in her time brought her own energy, vision, compassion, organisational ability, fun and liveliness to the group.

Through the group, Gill advanced the sense of community and campus family life among the women of Lincoln College and Lincoln University in many effective ways.

For example, the annual Christmas parties for campus families and staff which she helped organise are part of the collective memory of life at Lincoln in the 1980's and early 1990's.

Then there was advocacy by the group, under Gill's name as Chair and Patron, covering many important areas such as housing rental and childcare availability.

Gill also kept members informed of meetings, social activities, entertainment, guest speakers, and group business, with a newsletter called "Gill's Jottings".

Copies of "Gill's Jottings" now reside in the Lincoln University archives among other reminders of the important role of the Women's Group in campus life.

Gill, your Lincoln University Medal is most richly deserved.

Professor Grant Edwards
Vice-Chancellor

Bruce Gemmell
Chancellor