

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY

Citation

for the award of the degree of

Doctor of Science, Honoris Causa

Emeritus Professor Gina Geffen, AM

Emeritus Professor Gina Geffen is widely acknowledged as one of Australia's most eminent neuropsychologists. Over the past 40 years, she has made substantial contributions to both the science and practice of neuropsychology worldwide. She is also recognised as a national leader of the wider profession of psychology in Australia through her several state and national responsibilities for regulating the professional standards and conduct of registered psychologists.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts honours degree from the University of Witwatersrand in 1963, she worked at the Institute of Psychology at Oxford University where she published her first research on human attention. She emigrated to Australia in 1967 and gained her PhD at Monash University, where she undertook ground breaking research on asymmetries in the functions of the two cerebral hemispheres, a theme she has continued to study for the past 40 years.

In 1975, she was awarded a British Council Travel Scholarship to Cambridge and in 1980 she won a Fulbright Senior Scholarship to undertake research at several laboratories in the United States, including that of Nobel Laureate Roger Sperry. Subsequently, she has continued to collaborate with leading research workers in the USA, UK, Canada, and Israel as well as at several Australian universities, hospitals and medical research institutes.

From 1973 to 1991, while at Flinders University, she progressed from tutor through every academic rank to become the University's first female professor in 1988. Her chair (which was the first Australian chair in Neuropsychology) was located at the Julia Farr Centre, the principal institution for the care of the disabled in South Australia.

In 1991, Gina Geffen was appointed Professor of Neuropsychology at the University of Queensland, where she became Director of the Cognitive Psychophysiology Laboratory, a joint research and training centre of the Schools of Psychology and Psychiatry. The Cognitive Psychophysiology Laboratory became one of Australia's foremost centres for neuropsychology and has an international reputation for multidisciplinary neuroscience research, attracting research grants from many international, national and state agencies, including the prestigious International Human Frontiers Science Program.

The outcome of her research has been published in over 150 publications. Some of her articles are regarded as classics that have been reprinted and cited in textbooks; including a "citation classic" that was the most widely cited publication in the world literature in her field in 1971.

Gina Geffen's international scientific eminence is reflected in her election in 1990 to the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and in the many scientific offices she has held. For over 20 years, she has served on several editorial boards of international scientific journals and she has held many state and national offices in research organisations. She is the current President of the Australian Society for the Study of Brain Impairment.

In the course of her career, Gina Geffen has made substantial contributions to clinical service and training in both the South Australian and Queensland health systems, working as an Honorary Consultant Neuropsychologist at several major hospitals. She has been an outstanding leader in the training of the current generation of neuropsychologists in Australia. In 1994, she was elected a Fellow of the Australian Psychological Society in recognition of her scientific distinction and services to the Society that represents 14,000 psychologists in Australia.

Apart from her scientific and clinical contributions to neuropsychology, Gina Geffen has also made important contributions to the advancement of professional standards in psychology. The Queensland Minister of Health has appointed her to two consecutive four year terms as Chair of the Psychology Registration Board of Queensland. Nationally, she has been the Chair of the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC). Through APAC, which is the body that sets national standards for the training of psychologists, she has been active in moves to raise the minimum standards for registration as a psychologist in Australia to the level of the UK, USA and other comparable countries.

Gina Geffen has always subscribed to the importance of communicating to the community at large about scientific and professional issues in which she is involved. She has accepted the need to be publicly accountable for her research funding and frequently gives radio, television and press interviews, on national programmes such as the Science Report, the Health Report, and Quantum/Catalyst.

She has been a long standing supporter of the Brain Injury Associations of South Australia and Queensland. As Julia Farr Professor of Neuropsychology, she helped establish a research unit and developed a peer reviewed process for distribution of the Research Foundation's funds. She also campaigned for community residential facilities for the brain injured through Headway SA as it was then known.

In 2007 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her service in the field of neuropsychology as a researcher and educator, to the development of professional standards in psychology teaching and practice, and as an advocate for people with a brain injury.

Council is honoured to award the Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, to Emeritus Professor Gina Geffen in recognition of her distinguished contribution to the science and practice of neuropsychology.