

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Beloved Tasmanian author honoured in University graduations

The University of Tasmania will present an Honourary Doctor of Letters to alumnus and author Dr Christobel Mattingley AM at the winter graduations in Hobart tomorrow (Friday, August 14).

Last year Dr Mattingley received the University's prestigious 2014 Distinguished Alumni Award.

Dr Mattingley began her studies at the University as a 16-year-old in 1948, graduating in 1951 with a Bachelor of Arts with First-Class Honours, majoring in German. She worked as a librarian before going on to become a prolific writer, authoring 52 books, with three more forthcoming. She was even the author of the University's first ever Student Representative Council handbook.

First published at the age of 10, Dr Mattingley's pieces appeared in the children's pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and nature magazine *Wild Life*, which also published her first adult writing at 21. Her first book, *The Picnic Dog*, was published in 1970.

Many of her books have been shortlisted, won awards, or been translated into other languages. They include eight major non-fiction works: the ground-breaking Aboriginal history of South Australia, *Survival in Our Own Land*, (1988); the acclaimed biography of legendary Tasmanian Deny King, *King of the Wilderness*, (2001); *Ruby of Trowutta*, (2003); *Battle Order 204* (2007), the story of her husband David, a decorated Lancaster pilot in Bomber Command in World War 2; and four titles commissioned by the National Library of Australia.

Dr Mattingley's popular *No Gun for Asmir* trilogy, written in the 1990s about a Bosnian family during civil war, triggered a new wave of concern for refugees. All royalties from the books went to Asmir and his brother to support their education.

University of Tasmania Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said Dr Mattingley was a shining example of an exceptional graduate.

"It is clear that Dr Mattingley stands out as an aspirational figure to those studying English and History, but her success should also serve to inspire our graduates across all

disciplines; for the hard work and clear sense of purpose she has displayed throughout her esteemed career,” he said.

Professor Rathjen said Dr Mattingley had maintained a strong connection to Tasmania, producing biographies of notable Tasmanians which have contributed valuable chapters to Australia’s social history.

Dr Mattingley had also made a nationally significant contribution to the recording of Indigenous histories, most recently through her work with remote Anangu communities in South Australia affected by the British nuclear tests at Maralinga on their traditional country.

“Dr Mattingley’s commitment to social justice, her love of knowledge, and her respect for the value of education, are evident in her admirable body of creative work,” Professor Rathjen said.

“She also gives generously of her time to mentor young writers.

“We greatly appreciate Dr Mattingley’s continued association with the University and the state. The honour bestowed on her this year at our graduation ceremony further affirms the great pride we have in acknowledging her time with us, and the role our institution had in setting her on a path to great success.”

<http://www.utas.edu.au/graduation>

Information released by:

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