UTR2.148 - SIR RONALD FISHER LECTURE

Background –

A. In 1989, $20,000 (‘donation’) was donated to the University of Adelaide from Professor Peter Angas Parsons (‘donor’) who wished the gift to be used to endow an annual Ronald A Fisher Lecture at the University of Adelaide.

B. In 1993 a further $5,000 was donated by Professor Parsons to supplement the Fisher Lecture Fund.

C. Peter Parsons was, in 1955, the first recipient of the Barr Smith Travelling Scholarship in Agriculture at the University of Adelaide. After completing his Ph.D. in Genetics in Cambridge, he became a Fellow of St John’s College, Cambridge and University Demonstrator in Genetics. He was appointed as foundation Professor of Genetics at La Trobe University in 1966 and resigned from that post in 1988. La Trobe gave him the title of Emeritus Professor. Peter Parsons moved to Adelaide in July 1989 and both the Zoology and Genetics Departments recommended that he be given Honorary Visiting Research Fellow status.

D. Peter Parsons is the author or co-author of several books. He is also a grandson of a former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Adelaide, Sir Herbert Angas Parsons.

E. Ronald Aylmer Fisher was born in London in 1890. He came to Adelaide in 1959 on a six-month visit to the CSIRO Division of Mathematical Statistics and decided to settle in the city. He died in Adelaide on 29 July 1962. The University of Adelaide’s website states that “R. A. Fisher’s contributions to statistical theory and methods, experimental design, scientific inference, evolutionary biology and genetics have had far-reaching consequences in many branches of human thought and endeavour.” It has also been said that modern genetics could not have developed without his contributions.

F. The University accepted the donation upon the trusts specified by the donor and the donations therefore became the capital subject to those trusts (‘capital sum’).

Name of the fund

1. The capital sum, all income arising from the capital sum and any accumulations and additions thereto together form a fund called the ‘Sir Ronald Fisher Lecture’ (‘fund’).

Investment of the fund

2. The fund is to be amalgamated for the purposes of investment, and held in a common fund, and the net income earned by the common fund shall be credited, rateably, to the funds so amalgamated and thereafter distributed according to the trusts specified by the donor.
Obligations

3. In administering the fund, the University must adhere to the terms specified and is obliged:

(a) to invest the capital sum according to the directions of the donor; and

(b) to endow an annual Ronald A Fisher Lecture in the manner described in the following Rules.

Rules

4. Whereas in 1989 the Council accepted a gift of $20,000 from Emeritus Professor Peter Angas Parsons for the purpose of establishing an annual lecture in recognition of the work of the late Sir Ronald Fisher commencing in 1990, the centenary of his birth, it is hereby provided as follows:

(1) A lecture to be known as The Sir Ronald Fisher Lecture shall normally be given annually in the University of Adelaide in accordance with the provisions of these rules.

(2) The lecture shall be in a field to which Sir Ronald Fisher contributed namely, Genetics, Evolutionary Biology or Statistics.

(3) The selection of the Lecturer, and the general and financial arrangements shall be made by a committee established for this purpose, which shall report to the Faculty of Science.

(4) The Committee shall be convened by March in every year and shall consist of the Dean of Faculty of Science, the Heads of the Department of Genetics and Statistics, or their respective nominees, and an evolutionary biologist.

(5) The income from the fund shall be used to pay travel and other expenses involved in giving the lecture, as determined by the committee. Any unused income and any subsequent donations to the fund shall accumulate in the fund.

(6) Admission to the lecture shall be free to the public.

(7) These rules may be varied from time to time by Council, but the title and field of the lecture shall not be changed.