

Colin Matthews citation

Wednesday 11 September 2019, 11.00am

Chancellor, it is now my great pleasure to present to you **Colin Douglas Matthews**, for admission to the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Medicine (honoris causa).

Today we live in a society in which in vitro fertilisation, or IVF, is so commonplace, that one in every four births in Australia is now attributed to IVF.

This remarkable breakthrough in modern medical science has given hope to thousands of couples in Australia, enabling them to realise their dreams of having a family.

It has given them the gift of life, where life might not otherwise exist.

And with that has come generations of young people who have gone on to pursue their own opportunities, their own potential.

In fact, many of the young graduates who cross this stage today will owe their very lives to IVF techniques.

But while IVF and other reproductive technologies seem common today, there was a time when such births were rare, and the journey for couples, as well as scientists and clinicians, was a long and difficult one.

Today, we have with us a man whose scientific career has helped to lead that journey.

Colin Matthews has contributed enormously to both science and society through his life's work.

He is globally renowned for his pioneering methods, and has helped to put Adelaide – and the University of Adelaide – on the world map for reproductive science and medicine.

Now an Emeritus Professor with the University of Adelaide, for much of his long career with our University he has shown great leadership and foresight, and has helped to embody a spirit of innovation, all while searching for benefits to the community.

A product of medical training from the 1960s in Liverpool, Colin was appointed to the University of Adelaide in 1971. He joined the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, and was a Senior Consultant in Obstetrics at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

For the next three decades, Colin led both clinical and scientific advances in the management of human infertility that would fundamentally transform our society.

Colin has several Australian and world firsts to his name. He co-established one of the world's first sperm banks, pioneered the use of intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection, and the use of IVF technology to prevent the transmission of genetic diseases, such as Huntington's Disease.

Importantly, and this is not something many people can claim, he helped to deliver the world's fifth IVF baby, back in 1993.

As Founder, Head and Professor in the University's Reproductive Medicine Unit, Colin also understood the value of commercialising these world-leading activities.

Under his guidance, the Reproductive Medicine Unit led to a spin-out, Repromed, which, over the following 20 years, invested something in the order of \$30 million back into research – research aimed at better understanding infertility and how to overcome it.

Not only did Colin and his team make important contributions to establishing modern and highly respected infertility health care services, he has trained many distinguished clinicians and scientists who have continued his legacy throughout the world. The reach of his expertise is truly global.

Among other companies he has established is The Pippette Company, which provides IVF instruments to reproductive medicine clinics in 50 countries around the world. That company's success resulted in Colin and his son Johnathon becoming the joint recipients of a BioInnovation SA Industry award.

Colin also understood the broader impact and implications of his work: his professional contributions extended beyond clinical practice and research to influence policy and legislation, such as helping to set up South Australia's legal framework for reproductive health technology.

A Life Member of the Fertility Society of Australia and of the European Society ESHRE, Colin has made substantial contributions to Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council, to human and animal ethics, and to fundraising to support children's research.

In 2013, he was awarded the Officer of the Order of Australia in recognition of his outstanding contribution to reproductive medicine.

Today, the University of Adelaide continues to be a leader in reproductive health through the work of our Robinson Research Institute, and we are justifiably proud to name Colin among our Emeritus Faculty.

Many thousands of infertile couples have Colin and his team to thank for helping to turn their dreams of starting a family into a reality.

But in all things he has stayed grounded, understanding that there are more discoveries to be made, more people that can be helped. He once said: "I'm most proud of having been part of a world-leading reproductive health unit at the University of Adelaide that brought fertility success to couples where possible... but also not forgetting those that we were not able to help."

Chancellor, I am very pleased and proud to present to you Emeritus Professor Colin Douglas Matthews, Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery, Doctor of Medicine, Officer of the Order of Australia, for admission to the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Medicine (honoris causa).