

# Fact Sheet

Roseworthy Old Collegians Association Inc.

Roseworthy

## ROCA AWARD OF MERIT 1974 – Alexander Walker

Lex Walker (RDA,1937) grew up in the Clare district, receiving his primary and secondary education there before entering Roseworthy College in 1934. He completed his RDA as Gold Medallist in 1937 and moved on to the University of Adelaide to undertake the B.Ag.Sc. degree course. He was an outstanding student, gaining a credit (the highest rating at that time) in all subjects but one.

Upon graduation in 1939, Lex joined the staff of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute as an Assistant Agronomist, returning to that post after war-time service in the RAAF (1942-46). During his time at the Waite Institute, he did research on Cape Tulip control, lectured in agrostology and was co-author (with HC Trumble and DL Parker) of the first Australian guide to the identification of pasture grasses and legumes by their vegetative characters alone.

In 1950, he was recruited to the South Australian Department of Agriculture as Senior Agronomist and promoted to the position of Chief Agronomist on the retirement of Len Cook. In 1971, Lex was appointed an Assistant Director of Department with responsibility for research and extension programs. In this connection, he administered the large number of extension and applied research projects in the Department funded by the Commonwealth Extension Services Grant. Before his retirement in 1977, Lex also acted as Director of Agriculture on numerous occasions.

In 1970, following the death of AG Strickland, Lex was appointed Chairman of the Australian Barley Board, a position he held with great distinction until 1985. During his tenure, the Barley Board was a major earner of export income for Australia and he was the leader of many trade and marketing missions to foster and maintain our earnings from barley exports in Japan, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia and a number of European countries including Russia.

Lex Walker's service to agriculture was publicly recognised when he was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1986.

His distinguished record of service has always been enhanced by his personal qualities. An unassuming man of great integrity with a dry and penetrating wit, as a leader in whatever field he practiced, he had great capacity to inspire affection, loyalty and a willingness to go that extra distance in pursuit of the task at hand. It was understood by all who worked with him that they "would do anything for Lex".

