

Fact Sheet

Roseworthy Old Collegians Association Inc.

Roseworthy

ROCA AWARD OF MERIT 2010 – Dr Ray Beckwith OAM

Dr Arthur Ray Beckwith OAM (RDA 1932)

Throughout his career in the Australian wine industry, Arthur Ray Beckwith received many awards and accolades. Now he has another, having been named as the 2010 Award of Merit winner of the Roseworthy Old Collegians Association.

His contribution to the progress of the wine industry in Australia and abroad has been immense. Born in Cowell in 1912, Ray Beckwith graduated at Roseworthy Agriculture College with an Honours Diploma of Agriculture in 1932 and then began a 12 month oenology cadetship at the College.

While at the College he researched the use of pure cultured yeasts in the winemaking industry, which at the time generally used naturally-occurring yeasts found on grape skins. His research showed that the use of selected cultured yeasts produced superior wines with better flavor and bouquet.

When he had completed his cadetship, Ray Beckwith joined Thomas Hardy at its Mile End winery and remained there until 1935 when he was offered a position with Penfold Wines at Nuriootpa. He was to stay with this company until 1973.

One of his major achievements was to firstly recognise that there was significant bacterial spoilage of wine occurring throughout the industry and then to look for a solution. Ultimately he discovered that through manipulation of acidity levels in wine, bacterial contamination could be controlled and spoilage reduced to zero.

The results from this research were used by Penfolds in the development of Grange and its other wines, while this breakthrough in controlling stability in wine is widely regarded as a world-first discovery.

During his long career in the wine industry Ray Beckwith:

- Served for many years on the Council of the Australian Wine Institute and other important wine industry groups and organisations.
- In 2004 was conferred the honour of Doctor of the University of Adelaide – honoris causa degree – the first time this was awarded by the University.
- Was inducted in 2004 as an honorary life member of the American Society of Enology and Viticulture.
- In 2006 received a major Australian wine industry award – McWilliams Wines' Maurice O'Shea Award for his outstanding contribution to the wine industry.
- In 2008 received the Medal of the Order of Australia.

