

AWARD OF HONORARY DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF LETTERS

MR ERIK JENSEN

Consul-General Erik Jens Jensen is a prominent figure in the Scandinavian community in his roles as Consul for Denmark for over 30 years, a successful businessman and a generous supporter of Scandinavian cultural and scholarly events.

Consul-General Jensen was born in Copenhagen in 1929, and was educated in Copenhagen at the Oregard Gymnasium and Tertiary Commercial colleges. In 1946 he joined the East Asiatic Company Ltd (Denmark's largest company at the time) and from 1950 to 1954 was stationed in Singapore. In 1955 he moved to Sydney where he took up a management position. In 1967, at the age of 38, he became Managing Director of all the East Asiatic Company's in Australia. In 1971 he was appointed Consul for Denmark in Melbourne and in 1984 he was promoted to the position of Consular General, a position from which he retired as recently as March 2002. As Denmark's official representative in Victoria for more than 30 years, Erik Jensen has played a pivotal role within the Danish and Scandinavian communities and has helped forge strong links between the community and the University.

His connections with this University are deep and honourable. He has supported the Swedish section's work from its foundation in 1962 and has helped the Section to maintain a pan Scandinavian profile. One of his interests has been the study of Danish migration history in Australia and he has promoted research both in Denmark and Australia, given papers and helped many Australians of Danish descent trace their roots. Because of this interest, he encouraged the Swedish Section to hold a number of conferences on the topic of Scandinavian migration to Australia, and helped enthusiastically in their organisation. He was the chairperson of the organisational committee of the Third International Symposium on Scandinavian Migration to Australia, an officially accredited event of Australia's bicentenary in 1988. In 1995 he was again the driving force behind a conference organised by the Swedish section to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Scandinavia at the end of World War Two.

His enthusiastic support of the Swedish Section and Scandinavian culture, history and languages has facilitated the publication of five volumes of conference proceedings, and led to the establishment of the Danish-Australian Archive, originally housed in the University of Melbourne Archives, but later transferred to the State Library of Victoria. He has been an active supporter of research and assisted young Danish postgraduates to visit this University, the instigator of the Greta Hort Scholarship Committee, which has established a link between this University and the University of Aarhus in Denmark.

Erik Jensen has made a sustained contribution to the promotion of Scandinavian culture in this country.