

## **Obituary**

# **Emeritus Professor Sir James Stewart**

Emeritus Professor Sir James Stewart died in Christchurch 19 February 2010, aged 84. Sir James is survived by Lady Stewart and four adult children.

Sir James was – successively – a student, lecturer, professor, and principal at Lincoln University in the days when it was Canterbury Agricultural College, then Lincoln College. He completed his Diploma in Valuation and Farm Management, the College's flagship qualification at the time, in 1949, and MA (Hons) in Economics in 1953. As a Shaw Savill Centennial Scholar, he attended Reading University (UK) from 1959 to 1961, obtaining his PhD there.

Initially he joined the Department of Agriculture as an economist, but at the urging of his college principal, Professor Eric Hudson, he took up an assistant lecturership in farm management at Lincoln in 1951. That began a career which resulted in his becoming the doyen of farm management education and research in New Zealand.

In 1965, he was appointed New Zealand's first Professor of Farm Management, and he became Principal at Lincoln College in 1974.

As a lecturer, Sir James was popular with students at all levels. He developed the case study approach to farm management and always went on field trips to enhance student learning. Today this is more likely to be referred to as experiential learning.

As a researcher, Sir James had a long and significant research association with the university's Ashley Dene Farm, south of Lincoln, where he conducted pioneering work on pastoral farming of light land, particularly with the use of lucerne. His more significant work included a comparative examination of profitability on irrigated and non-irrigated sheep and cattle farms.

In the late 1950s he collaborated on a major research project examining the inter-relationships between investment and output in New Zealand agriculture and forged a close partnership with Bryan Philpott, foundation Professor of Agricultural Economics at Lincoln College, which led to the establishment of the influential Agricultural (now Agribusiness) and Economics Research Unit at Lincoln.

Late in the 1960s, he was one of the founders of the New Zealand Society of Farm Management, now the New Zealand Institute of Primary Industry Management. He had a long association with South America, particularly Uruguay, and carried out consultancies in the Middle East, Indonesia, Eastern Europe, and other countries for the World Bank, the UN Development Plan, and the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation.

In 1976, he was awarded the Bledisloe Medal by Lincoln College for distinguished contributions to advancing New Zealand's land-based interests. He was knighted in 1983, the year he retired from the College, for his services to agriculture and education. Subsequently he became Foundation Chairman of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

Sir James was a passionate rugby player and was a Canterbury provincial player from 1949 to 1956. He became its coach from 1967 to 1973. His tenure as coach saw his club lifting the Ranfurly Shield from Hawkes Bay in 1969 with a team containing All Blacks of the likes of McCormick, Arnold, Kirkpatrick, Wyllie, and Hopkinson.

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Sources: Lincoln University, *New Zealand Who's Who Aotearoa* (Alister Taylor 2001), and *The Press*, Christchurch