



Emmanuel College

Papers

TRUSTING ONE'S JUDGEMENT

by

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Emmanuel College
The University of Queensland
Enriching lives since 1911

Emmanuel College is Australia's ninth, and with St John's College, The University of Queensland's first residential college to gain affiliation. It was founded by the Presbyterian Church of Queensland in 1911 with the first students taking up residence in Wickham Terrace in 1912. As the Presbyterian Church moved towards partnership with other religious denominations during the 1970s, Emmanuel College also came under the auspices of the Uniting Church. Upon its inauguration, Emmanuel College was an all male residence but this changed in 1975 when women were admitted as collegians. Now, the College numbers around 340 students with half our population being female.

Further change was experienced by the College when it moved in 1955 from its original site in Wickham Terrace to its present location on the main university campus in St Lucia.

Since 1911, Emmanuel has stood for excellence in all round education and has had seven Rhodes Scholars during its history. Its graduates have gone on to make a major contribution to Australia in many areas, including as doctors, scientists, teachers, engineers, lawyers and judges, politicians, ambassadors and diplomats, and church leaders.

THE AUTHOR

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Professor John Pearn AM has been described as a legendary character in medical and defence circles. He was Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health at The University of Queensland and the Royal Brisbane Hospital from 1986 until his retirement. He served as the Surgeon-General of the Defence Force and was part of the Australian Emergency Response Team to the Asian tsunami. The University of Queensland's 13th *Alumnus of the Year* in 2004, Professor Pearn retired from the School of Medicine in 2005.

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TRUSTING ONE'S JUDGEMENT

"It is not by muscle, speed or physical dexterity that great things are achieved, but by reflection, force of character and judgement".

Cicero (104-43 B.C.).¹

Anniversaries stimulate one to reflect on the genesis of our institutions. They engender a perspective of what has been achieved; and encourage reflection on the judgement of those who have enriched our personal and professional lives.

In medieval times, when the planets were in conjunction, it was believed that life was especially meaningful.² In 2011, three signal anniversaries are in conjunction. These are the Centenary of the Inaugural Ceremony which founded The University of Queensland (on 1 June 1911); the Centenary of the foundation of Emmanuel College (September 1911) at the new University; and the 75th Anniversary of the Faculty of Medicine (in 1936), whose School of Medicine in the twenty-first century has grown to be the largest of Australia's 22 medical schools.

Each of these events was the result of vision, advocacy and ultimately judgement that new things might be achieved and society enriched. In this context one is tempted to reflect on professional judgement; and to explore the qualities of courage, resilience and resolve which are its fellows.³

In the professions of education and medicine judgement is required everyday. Judgement is distinct from learning, but wise judgement can come only from learning and the perspective which it imparts:

"The art of medicine for the most part, deals with physical phenomena; [but] it has to do with the animal organism which is subject to perpetual changes and is never quite the same for two moments... this places the judgement of the physician above his knowledge".⁴

Karl von Clausewitz (1780-1831).⁴

Sir William MacGregor (1846-1919) and the School of Medicine

After more than three decades of advocacy, The University of Queensland was established by an Act of Parliament in 1910. The Ceremony of Inauguration was held on 1 June 1911, at the Exhibition Building, in Gregory Terrace,

Brisbane.⁵ Commencing at 2pm in the afternoon, it was a prolonged affair, with more than 14 separate speeches, and the conferring of Degrees *ad eundem statim*, in several Faculties, including that of Medicine. It was also a grand affair, with carriages rolling in successively to the main entrance prior to the arrival of Sir William MacGregor, the Governor of Queensland and the new University's inaugural Chancellor. Besides his role in the foundation of The University of Queensland, MacGregor had a signal influence on the eventual establishment of the School of Medicine itself. His influence was important at a time of unrest in the government and hostility from much of the medical profession, many of whom felt that new graduates from another Medical School would swamp the northern State with too many doctors.⁶

MacGregor was born the son of a crofter in the Village of Hillockhead in Aberdeenshire. His potential was recognised early in life by a benefactor who ensured that he received an education at high school and then at the Universities of both Aberdeen and Glasgow, where he studied medicine. He practised medicine in the Seychelles, at Mauritius, and (from 1875) was the Chief Medical Officer for the Colony of Fiji. It was at Fiji that he was also awarded the Albert Medal of the Royal Life Saving Society, and the Clarke Gold Medal for his personal courage in saving a drowning sailor's life in a shipwreck near Suva.

MacGregor's first appointment as a Governor was to British New Guinea (1888-1898), where for eleven years he was based in Port Moresby. His reputation grew, and he was appointed successively as Governor of Lagos (1898-1904) and then at Newfoundland. In Queensland, he came to be regarded as a governor who was held in particular esteem and indeed affection.

When Sir William retired in 1914, there existed a groundswell of public opinion to establish an enduring testimonial to his service. The Sir William MacGregor Recognition Fund was commenced and coordinated by the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Mr CM Jenkinson. MacGregor wrote to the Lord Mayor:

"I notice there is to be a public meeting soon in connection with the proposal to do me the great honour of raising a Fund, to be devoted to some educational purpose in my name... At the present time there are many students in Queensland who desire to study medicine. Medicine will play no inconsiderable part in the development of Queensland, and our students must at present go elsewhere for medical study...I should be disposed to think that the Fund should be allocated to a Medical Faculty in The University of Queensland...".⁷

A Senate Select Committee (the first of three on medical education) of The University of Queensland, reported on 14 July 1914 that there was a special need for locally trained doctors. The Fund, described in the Brisbane *Daily Mail* as the MacGregor Memorial Fund, was well subscribed.⁸ By 1924 the MacGregor Fund stood at £2,450. Its corpus was invested in War Bonds and was earning approximately £200 per annum.⁶ On 13 March 1936, when the first formal meeting of the Faculty of Medicine was held, the MacGregor Fund stood at £4,230. This was a testament to the advocacy, wisdom, perspective and, above all, the judgement of Sir William MacGregor, that medical education would be available in northern Australia.

Today, it is fitting that Emmanuel College, whose Centenary is celebrated in the same year as that of the Inauguration Ceremony of The University of Queensland, stands on Sir William MacGregor Drive at The University of Queensland.

Emmanuel College – A Centenary

One of the University's two foundation Colleges, Emmanuel College, likewise became a reality because of the wise judgement of several forebears. Two of its acknowledged founders, the Reverend Dr John Meiklejohn and the Reverend Dr Ernest Northcroft Merrington, brought with them the powerful tradition of Scottish enlightenment and the strongest advocacy that education should be available for all, irrespective of class, status, personal means or the isolation of distance. Together with Sir William MacGregor, these two Scots were a powerful Caledonian triumvirate in the year of The University of Queensland's foundation.

John Meiklejohn (1841-1915) was born on 20 August 1841 at Larkhill, near Hamilton in Lanarkshire. He graduated Master of Arts from Glasgow University in 1870, and was ordained in 1874. He emigrated to Melbourne because of his health in 1889 and became a leader of Church Union within the Presbyterian faith. A scholar, classicist and scientist, he was also elected President of the Victorian Branch of the Astronomical Society. The last decade of the nineteenth century had seen several movements towards the concept of Federation, not only in the broader political sense but also in the smaller institutions which enrich society. He served as the Convenor (1892-1901) of the [Federal] Union Council of the Presbyterian Church. His judgement was that the six separate State Presbyterian churches would achieve much by Church Union.⁹ In 1901, he was elected Moderator General as:

“The man who had been Convenor of the [Presbyterian] Union Committee for nearly a decade and had shared the process to its successful end, [and] was given the Chair”.¹⁰

The Reverend Dr John Meiklejohn’s judgement led, on 24 July 1901, to the first meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. It brought together six hitherto separate colonial Presbyterian Churches.¹¹ After Federation, Meiklejohn’s judgement was that there should be a residential college, based in Brisbane, to support the proposed University of Queensland. In this context, he was appointed the Principal (without pay) of Emmanuel College and served in this role from 1911 to 1914.¹²

The Council to establish Emmanuel College was also the result of advocacy by the Rev Dr Ernest Northcroft Merrington¹³ (1876-1953). Dr Merrington was a particularly distinguished scholar, author and military chaplain, whose good works resonate today in the institutions which he established.¹⁴ He was appointed as the Pastor at St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in central Brisbane in July 1910.¹⁵ He was perhaps the first Australian to complete a Doctor of Philosophy at Harvard University; and at the Inauguration Ceremony in Brisbane on 1 June, 1911, when The University of Queensland finally became a reality, the Reverend Dr Merrington represented Harvard University and gave an address, wishing the new University well, on behalf of his *alma mater*.

The Reverend Merrington established the Emmanuel College Council and served as its first President. At the outbreak of World War One, he enlisted in the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF), and served both at Gallipoli and in France.¹⁶ He rose to the rank of Colonel Chaplain in the Army, a senior and distinguished rank for an army chaplain, but one appropriate to a person of his judgement and wisdom. The Centenary of Emmanuel College at The University of Queensland is one muscular and fitting memorial to his foresight and industry.

Professor Raymond Dart (1893-1988)

Another example of wise judgement, in which personal confidence was a dramatic feature, is the work of Raymond Dart, the discoverer of *Australopithecus*.¹⁷

Raymond Dart was born in Toowong, on the banks of the Brisbane River at the height of the devastating Brisbane flood of 1893. His family home was flooded. The newborn infant (in a box) and his mother were floated to safety through an upper window to a rescue boat.¹⁸ After graduation from The University of

Queensland with a Bachelor of Science Degree with Honours (in 1913) and a Master of Science (1915), he graduated in Medicine from the University of Sydney in 1917. As a young Professor of Anatomy at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, Dart was given fossil bones from the Buxton Quarry, near Taung in November 1924.

One of the specimens contained fragments of a skull, with an endocast of the brain cavity. He immediately realised that the skull was neither human nor that of any living ape, but possessed intermediate anatomical features of both. He

“delivered the fossil from its stone matrix... and with incisive neuroanatomical and evolutionary acumen, and not a little courage... recognised that this creature was relevant to the study of hominid emergence and evolution”.¹⁹

Dart was subjected to enormous scientific and social vilification following the initial publication of his paper in *Nature*. Of resolute and determined *persona*, Dart nevertheless withstood the attacks, and within 20 years his work was the foundation of an understanding of an extra four million years of hominid evolution. It is now appreciated that this comprises much of our genetic ancestry.

Professor John Kerr and Apoptosis

Apoptosis was discovered by the Brisbane pathologist, Professor John Kerr. In a milestone paper in the *British Journal of Cancer*, published in 1972, apoptosis was formally described and named.²⁰ Over the ensuing decade, in Brisbane, Professor Kerr and his students (especially Professor Jeff Searle, and Dr Michael Harrison and the microscopists David Collins and Brian Harmon) published the definitive papers which established apoptosis as an ubiquitous kinetic process in all vertebrate tissues.²¹⁻²⁵

Apoptosis is sometimes described as programmed cell death. The phenomenon is under genetic control. Apoptosis is distinct from cell death due to necrosis. Unlike necrosis, apoptosis does not engender any inflammatory response. Apoptosis is the manner in which the embryo is sculpted, some areas growing by mitosis and other areas being “sculpted” or reduced by apoptosis. Apoptosis occurs spontaneously in tissues and organs and is the process by which tissues are remoulded during regeneration and scar formation. It is widespread in neoplastic tissue.

Professor Kerr first observed the peculiar and distinctive changes in cell nuclei, in 1965. He studied the phenomenon extensively, appreciating at that time, that this was an entirely new and distinctive type of cell death. Initially, he called the process “shrinkage necrosis”.²⁶ Ubiquitous in many tissues, it required great judgement and considerable resolve to point out its presence, obvious in retrospect to every microscopist ever since Virchow’s first microscopic studies of the cell a hundred years earlier.

Over the last decade, from 2001, apoptosis is the most discussed topic in biology and medicine. Of the 6.3 million refereed papers in the international medical literature in the last decade, some 145,000 papers discuss apoptosis – compared with 126,000 papers in HIV-AIDS and 101,000 on breast cancer.

As the process is under genetic control, and as disordered apoptotic mechanisms underlie all dysmorphology and congenital genetic syndromes, the theme will increasingly be a feature in the work of geneticists and cancer specialists into the unknowable future.

Conclusion

Wise judgements are made after observation, experience and reflection. Judgements must not be set in stone; and must change with changing circumstances and the arrival or discovery of new information and with later experience:

“A series of judgments, revised without ceasing, goes to make up the incontestable progress of science”.

Emile Duclaux.²⁷

In the theme of “trusting one’s judgement” there is the implication that one needs resolve, indeed sometimes courage, to share or promote one’s judgement, indeed to “see it through”. Equal resolve is often needed to change or modify one’s judgement. Such is the foundation of wisdom. The three institutions which are celebrated in the calendar year of 2011 – The University of Queensland, its School of Medicine and Emmanuel College – have all evolved from institutions founded seven to ten decades ago. Such would be unrecognisable today. Changes within them have come about because of the resolve and courage of those who trusted their judgements - that the combined professions of education and medicine might hold the esteemed place which they enjoy in the society of the twenty-first century.

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