

ACU community mourns the death of Chancellor The Hon John Fahey AC, GCSG

It is with great sadness that Australian Catholic University (ACU) announces the death of the University's Chancellor the Hon John Fahey AC, GCSG after a battle with leukemia.

ACU Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Greg Craven AC, GCSG said that Mr Fahey died today at 7.30am.

“John Fahey was our Chancellor, but also an Australian hero. As well as holding some of the highest offices in the land he will always be renowned for bringing the Olympics to Sydney.

“John was greatly loved as Chancellor. He was profoundly committed to the idea of a Catholic university, and brought to office courage, wisdom and dignity.”

Mr Fahey was the fourth Chancellor of ACU, appointed in 2014 to replace Sir Peter Cosgrove. He was reappointed for a further term in 2019.

A man of great integrity and deep faith, Mr Fahey was born in New Zealand in 1945 to Irish migrants Stephen and Annie Fahey, educated at Chevalier College in the NSW Southern Highlands and at the University of Sydney. Upon graduation he practiced law before entering public life as a politician, industry leader, and administrator. =

Mr Fahey was NSW Premier from 1992-95 before entering federal politics, where he served as Minister for Finance and Administration in the Howard government until 2001. As chairman of the bid team, he was instrumental in securing the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

He earned the affectionate epithet “Jumping John” Fahey for his enthusiastic response to the announcement Sydney had won the bid. He had already earned the admiration of the public when leaping to disarm a protester who had threatened Prince Charles with a gun at an awards ceremony in Sydney in 1994.

In 2002 Mr Fahey was made a Companion of the Order of Australia for his work in the political arena, and for facilitation of industry growth and industrial relations reform.

Five years later he became President of the World Anti-Doping Agency, a position he held until November 2013. In this role Mr Fahey was a driving force behind moves to increase and enhance drug testing in sport around the world.

In 2019 Pope Francis awarded Mr Fahey the Pontifical Equestrian Order of St Gregory the Great, one of the Church's highest awards, in recognition of his significant and distinguished service to the Catholic Church in Australia including ACU.

During his time as Chancellor the University's reputation as a Catholic university has been enhanced. Much of this was due to the personal convictions that Mr Fahey had on the critical role that the university plays in the life of the Church in Australia. This was reflected in 2015 when ACU was awarded the Ex Corde Ecclesiae medal, the highest award of the International Federation of Catholic Universities.

As Chancellor, Mr Fahey encouraged ACU to develop into a national university of stature. Under his stewardship, the university underwent a long-term, sustainable expansion strategy that encompassed a rise in the numbers of both students and staff, the establishment of two new campuses, enhanced research capabilities, deepening partnerships in Australia and internationally, and greater engagement with our communities.

Most recent significant initiatives over the last 12 months have been the successful partnership with Blacktown City Council within the Diocese of Parramatta to establish ACU's newest campus, and the appointment of our fourth Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Zlatko Skrbis.

Family, faith and football have always been central to Mr Fahey. Such was his lifelong love of rugby league team Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs, he was once a reserve grade player, always a fan and later became patron of the club.

His personal life has been marked by great joy and deep tragedy. An aggressive bout of cancer threatened to fell him in 2001 but he overcame the disease with only one lung, shorter of breath and a renewed

determination to contribute as a leader, mentor and campaigner. He was profoundly affected by the sudden death of his daughter Tiffany who was killed in a car accident in 2006. The Faheys raised Tiffany's two children.

He is survived by Colleen, children Matthew and Melanie, and grandchildren Amber and Campbell.

The University's Pro-Chancellor Mr Julien O'Connell AO will assume the role of Acting Chancellor until a new Chancellor is appointed.

The NSW Government will hold a state funeral for Mr Fahey on a date to be determined. Details of the funeral are yet to be advised and will be limited by COVID restrictions.

ACU will hold Memorial Masses on each campus to honour Mr Fahey, subject to COVID restrictions. May He Rest in Peace.

Media contact: Jen.Rosenberg@acu.edu.au, 0407 845 634