

CELEBRATING THOSE WHO UNLOCK POSSIBILITY



UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE



YEARS

**HONOURING
BEQUESTS
2025**

*Michael Wilson, Bequest and
Scholarship Donor and Professor
Clovia Holdsworth, Head of School,
School of Environmental and Life
Sciences, College of Engineering,
Science and Environment*



We celebrate the lives of those who have so generously left an enduring legacy beyond their lifetime.

We honour them by sharing their stories and the impact their kindness has enabled.

We remember them and acknowledge the continued positive effect their generosity is having on the lives of others.

The University of Newcastle acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands within our footprint areas: Awabakal, Darkinjung, Biripai, Worimi, Wonnarua, Gomeri, and Eora Nations. We pay respect to the wisdom of our Elders past and present. We extend our acknowledgement and respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations from which our students, staff and community are drawn.



HONOURING OUR SUPPORTERS

Writing a Will is a powerful way to reflect personal values and create a legacy. We can honour loved ones, advance research that is important to our families, or strengthen communities through education.

This booklet is dedicated to the inspiring people who made the decision to leave a gift in their Will to the University of Newcastle. Their stories show kindness, passion and a deep commitment to shaping a better world.

Because of their generosity, we can build a more equitable, compassionate and sustainable future for generations to come.

As we mark our 60th anniversary, we remember with gratitude these remarkable legacies. Their enduring gifts will continue to unlock possibility to benefit the lives of others – a truly meaningful legacy.

Professor Alex Zelinsky AO
Vice-Chancellor and President

A GIFT FOR THE FUTURE

With a decision to leave a gift in his Will to support students studying environmental and life sciences, alumnus Michael Wilson has ensured his passion for the environment will continue beyond his lifetime.

Michael grew up in northern England, where high school students were typically divided between two paths, those that would attend university and those that would enter the workforce. For Michael, higher education wasn't an option, his family needed him to start earning a living.

In 1979, he moved to Australia, beginning his new life by washing dishes in Bondi. With hard work and determination, his career evolved and he became a pioneer in the Hunter Valley's olive industry.

At the age of 65 and approaching retirement, Michael made a bold decision to enrol in Open Foundation, a pathway program to higher education offered by the University of Newcastle. Fuelled by a lifelong passion for the environment, he went on to complete a Bachelor of Environmental Science and Management, graduating at the age of 71.



During his studies, Michael saw first-hand the financial pressures faced by many of his fellow students. Inspired to make a difference, he chose to leave a gift in his Will to help students in need of support studying in the fields of environmental and life sciences, at the University of Newcastle.

Photo: Michael Wilson at his graduation in 2023.

SHAPING A BETTER WORLD

“I’m leaving a gift in my Will to lift some of the financial burden for students. I got a lot out of university and I’d like to give that opportunity to someone else.”

Michael Wilson

Bequest and Scholarship Donor
Bachelor of Environmental Science
and Management (2023)



Scan the QR
code to watch
Michael's story

*Photo: Michael with students
at Hunter Wetlands Centre.*

REMEMBERING REMARKABLE PEOPLE

The University of Newcastle is most grateful to the following people for their exceptional generosity and kindness in leaving a gift in their Will to transform lives.

Sister Kathleen Alderson

Mrs Mary Allen

Mrs Matilda Asars

Mrs Elizabeth Aston

Ms Joan Bale

Mrs Gladys Barnard

Mr Eric Bauer

Ms Mary Beasy

Ms Jenny Blakey

Ms Valasi Bleazard

Mr Laurie Bogan

Mr Harold Brawn

Mr Norman Bushman

Canon Bill Childs

Mrs Merridy Childs

Dr Beryl Collier

Mrs Janet Copley

Ms Carmel Costello

Ms Thora Crighton

Ms Nellie Currie

Mrs Betty Dobrianskyj

Dr John Duggan AM

Mr Frank Duncan

Ms Margaret Farrell

Mr Edmund Furner

Ms Betty Fyffe

Ms Barbara Graham

Ms Isobel Hancock

MRS MERRIDY CHILDS



With very special thanks for
those gifts received in 2024

The late Merridy Childs, inspired by her parents' enduring values of compassion and community service, left a generous gift in her Will to establish the Canon Bill Childs Shaping Futures Scholarship to support talented students facing educational disadvantage.

Born in Sale, Victoria in 1951, Merridy spent her formative years in Cessnock and Newcastle, where she attended Newcastle Girls' Grammar School. She later earned qualifications from the Salisbury College of Advanced Education and the South Australian University of Technology. Her distinguished career with the South Australian Education Department spanned more than 30 years, during which she held diverse roles in teaching and as a student counsellor. Her passion for teaching also took her abroad, where she worked in Central London, Brunei, and Qatar.

Merridy believed deeply in the transformative power of education to break cycles of disadvantage and foster equity. She was dedicated to ensuring all students had the opportunity to realise their full potential. Her work championed literacy, inclusion, and social justice, with a particular focus on supporting teenage migrants and refugees: listening to their stories, advocating for their needs, and connecting them with tailored support services.

Merridy is remembered not only for her professional accomplishments but also for the warmth, kindness, and authenticity she brought to every relationship. Her generosity of spirit, sense of humour, and unwavering commitment to others left an indelible mark on all who knew her. Through her legacy, she continues to change lives and inspire future generations.

MS WENDY KAPPE

The late Wendy Kappe's decision to leave a gift in her Will to the University of Newcastle was both unexpected and profoundly moving. Wendy left an ongoing legacy to support students who will go on to become our next generation of healthcare professionals.

A resident of Lake Macquarie, Wendy chose to leave part of her estate to establish the Wendy Kappe Shaping Futures Scholarship for Nursing and Medicine – a generous gift that will change the lives of countless students, who will carry her kindness with them throughout their studies and into their careers.

Wendy had immense respect for the nursing profession. She deeply admired the care, passion, tolerance, and kindness that nurses displayed to all around them. Her legacy reflects this admiration and her commitment to empowering those who dedicate their lives to caring for others.

While we know little about Wendy's life, her impact speaks volumes. Alongside her support for the University of Newcastle, Wendy also included several other causes close to her heart in her Will, including Belmont Public Hospital, St Vincent's Hospital, koala conservation, and the Catholic Church at Belmont. Her quiet generosity is a powerful reminder of the difference one person can make.

Wendy's gift to the University of Newcastle will help more nurses and doctors receive the support they need to graduate and serve our communities. A remarkable legacy that will benefit the lives of many for years to come.



UNLOCKING POSSIBILITY

“I’d like to express my heartfelt thanks to the late Wendy Kappe, whose generosity in establishing the Wendy Kappe Shaping Futures Scholarship for Nursing and Medicine has eased the financial burden of university. It has helped me pay for study supplies, placement uniforms, and on-campus accommodation, allowing me to focus on my studies and build my confidence. Wendy’s kindness is helping me pursue my dream of becoming a nurse so that I can make a meaningful impact in the lives of the patients I’ll go on to serve.”

Jessica

Bachelor of Nursing Student

Wendy Kappe Shaping Futures Scholarship for Nursing and Medicine Recipient

DR JOHN WATERS



With very special thanks for
those gifts received in 2024

The late Dr John Waters completed a Bachelor of Engineering at the University of Newcastle. A firm believer in the life-changing power of education, he left a generous bequest to help students in need of support access and continue their education through Shaping Futures Scholarships.

Born in Paxton in 1936 and raised in West Wallsend, John was the first in his family to attend university. Encouraged by his mother, he became a lifelong learner and earned five degrees from four institutions, including a PhD at the age of 69.

John began his professional life as an electrical engineer and spent 26 years at the technology and manufacturing company, 3M Australia. During this time, he developed a strong interest in business and organisational psychology, leading him to complete a Master of Business Administration, Bachelor of Arts, and a Master of Letters. He later brought his expertise to academia, consulting and teaching at the Australian Graduate School of Engineering Innovation at the University of Sydney.

Despite his many achievements, John remained humble and committed to the community, volunteering throughout his life to help others through Apex and Rotary. He encouraged his daughters and seven grandchildren to pursue their own academic journeys, collectively completing 12 undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

Through his enduring gift, John's legacy and lifelong passion for education will live on, empowering students from all backgrounds to shape better futures for themselves and their families.

LIFE-CHANGING RESEARCH

Associate Professor Nicole Nathan's pioneering programs and innovative approaches are the result of two decades of impactful work and an unfailing determination to improve public health – a passion shared by the late Nellie Knight.

Nellie left a gift in her Will to support promising researchers to explore new initiatives for the treatment and management of heart disease. To date, Nellie's legacy has supported the work of 12 researchers, including Associate Professor Nathan who leads a school program to help prevent the growing rates of childhood obesity.

“One in four children are not a healthy weight and these children are at an increased risk of becoming overweight as adults which then increases their risk of developing cardiovascular disease and some cancers. The direct health care costs for treating or managing unhealthy weight is in the billions, but the indirect costs are also really alarming. We want to keep kids healthy so that they've got wellbeing for life.

With an estimated 580,000 adults living with coronary heart disease in Australia, the generosity and passion of Nellie Knight is helping to improve the lives of people now and in the future,” says Associate Professor Nathan.



YOUR LEGACY WILL SHAPE A BETTER WORLD

“It is always hard juggling work and family commitments but with Nellie Knight’s help I was able to complete my research and obtain my PhD. This support enabled me to continue my research career and keep working on programs to help keep kids healthy.”

Associate Professor Nicole Nathan

MRFF Investigator Fellow

School of Medicine and Public Health

College of Health, Medicine and Wellbeing

PhD (2016)

A LASTING IMPACT



“For those considering leaving a gift in your Will, you will not only be leaving a gift of financial support, but you will also be sharing your dreams and aspirations with future generations – a gift of hope for a better future.”

Professor Clovia Holdsworth

Head of School, School of Environmental and Life Sciences
College of Engineering, Science and Environment

Thank you for taking the time to honour and remember the remarkable people who chose to shape a better world through a gift in their Will to the University of Newcastle.

FIND OUT MORE

If you would like to know more about the inspiring people featured in this booklet, discuss a gift in your Will or update us on your own wishes, please contact Catherine using the details below.



02 4921 8612



bequests@newcastle.edu.au



newcastle.edu.au/bequests