

- RICHARD F. SWINDELL '72 -

RICHARD SWINDELL OF BRISBANE, Queensland earned his first degree in physical education in 1961 from Otago University in New Zealand. The following year, he earned a teaching degree and taught physical education in New Zealand, Australia and Canada for the next five years.

In 1967 he was accepted into the chemistry program at Eastern Washington State College in Cheney, Washington, and then into the fluorine chemistry doctoral program at the University of Idaho in 1968. Swindell completed his Ph.D. in chemistry from U of I in 1972. While at U of I, he had seven publications accepted by prestigious national and international chemistry journals. He returned to Australia and in 1975 he accepted a position at Mt. Gravatt College of Advanced Education in Brisbane as a chemistry professor.

In 1986, Swindell took more formal studies in adult education and began work on "University of the Third Age" (U3A), a movement that involved education opportunities for retirees to keep their minds stimulated and engaged with activities. He secured funding to establish U3A in Queensland. Brisbane U3A now has more than 4,000 members and its volunteer teachers offer more than 300 courses for retirees. There are over 30 other U3A groups in Queensland today that provide courses for more than 20,000 retirees.

In 1998, in conjunction with two other U3A individuals and the Australian Government, Swindell helped launch the virtual U3A Online. This was the first online U3A program, which has grown to serve retired people internationally. Swindell and U3A Online later worked with two other seniors' organizations to secure more than \$25 million through the Australian

Government to provide 2,000 internet kiosks for senior citizens throughout Australia.

Swindell continued training primary science teachers at Griffith University until 2005. Throughout his career, Swindell has strived to improve the effectiveness of school science teaching. He was awarded three Griffith University teaching excellence awards and one national university teaching excellence award.

Swindell was named a Member of the Order of Australia in 2004 for his service to education through the U3A and the development of U3A Online and Primary Science Teaching. This national award is one of Australia's highest awards recognizing outstanding achievement and service.

Swindell used the emerging use of personal computers to reach individuals in rural communities, especially isolated senior citizens. From 2010 to 2019 he compiled a free monthly email newsletter, *GEMS for Enquiring Minds*. Subscribers were international and there were more than 6,000 readers.

Post retirement, Swindell continued his association with Griffith University from 2006-2013 as a voluntary senior adjunct lecturer. He is married to Bettina Magafaskis, and he has a daughter, CJ and a son, Lee.