

Citation Lincoln Alumni Medal: Dr John Morris

A passionate commitment towards retailing and food marketing, and the chain from producer to consumer, together with a willingness to share his experience and knowledge, sees Dr John Morris awarded the Lincoln International Alumni Medal.

The Medal is awarded to a former student, or past or current staff member, of Lincoln University who has made an outstanding contribution to their chosen field and brought credit to the University through achievements in a country other than New Zealand.

Dr Morris is director of the Institute of Food and Grocery Management in Australia.

He earned a Bachelor of Agriculture Science from Lincoln College in 1964 and a Master of Agricultural Science degree in 1971, before going on to be granted an MBA from Cranfield School of Management in the United Kingdom and a PhD from Cornell University in the United States in 1978.

He has worked as a senior executive with Safeway Stores, in California, and has consulted with many leading retail, grocery and fresh food companies around the world.

Dr Morris has been an international adviser to the Food Marketing Institute (FMI), the global organisation for food retailers and wholesalers, and conducted FMI operations and customer research in many countries.

He was part of the Cornell University Food Executive Program in the United States for 28 years and has been a Visiting Professor of Food Industry Management at a number of international institutions, among them London University and Copenhagen University.

He has been the director of Executive Programs at Monash University and also director of the Rabobank Executive Development Program for Primary Producers. The latter, initiated and run by Dr Morris, has developed a new generation of future leaders for the New Zealand and Australian food and agriculture industry

He has had a significant beneficial impact on all facets of the food production industry— from primary production, processing and manufacturing, to retailing and international marketing. In a distinguished career over almost 50 years he has advised numerous farmers, food processors, retailers and exporters how best to develop and market their products.

Dr Morris is a proud Lincoln alumnus and has always maintained a very close association with Lincoln University, with significant input into marketing courses and seminars over many years. He places high value on the alumni network and has shown a selfless willingness to help other alumni grow their businesses.

Testimony from the letters of support to this nomination illustrate the impact Dr Morris has made, and the helping hand he has offered many.

In them he is described as excelling as an educator, mentor, communicator and businessman and is respected by the myriads of people he has been involved with over many years.

Without any request for monetary gain he offered his wealth of knowledge and contacts to expand the export side of a grateful business, and a voluntary talk he gave in the 1980s to a group of senior executives on the structure of the retail food distribution industry in the United States, and how to access that market, was said to remain relevant today.

His Rabobank course was seen as supporting leading New Zealand and Australian farmers to grow sustainable farming enterprises, and to foster the ongoing, long term success of agriculture.

He is seen as a tireless supporter of agribusiness and marketing within New Zealand who has always made himself available above and beyond the call of duty.

“He willingly gives good direction and sound advice, selflessly, to individuals and businesses purely because he enjoys watching others succeed. It would be impossible to quantify the positive difference he has made to primary industry in New Zealand and Australia,” a nominator said.

Dr John Morris is therefore a worthy recipient of the 2015 Lincoln Alumni International Medal.