

Lincoln University

## **Vernon Raymond Clark, ONZM, Lincoln University Medal**

2012 Recipient

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Mr Vern Clark's association with Lincoln University, the Selwyn community, the wider Canterbury and numerous national and international bodies of specialist scientific interest with which Lincoln University interacts, is long and legendary.

He joined the staff of Canterbury Agricultural College (now Lincoln University) as a laboratory assistant in 1940 and by the time he retired in 1981, he was a Senior Lecturer in Animal Science and co-founder, with Professor Ian Coop, of the Coopworth breed of sheep, New Zealand's second most numerous breed.

Mr Clark's teaching, extension and scientific achievements and contributions have been well recognised with the award of Lincoln University's Bledisloe Medal and his appointment as an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM).

As a resident of Lincoln, and as both an active and retired staff member of the University, Mr Clark has given years of service building a strong and harmonious relationship between the University and its local community.

One project was the conception and construction of the Lincoln Community Centre on the main street of the village, and the shared voluntary work that went into it. Mr Clark was secretary-manager of the building project and brought students, College trades staff, academics – even the Director – into the project and the manual work it involved. The Community Centre which resulted from this voluntary 'town-gown' construction project benefitted the village greatly and contributed spectacularly to the growth of a good relationship between the University and the local residential population. There were many other subsequent projects that brought the University and community together, including negotiating the use of some Lincoln College land for golf; sewage; a high-pressure water system; and the Lincoln Fire Brigade.

As a World War II veteran and active member of the Springs Sub-Branch of the Christchurch RSA, Mr Clark has played a significant volunteer role in local Anzac Day services. Through his initiative and effort the traditional Lincoln University Anzac Day service was officially 'upgraded' in 2008 to become the formal Lincoln township and community service. This positioned Lincoln University at the centre of its local community for marking this nationally sacred and significant day. The behind-the-scenes work in nominating and advancing Lincoln University's case for this distinction was carried out by Mr Clark.

Mr Clark was also involved with the initiation and building of the official Lincoln War Memorial (located adjacent to the Lincoln Event Centre) and he ensured a balance between University and community involvement in its planning, construction and dedication.

In summary, across a wide variety of projects, Mr Clark has been an energetic and dedicated voluntary worker responsible for building a solid and mutually supportive relationship between Lincoln University and the Lincoln township community of which it is part. As such he is a worthy recipient of the Lincoln University Medal.