



Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

The English poet John Masefield wrote: "There are few earthly things more beautiful than a university." Whenever I think of the University of Queensland, it is with a very special affection and respect, deep in my heart.

UQ has been a part of my life since I was 17. I still remember how I felt as I stood in my white dress, black gown and mortar board on the day I matriculated – the only one from my small year 12 to be there. I had a sense then of what noble portals I was entering, and it never left me in those halcyon student days.

In 1960, my first year, everybody knew everybody, and we made what would become lifelong friendships. We were a generation who went to university on Commonwealth Scholarships, truly fortunate to have the time to read and think, to sit in the refec talking about Plato or Keats or Kennedy. We had the luxury of learning, and consequently we have a great responsibility to give back. On graduating in Law, I set off, as we all did in those days, for Europe.

When I returned in 1968, I was given an opportunity to teach in the Law School that had taught me so much. At first I was the only woman on the staff. I loved every minute of my teaching, my students so eager and engaging, my wonderful colleagues, many of them active in legal and social reform.

I always lived close to the campus. The magnificent sandstone buildings, the yearly bloom of vivid jacarandas were the backdrop of my young family's life. Picnics by the lakes, going to Campus Kindy, were essential experiences in their growing up.

These days, when I walk through the quad, memories flood back even as I take in the university's remarkable evolution. The art gallery, the world-class research institutes, the partnerships with business and industry make me feel very proud of my alma mater.

The ethos I fell in love with in 1960 is still there: an unswerving value for learning, scholarship, reflection and human wisdom. UQ remains a place for elevated thinking, where students discover themselves and their world, where teachers inspire them to engage with society in thoughtful, articulate, and ethical ways.

I am so thankful for everything UQ has given me across half of its life, and five decades of mine. With all its alumni, I acknowledge its centenary year in 2010 with pride, gratitude and love.