

Citation for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*

Professor Erkki Vartiainen, MD, PhD

Professor Erkki Vartiainen graduated in medicine in 1981 and completed his doctorate in 1983. He has been an Adjunct Professor in Public Health at the University of Kuopio in Finland since 1985 and Research Professor in National Public Health Institute since 2000. His Welfare and Health Promotion Division at the National Institute for Health and Welfare is one of the world's largest groups conducting research into the prevention of chronic diseases. He was an co-principal investigator with the North Karelia Project which was the world's most successful heart disease reduction program.

His distinguished record of consultancies and collaborations includes work for the World Health Organisation, World Bank, European Union, and national governments. Since 2004 he has been Director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Non-communicable Disease Prevention. He has published over 350 papers.

His contribution to Flinders University started in 2002 when he visited the university's Greater Green Triangle (GGT) University Department of Rural Health as a consultant and provided valued advice on the development of a research program to investigate why the Greater Green Triangle region has the highest prevalence of diabetes and heart disease in mainland Australia. Professor Vartiainen seconded Dr Tiina Laatikainen to the GGT Department of Rural Health in 2004 and she established the GGT Risk Factory Study and the GGT Diabetes Prevention Program. Professor Vartiainen then arranged for two more of his colleagues from Finland to spend their sabbaticals with the GGT Department of Rural Health to work on the projects.

Each year since 2002 he has returned to the Greater Green Triangle to take part in the department's annual two week writing retreat. During this time he trains and mentors members of the academic staff, and participates in the analysis and reporting of the research data. This has resulted in 15 publications. His visit in February 2011 will be his tenth visit to the Department of Rural Health. Despite his busy schedule and heavy research responsibilities in Finland and across Europe, he has found the time to support the GGT Department of Rural Health each year and has played an important part in strengthening our research. As a Chief Investigator on a number of research grants he has helped ensure the Department of Rural Health's grant success which has included funding from Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council.

Professor Vartiainen is held in high regard by public health researchers across the world. Flinders University is fortunate to have such a distinguished international colleague prepared to share his valuable time and expertise with our university in the support of our public health research.