Citation for the Award of Doctor of Letters (DLitt)
honoris causa

Mr Tom Gleghorn, OAM

Mr Tom Gleghorn OAM has had a distinguished career spanning more than 50 years as a painter and teacher of art, during which he has made a magnanimous contribution to the cultural fabric of Australia. He has had a long association with Flinders University through his teaching and mentorship, and through his work with the Helpmann Academy.

Born in Thornley, England in 1925, Gleghorn migrated to Australia with his family at the age of three. Settling at Warners Bay on Lake Macquarie, he grew up in a make-shift home fashioned from bush timber, white washed flour bags and an earthen floor. He credits his early interest in education and lifelong pursuit of knowledge to Joe Westcott, an ex-merchant sailor who lived in the area and introduced him to *Aesop's Fables.*

Mr Gleghorn came to prominence as a painter in 1958. Initially, upon leaving school in the mid 1940s, he had set out to become an engineer but determined to change course following a trip to the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1949. This led to work as an artist/designer for retail stores in Newcastle and Sydney while he developed his talents as a self-taught abstract painter in his spare time. By 1957 he was exhibiting in group shows. In the year following he won a string of prestigious awards including the Mosman Art Prize for watercolour, the Blake Christus Prize and Muswellbrook Art Prize. These accolades established his reputation as a creative force.

In 1958 Gleghorn was also appointed director of the Blaxland Gallery, Sydney. In 1959 he mounted his first solo exhibition to widespread critical acclaim and in 1961 was awarded the Helena Rubinstein Travelling Scholarship which took him to Europe 1962-1963.

Returning to Australia Mr Gleghorn became a committed art educator whilst continuing to maintain his own practice and regularly exhibit. He held pivotal roles at the National Art School, Sydney (1960-1968), Canberra Art School (1969) and Bedford Teachers College, latterly Sturt College of Advanced Education and now Flinders University (1970-1983). Held in high esteem by students and colleagues alike for his technical abilities as well as his skills as an innovator and motivator, Gleghorn made important contributions to practical and theoretical understandings of art education and helped inspire a new generation of artists and teachers.

A Foundation Member of the Helpmann Academy and Life Member of the Helpmann Foundation, Mr Gleghorn has also been instrumental in assisting emerging South Australian artists begin their professional lives.

In 1983 Mr Gleghorn left education to paint fulltime. Since then he has maintained his close connections with Flinders, not least by donating an important artwork housed at the Sturt campus. The University's Art Museum holds examples of his work, including a painting donated by Lena Karmel as part of her support of the Karmel Endowment Fund and its companion piece, donated by himself. Over the course of his life as a painter, Tom Gleghorn has received 30 art prizes and mounted some 60 solo exhibitions. He is represented in major Australian and international galleries, which includes a collection of 65 works at the National Gallery of Australia. At the apex of his career he was described by fellow artist and former director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Hal Missingham, as "the greatest painter in Australia". Still painting at the age of 86, he is known for his gregarious affability, wit and easy going ways. He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2006 for service to the arts as a painter and a teacher.

20 August 2011