

Ruth Grant citation

In a career spanning three continents and five decades, Professor Ruth Grant has held academic and professional practice appointments in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Ruth recently retired as Pro Vice Chancellor and Vice President of the Division of Health Sciences within the University of South Australia.

She began her career as a physiotherapist at Melbourne Hospitals, then lived and worked overseas for four years – first in Canada as a Senior Physiotherapist at the Winnipeg General Hospital and as a lecturer at the University of Manitoba, then in London as the Senior Physiotherapist at the Hammersmith Hospital and Brompton Hospital.

Ruth returned to Australia in the early 1970s. Her first Australian academic appointment was with the Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences in Melbourne and she then worked as Chief Physiotherapist at the Alfred Hospital.

In the late 1970s, Ruth came to South Australia for postgraduate study in manipulated physiotherapy. In her farewell speech, Ruth noted that South Australians often take what we have in this state for granted and rarely reflect upon it as being world standard. However, Ruth decided to move to SA for this precise reason – The South Australian Institute of Technology, a predecessor institution of UniSA, was the best place in the world to study manipulated physiotherapy. And, in Ruth's words, UniSA remains today a "second-to-none" player in Health Sciences education, internationally.

In 1981, Ruth joined the South Australian Institute of Technology as a half time lecturer whilst also working half time as a physiotherapist. Following the acceptance of this position, she enjoyed a relatively rapid rise within the institution.

In 1982 she was appointed Senior Lecturer of the School of Physiotherapy, then Head of School in 1983. From '92-'98 Ruth was Dean of the Faculty of Health and Biomedical Sciences prior to being appointed Pro Vice Chancellor of the Division of Health Sciences.

Ruth's career is notable for a number of 'firsts'. She was:

- the first female professorial appointment in the 100 year history of the South Australian Institute of Technology (in 1989)
- the inaugural Dean of the Faculty of Health and Biomedical Sciences at the University of South Australia in 1992
- the first President of the International Society of Educators in Physiotherapy, and
- the first person outside Hong Kong to be appointed Honorary Advisor to the Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association.

She is also the first physiotherapist in Australia to be awarded the title of "Professor Emeritus".

From a professional perspective Professor Grant's critical evaluation of case studies of accidents following neck manipulation published in the English language literature (1947-1986) and her critical evaluation of current clinical practice at that time, resulted in the Australian Physiotherapy Association formalising a Protocol for Premanipulative Testing of the Cervical Spine in 1988, and recommending its use for all patients prior to neck manipulation. In so doing the APA became the first professional group of any who used manipulative techniques in patient treatment in Australia and internationally to have such a protocol.

Since that time other countries' physiotherapy associations have adopted similar protocols, amongst them Canada, UK, New Zealand, South Africa and the Netherlands. The Protocol has been the springboard for a great deal of research by chiropractors and physiotherapists. This early work of Ruth's and the Protocol which derived from it, along with published work, has shaped the way physiotherapists manage patients' neck and headache problems today.

Ruth is well known as a keynote speaker at international conferences, has published widely and is on the editorial boards of two international physiotherapy journals. She is also widely known through her editorship of the text, “Physical Therapy of the Cervical and Thoracic Spine”, now in its third edition. She also remains actively engaged in research into the effects of cervical spine (neck) movements on vertebral artery blood flow.

Ruth continues to serve on many professional associations. These include:

- Chair of the Physiotherapists Board of South Australia and
- Chair of the Accreditation Committee of the Australian Council for Physiotherapy Regulating Authorities.

More widely, she is an auditor of universities with the Australian Universities Quality Agency.

Ruth’s contribution to teaching and research in physiotherapy, to the physiotherapy profession and to the University of South Australia and its antecedent institutions has been outstanding.

Chancellor, I present to you Ruth Grant for the title of “Professor Emeritus”.