

# Fact Sheet

Roseworthy Old Collegians Association Inc.

Roseworthy

## ROCA AWARD OF MERIT 1966 – Sir Allan Callaghan

**Allan Callaghan** gained his BScAg from Sydney University, then his BSc and D.Phil as New South Wales Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. He considered his experience there to be valuable throughout his life. He then completed his cadetship with the NSW Department of Agriculture at Cowra and Wagga Wagga as a Plant Breeder.

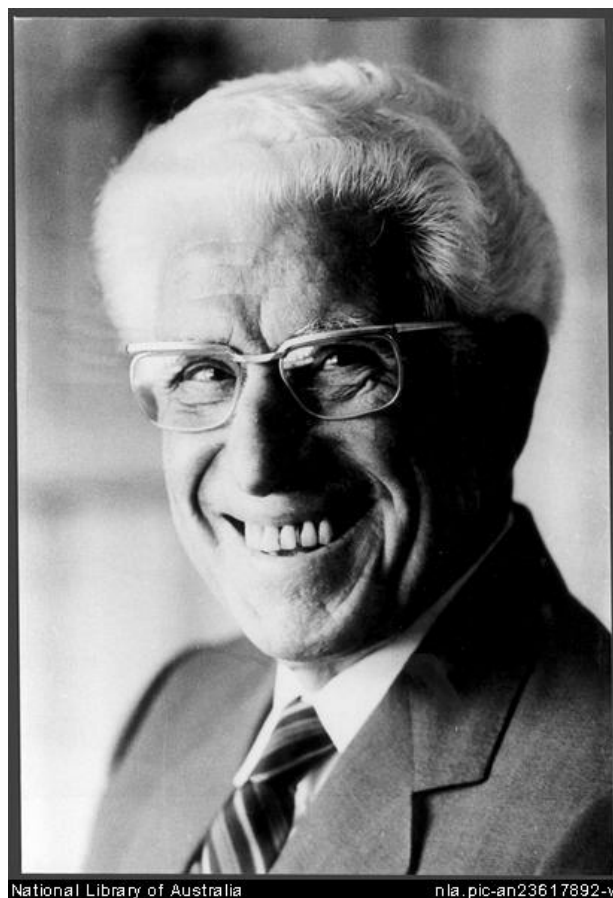
Aged 28, Allan was the youngest Principal when appointed to Roseworthy Agricultural College in 1932 where he immediately addressed issues of student discipline, administrative and managerial issues and staff problems. He then integrated livestock and farming enterprises and incorporated legumes in the widened rotation. Allan also established the sheep breeding research centre at the college. He also pursued his keen interest in plant breeding by updating wheat and other cereals breeding, and later gained national recognition for this work and a CMG in 1945 for services to agriculture.

Allan Callaghan improved the productivity of the College Farm, placed academic work on a firm basis and exhibited a deep and wide understanding of agricultural economics and farm management. Allan's contribution to the second 50 years of Roseworthy is considered as significant as that of Professor Perkins for the first 50 years. He established RAC as a training centre for agricultural technologists, extension and applied agricultural research officers and developed a complementary relationship with the University of Adelaide that had previously been seen as a competitive relationship.

Allan Callaghan's management skills, leadership, knowledge of progressive farming practices and foresight that enabled him to return Roseworthy Agricultural College to its premier position as a practical, agricultural training institution was carried forward to his subsequent position as Director of Agriculture which he held for 10 years until 1959. He was chair of numerous boards including the Land Development Executive during this period and was awarded the Farrer Medal for distinguished services to Australian Agriculture in 1954.

In 1956 he was the senior author of "The wheat industry in Australia", still the definitive text.

During his term as Director of Agriculture, he strengthened the Department's advisory services, especially in farm economics, as well as its research functions. It was this keenness to develop this latter area that caused him conflict with the then Premier, Tom Playford, and his Minister of Agriculture, Glen Pearson. This governmental frustration caused Allan significant health problems that were remedied by his changed responsibilities in his subsequent appointment as Commercial Counsellor at the Australian Embassy in Washington.



National Library of Australia

nla.pic-an23617892-v

*Photograph courtesy of the National Library of Australia (<http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an23617892>)*

*Fact Sheet compiled by Andrew L Brown from material in: "Roseworthy Agricultural College, a Century of Service", Jeff Daniels ed. 1983 and "Allan Callaghan, a life", LR Humphreys.*

*Published November 2006*

## Fact Sheet *continued*

### Roseworthy Old Collegians Association Inc



## Sir Allan Callaghan 1966

As Commercial Counsellor, Allan honed his diplomatic skills as he focussed on gathering market information that facilitated exports of Australian produce; he was also often the most senior Australian representative at FAO and other international meetings of significance. Sadly, his wife Zillah died during this period after a long battle with cancer and he subsequently married his former personal, loyal assistant, Doreen Draper.

Allan returned to Australia as Chairman of the Australian Wheat Board in 1965, a position he held until 1971. Once again, he showed great leadership in the management of the AWB, and his market intelligence and diplomatic skills enabled the board to sell huge quantities of wheat at times of world surpluses. Furthermore, his intimate knowledge of wheat itself facilitated his introduction of a revised system of wheat classification that enabled the board to sell to special markets as well as providing growers with a fair price for their grain.

Allan was awarded the ROCA Award of Merit in 1966 for his tremendous contribution to Australian agriculture through education, research, extension, administration and marketing. He was subsequently knighted in 1972 after he had retired from the AWB, then continued to serve agriculture by developing the 6th Wheat Stabilization Plan in 1972 and reviewing the functions of the South Australian Department of Agriculture in 1973, which led to the regionalisation of its extension and research functions. Sir Allan Callaghan died in 1993 at home in Adelaide.