



Among our investors, we're proud to have retired financial planners, lawyers, accountants, engineers, doctors, business people and banking executives. Hence our catchphrase, "The smart money's with Equititrust". And of course there are others of you whose mental zing is far from shabby. Take Harry Messel (Emeritus Professor AC CBE). In this man's midst, even MENSA members could feel like dimwits. The following was obtained via a University of Sydney publication.

- At age 29 he was appointed to the University of Sydney as Professor of Physics and Head of the School of Physics.
- Through the Nuclear Physics Foundation, he raised more than \$100,000,000 to support the research of the School.
- He pioneered the introduction of computers in Australia.
- He made major contributions to high school education through his famous text, now affectionately known as "The Blue Book".
- He influenced Australian science policy through his advice to government and his service to Australian government bodies.

A Life in Academia

Professor Harry Messel



Professor Harry, when did you know academic life was for you?

Probably at age four. Ever since I can remember, I was always interested in learning. I entered Kingston Military College 65 years ago and when graduating was awarded the Governor General's Medal. Later this year, I'm proud to say they're conferring an honorary DSc degree on me.

But you have plenty of degrees already...

Well, after the war I studied at Queens University, Ontario, Canada. I must have been the first person there who wanted to do two degrees simultaneously, because they had to change the by-laws. I received honours degrees in engineering physics and mathematics.

What was your role in the military?

I volunteered for the Pacific after the European Theatre. I was on leave during the bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima; after that I got out. I saw no point in being a soldier if I wouldn't be fighting.

What did you do then?

I was very eager to learn, but never sure what I wanted to do. I'm still not sure. I wanted to study medicine, geology, political science, chemistry - you name it. Anyway, I did post-graduate work on mathematics group theory and modern algebra. After that, I wanted something more practical, so I did a PhD in theoretical nuclear physics.

When did you move to Australia?

Soon after getting the PhD I became a senior lecturer at Adelaide University. You know the funniest thing? You couldn't do a PhD there, nor could you at Sydney Uni. I thought it was wrong; Australia was losing its brightest students to other countries.

When I campaigned against it, a Nobel Laureate told me Australia should stick to undergraduate work and leave PHD schooling to the British. What he didn't know was I'd already begun poaching his senior staff. Anyway, I didn't get the support I needed so I resigned.

What was your next role?

In '52 I became head of the physics school at Sydney Uni. Soon after, I set up the Nuclear Research Foundation - Frank Packer was the first member. We fought for nuclear power in the 50s and 60s. During the 60s "nuclear" became a dirty word so we changed the name to the Science Foundation for Physics.

You still advocate nuclear power?

I fought like hell for it and still believe in it. I feel, and felt, we should not only be buying uranium but enriching it.

Did you enjoy your chancellorship at Bond?

I thought Bond Uni was a wonderful idea. You get what you pay for with education; in the 50s university wasn't free. Anyway, when I joined Bond it was on the verge of bankruptcy. Thankfully Neville Wran and Malcolm Turnbull joined the board, and I'm proud to say when I left six and a half years later the place was \$42m in the black.

And finally, Professor Harry, why Equititrust?

The company's done well. The risk seems minimal and the returns are good.