

CELEBRATING AGEING RESEARCH
BETTER HEALTH IN MIDLIFE AND BEYOND



An explorer, a pioneer, inspirational, influential, passionate and determined. Fitting words to describe the founder of geriatric medicine in Western Australia, Dr Dick Lefroy.



In celebration of the enormous contribution that Dr Richard Bruce Lefroy (affectionately known as Dick), has made to the founding of Geriatric Medicine and to the teaching, rehabilitation and aged care services in Western Australia, the WA Centre for Health & Ageing

will establish the *Dick Lefroy Training Fellowship in Health & Ageing*.

This Fellowship will support aspiring leaders in the field of health and ageing to continue the journey initiated by Dr Dick Lefroy over 47 years ago.

The Fellowship aims to attract the brightest and most promising young researchers in the field of ageing, to support early career development, and to promote excellence in research, service development, and improve health and ageing in our community.

Dr Lefroy was born in Perth in 1918. After spending an extended period in hospital following an accident while serving in the British Army he decided to make medicine his career. He returned to Australia to study medicine in Melbourne and then to Perth to begin his long and influential career.

Dr Lefroy's achievements have been momentous and include:

- Introduction of assessment systems for older people;
- Establishment of rehabilitation services, day hospitals, community consultation and home visiting as essential components of aged care to Western Australia;
- Introduction of Hostel care;
- Development of dementia-specific care units;
- Recognition of Geriatric Medicine as a new medical discipline.

He has had a profound effect on the teaching of medicine and, today, still has a reputation amongst his former pupils as one of their best teachers. His approach to teaching extended well beyond the teaching of clinical skills to the demonstration of exemplary medical practice, dedication and compassion.

Dr Lefroy is a past president of both the Australian Geriatric Society and the Australian Association of Gerontology. He has authored and co-authored numerous scientific papers and book chapters in geriatric medicine and residential care.

Dr Lefroy is noted as a brilliant physician, but endearingly modest about his vast achievements. The Western Australian community is exceedingly grateful to Dr Dick Lefroy for introducing geriatric medicine to Western Australia.



About the Western Australian Centre for Health & Ageing

The WA Centre for Health and Ageing is a leading, non-profit clinical research and education Centre that has defined ageing research in Western Australia.

The WA Centre for Health and Ageing was launched in 2000 to pioneer a “new model” of collaborative multidisciplinary science that would transform ageing research in Western Australia. A unique scientific community of diverse talents was established with a singular purpose – improving the health of people in mid-life and beyond, by applying research knowledge to practice. The Centre brings together world-class researchers, clinicians and students, empowering them to work together to identify and overcome the most critical obstacles to realising the full promise of ageing research.

The Centre is organised around scientific programs covering; healthy ageing; clinical research; and health services, to build, apply, and share with scientists worldwide the knowledge needed to revolutionize disease prevention, treatment and cure for people in mid-life and beyond. The Centre runs pioneering programs in dementia, depression and frailty research with a record of success.



“We envisage that this early career experience working as a research fellow will be a career

shaping experience and accelerate our yield of future leaders in health and ageing research”, says Research Director, Professor Osvaldo Almeida.

At the heart of WACHA's purpose is filling an educational need to nurture early career researchers in their most creative years, to cultivate future scientific leaders in ageing research. The *Dick Lefroy Training Fellowship in Health & Ageing* will achieve this by supporting young researchers in the pursuit of new ideas in an intellectually stimulating environment.



Research Achievements

WACHA's discoveries have dramatically improved the lives of countless people, by providing better health outcomes, improved health services, disease treatment and new knowledge about normal ageing. It is no coincidence that *The Australian* newspaper acknowledged that WACHA had produced one of the 10 most important breakthroughs in health research in 2008.

Top Seven Discoveries

- Proved that regular physical activity postpones cognitive decline in people at risk of Alzheimer's Disease giving hope to people at risk of developing dementia;
- Located a gene that increases the risk of depression in older men, which has led to improving depression treatment;
- Found that vitamin B supplementation can lower the risk of depression and stroke;
- Confirmed the benefits of memory clinics for people with dementia which led to the establishment of memory clinics in Victoria and Western Australia;
- Showed that smoking causes brain changes and is a risk factor for dementia, therefore advancing our understanding of the dementia risk factors;
- Created Australia's first Indigenous dementia assessment tool resulting in early dementia detection in remote communities. It was found that remote Indigenous communities have 5 times the rate of dementia when compared to their non-Indigenous peers;
- Found that older people who are overweight, not obese, are less likely to die over a 10 year period than their normal weight peers, providing new evidence for the revision of the body mass index (BMI) classification system for older people.

Message from the WA Centre for Health & Ageing Chair



Dr Penny Flett
2009 West Australian of the Year

Join me in celebrating the achievements of one of Western Australia's own living treasures. It is with great pleasure that I announce the naming of the Training Fellowship in Health & Ageing in honour of Dr Dick Lefroy. Over his career he has accomplished something that has changed the way medicine and health services are administered to old people in our State; this is a colossal achievement.

For years, Dr Lefroy has been a champion of geriatric medicine and ageing research and today as a nonagenarian he is living proof of active and successful ageing. Dr Lefroy continues to engage with the medical community and has been unremittingly outspoken in his conviction that health and ageing research is the only way to tackle the challenges that present to older people.

He has worked tirelessly over his career to achieve change and continues to give his energy, vision and support to make sure that older people's health needs are kept front of mind.

As Chair of WACHA's Executive Committee, I am particularly thrilled to acknowledge and thank Dr Dick Lefroy for allowing us to honour his achievements in this way. The establishment of the *Dick Lefroy Training Fellowship in Health & Ageing* will ensure that research into ageing will continue to grow in Perth, Western Australia.

How you can be involved

By naming the training fellowship in honour of Dr Dick Lefroy, a true Western Australian pioneer, we wish to inspire our future Research Fellows to continue the pursuit of activities that will make a practical difference to the lives of people living in our community.

By establishing the *Dick Lefroy Training Fellowship in Health & Ageing* we celebrate Dr Lefroy's outstanding contribution and vision on what we can do to improve the lives of older Western Australians. In order to carry on with the important work that Dr Lefroy started 47 years ago the Centre will establish the *Dick Lefroy Training Fellowship in Health & Ageing* in perpetuity. To achieve this the Centre will need to raise \$2 million.

Supporting the *Dick Lefroy Training Fellowship in Health & Ageing*, is one of the most lasting and important gifts a donor can make to research in Western Australia.

Simply put, this accomplishes two things:

1. It honours the commitment and work Dr Lefroy has made to the field of health and ageing in Western Australia;
2. It supports our community's ongoing commitment to improve the lives of older Western Australians.

To discuss ways you can support the *Dick Lefroy Training Fellowship in Health & Ageing* contact Christianne White on +61 8 9224 2993 or email wacha@uwa.edu.au

Cheques should be made out to The University of Western Australia. Please send your donation to:

Office of Development, M361
The University of Western Australia
35 Stirling Highway
Crawley, WA 6009

We accept credit card and online donations; visit www.development.uwa.edu.au/donate/hackett

Donations over \$2 are tax deductible. 100% of your donation will go towards the *Dick Lefroy Training Fellowship in Health & Ageing*.

