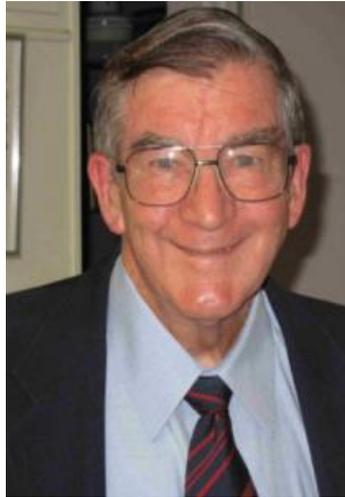


**A Tribute to Philip Gwyther Atherton
9 February 1931 – 3 September 2017**



It is with deep sadness that we have learned on 3 September that Philip Gwyther Antherton had passed away.

Philip was born in Toowoomba and lived there with his parents and three older siblings for 5 years before moving to Brisbane. He was identified as a gifted student at an early age and earned a scholarship to the Church of England Grammar School on the back of excellent primary school results. After completing high school, Philip attended the University of Queensland and obtained a Bachelor of Engineering degree with Honours and after that, a Post-Graduate Diploma in Sugar Technology. Through a friend at university, he met, fell in love with and eventually married Lynelle in 1954 and this love withstood the test of time and the raising of three children.

After completing his time at university, he began a career of nearly 40 years in sugar technology and research. His industry career began in Mackay at the Sugar Research Institute where he spent just one year before a move to Australian Estates. Here he obtained considerable practical engineering experience across the following 10 years working as a research and development engineer at the Pleystowe and Kalamia Mills. Philip then took a post as a Senior Mill Technologist at the Bundaberg research station of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations where he was to spend the next 31 years of his professional career. During this time, he was promoted to the role of Chief Mill Technologist and focused strongly on promoting engineering and chemical research and advising sugar mills and other industry organisations.

In 1993, he was seconded to the Queensland Sugar Corporation and was appointed Manager Cane and Sugar with the task to set up a new cane payment system. Philip retired in 1996 but continued to consult to the Fijian and Thai sugar industries until 2011, when he finally fully retired at the age of eighty. During this period of his life, he became the founding Chairman of the Board of the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji during 2006-2010.

Philip was a prolific writer of scientific papers and presented many of these at conferences in Australia and overseas. His keen scientific brain enjoyed defending and challenging hypotheses, findings and recommendations and many found out that he was equally forward at challenging the work of others.

His career has made a large contribution to engineering and the sugar industry. Importantly, his work led to change which is probably the highest praise that any scientist or engineer can receive. His ability to recall facts and his memory for detail were second to none.

In his spare time, he took a strong interest in local community affairs and proactively tried to improve and showcase the engineering profession. He was a founding member of the Bundaberg Higher Education Committee, which lobbied for the development of a university campus in Bundaberg and it is almost certain that the local engineering school would not be there but for Philip's foresight, determination and uniquely persuasive manner.

He served as a member and chairman of many committees including but not restricted to the following:

- TAFE advisory committee,
- the Institution of Engineers,

- the Royal Australian Chemical Institute,
- the Australian Institute of Management and
- the Australian Society of Sugar Cane Technologists (where he was a past President and Life Member and remained a regular attendee at conferences even up to 20 years after his formal industry retirement).

Outside of science and engineering, he was a member of many choirs and possessed a fine singing voice. But it was his long standing voluntary services to education development that led to him being awarded the Centenary Medal and the Order of Australia Medal in 2005.

Phil was a kind, sociable gentleman, who was knowledgeable and highly principled. He loved trouble shooting and helping others, and was never afraid to speak his mind after due consideration. Many will recall thought provoking chats and intellectually-driven conversations with him. He will be sorely missed by many sugar industry communities.

Phil was a member of ISSCT for many years, especially in 2001 when he attended the XXIV Congress in Australia where he was the co-author of a paper entitled '*Application of NIR cane analysis technology to small consignments of cane in Fiji*'. It was always a

pleasure interacting with Phil and he will be missed by his ISSCT colleagues as it will be the case for his ASSCT ones.

On behalf of ISSCT Council and Executive Committee and all the Members, we would like to convey to Phil's family our deepest sympathy and to assure them of our thoughts and prayers during this period of grief. May the Lord provide them with his peace during these difficult times.

*Information provided by Dr. Michael O'Shea, General Manager,
Research Funding Unit, Sugar Research Australia*