

APPENDIX A

Citation for the Conferral of the Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*)

David Chiem
Presented by
Distinguished Professor George Williams AO
Vice-Chancellor and President
Western Sydney University

The Board of Trustees from time to time confers honorary titles and awards on distinguished individuals who have contributed to the advancement of knowledge or the betterment of society and who have achieved eminence in their field of endeavor at a local, state, national, or international level.

Mr David Chiem is an international award-winning entrepreneur, acclaimed author and education innovator whose work has transformed early childhood education globally.

David is the visionary Founder CEO and Executive Chairman of MindChamps, a pioneering education organisation. It was described by New York Times and Wall Street Journal No.1 bestselling author Dr Joseph A. Michelli, as “**the global education movement of the 21st Century**”, in his book ***The MindChamps Way: How To Turn An Idea Into A Global Movement***.

Reflecting on MindChamps' impact, Dr Michelli wrote: “While the companies featured in my prior books, Mercedes-Benz, The Ritz Carlton Hotel Company and Starbucks, demonstrate impressive brand power, none has been in a position to fundamentally shape society on par with MindChamps.”

Driven by a vision to redefine how children learn, David has led MindChamps to achieve a historic milestone as the only education organisation to secure patents for its breakthrough approach across four major international jurisdictions - Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom and Singapore.

David's personal journey is equally remarkable.

He arrived in Australia at the age of nine, unable to speak English, however, by the age of 14 he was the first Asian actor to be cast in a starring role in a mainstream Australian television series, *Butterfly Island*.

He later performed in other iconic Australian productions including *Sons & Daughters*, *A Country Practice* and the Sydney Theatre Company's *The Shearston Shift*, breaking new ground for Asian representation in Australia's screen and theatre culture.

David studied theatre at Western Sydney University's Theatre Nepean, shaping his understanding of how people learn, perform, build confidence and form identity.

He also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of Technology Sydney, and a master's degree in Filmmaking from the Australian Film Television and Radio School.

Under his leadership, MindChamps partnered with Western Sydney University to establish the Western Sydney University–MindChamps Academy for Early Childhood Innovation, aimed at lifting standards in Australian early childhood education.

David also serves as Chairman of Actors Centre Australia, one of Australia's leading acting schools, whose alumni include its patron, Hugh Jackman. As Chairman, David spearheaded a partnership with Western Sydney University to revitalise performing arts education in Western Sydney, including the return of the Bachelor of Performing Arts Acting after an 18-year hiatus, building on the legacy of Theatre Nepean.

As an accomplished author, David has written four bestselling books on parenting and education, as well as two critically acclaimed novels, *The Full Story* and *Only the Heart*. *Only the Heart* was nominated for three Australian literary awards and was used for many years as a high school English literature text in Australia.

David's contributions to business, education and innovation have been recognised internationally through numerous honours and awards, including:

- Top Entrepreneur – Entrepreneur of the Year award by Rotary – the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises in 2008,
- Entrepreneur of the Year by the Australian Chamber of Commerce, Singapore in 2019,
- Asia's Most Influential Entrepreneur in 2022, and
- Innovator of the Year at the Singapore Business Review Management Excellence Awards in 2024.

Through his lifelong commitment to creativity, education and human potential, David Chiem has made an enduring contribution to Australian society and to the future of learning worldwide.

It is an honor for me to announce to all gathered here today that the Board of Trustees of Western Sydney University has resolved to confer the award of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa), on Mr. David Chiem, in recognition of his significant commitment to education in the arts and to Western Sydney University.

Chancellor, I present to you Dr. David Chiem.

Formal Conferral

by Professor Jennifer Westacott AC, Chancellor of Western Sydney University

In the name of the Board of Trustees, and by the authority vested in me, I confer upon you the award of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*).