

It's never too old to graduate!

They say learning is a life-long journey and for Dr David Bottomley who has become Australia's oldest recent PhD graduate at 94 that couldn't be more accurate.

Dr Bottomley graduated from Curtin University, Perth with a Doctor of Philosophy after completing his thesis, which examined the teaching methods of five progressive English educators who introduced an understanding of science into the curriculum from 1816 to 1885.

Having started his career in the 1940's teaching science at a country school, completing his Masters degree at the University of Melbourne aged 84 in 2008 and now his PhD, his academic career spans 72 years.

It is evident when he speaks that he has discovered, understood and absorbed a wealth of information, knowledge and wisdom. When explaining his studies, he reels off dates describing the process of how he went back into history exploring 19th century approaches to science education so as to apply them to the contemporary context. When asked what he learned about himself throughout this process, he responds by saying that he "is merely the same old cranky character".

Dr Bottomley enrolled to study for 8 years part-time, however, he finished a year ahead of schedule not taking any leave even when he had a knee operation. His PhD was completed via correspondence "using email and telephone. Every month I would have a meeting with my professor where we debated and discussed. He had no real fixed routine and that [the doctorate] was hard work."

His studies included travelling to London to visit museum archives for research as well as presenting his work at a conference in Canada. Dr Bottomley has no intention of slowing down, hoping to extend his Doctorate on the impact of creativity in school curricula.

David's wife is a resident at MannaCare's Doncaster Melaleuca Lodge (DML). He regularly visits Anne who herself is a remarkable teacher having taught "English, Geography, French, Latin and whatever was required in a country school." They have been married for 68 years have four children, 13 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Now that he has finished his studies "for now" he intends to devote more time to Anne, going to the cinema and spending time in nature.

Well done David!



Photo credits: Jaimi Joy

Thank you to Curtin University Media Relations Manager; and MannaCare DML staff Shantel Innes, Facility Manager and Denise.