Wirrabara Surgeon Honoured in Special Ceremony

Friday 18 August, 2017

Wirrabara local and retired Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS), Mr Peter Byrne, was this evening presented with an Outstanding Service to the Community Award in recognition of his long and distinguished career.

The RACS award was presented by Dr Phil Worley, Deputy Chair of the College’s South Australian Regional Committee in a surprise ceremony to Mr Byrne at the RACS Adelaide Office.

Award recognises surgeons with a dedicated history of service to their local community, without whom the standard of surgical care in that community would have been less than society expects,” Dr Worley said.

Upon gaining his RACS Fellowship in 1975, Mr Byrne quickly developed a reputation as a gifted and dedicated surgeon. Over his long career Mr Byrne helped to improve the lives of thousands of patients, and was highly regarded as a fine surgical teacher who provided guidance to many generations of young Trainees.

However, it has not only been his surgical abilities that endeared Mr Byrne to the community that he served. He became involved in the military from a young age, and provided almost half a century’s worth of dedicated service.

His military career included serving as a Major in Vietnam, and also as a United Nations Military Surgeon is East Timor. Among his many accolades, he was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia Military Division in 1992, and between 1990 and 1993 he served as an Honorary Surgeon to the Governor General.

Friend and colleague Mr Trevor Pickering, who provided a citation for Mr Byrne, said the award was well deserved and that Mr Byrne was held in high regard across the surgical profession, the military and within the community.

“His main areas of interest have been the practice and teaching of surgery and military history and he has been highly successful in both.”

“He had a remarkable military career culminating in being promoted to full colonel – clear recognition of his major contribution to the community.”

“Further evidence of his contributions are found in his active involvement as a member of the RSL, as well as his position as Board Member of ‘Exercise Trojan’s Trek’, an organisation which provides psychological rehabilitation for young Vietnam veterans.”

“He has also been involved in sports medicine, in particular as a medical officer for teams in the SA National Football League for nearly 20 years. He has also been Medical Officer for the South Australian Cricket Association which has involved care of the Australian Cricket Team at the Adelaide Oval. His interest in local rural sport continues with his support of his local football team.”

Mr Byrne was joined at the ceremony by family, friends and former colleagues who all helped celebrate his decorated career and outstanding service.

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