

ASSESSING A VICE-CHANCELLORSHIP GEORGE WHITECROSS PATON PROFESSOR EMERITUS JOHN POYNTER

George Paton was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne for seventeen years, a tenure unlikely to be surpassed. The popular young Dean of Law was widely praised when appointed in 1951, and even more widely criticised—on several grounds, some of them contradictory—when he retired in 1968. His role over such a long period is indeed difficult to assess.

John Poynter, who wrote of this period (with Carolyn Rasmussen) in *A Place Apart* and has recently written the entry on Paton for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, had a good deal to do with him (mainly in Rhodes Scholarship matters) from 1951, and much more after becoming Ernest Scott Professor of History in 1966, two years before Paton retired. He was involved in the restructuring of the University under Paton's successor, David Derham, first as a member of Council, then as Chairman of the Professorial Board and finally as a Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Now a Professorial Fellow in the School of Historical Studies, he discusses in this paper the main issues to be considered in assessing Paton's Vice-Chancellorship.



Sir George Paton at opening of Redmond Barry building, University of Melbourne, with (seated) Premier the Hon. Henry Bolte, Chancellor Sir Arthur Dean, and Professor R.D. Wright, 22 November 1961 (detail). University of Melbourne Archives, UMA/1/1098.

1.00–2.00pm
Wednesday, 21 October 2009

Leigh Scott Room
1st Floor, Baillieu Library

Enquiries

Dr James Waghorne
The History of the University Unit
(03) 8344 4154 / jwag@unimelb.edu.au



The History of the University Unit is funded by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Relations), and is based in the Australian Centre, School of Historical Studies.