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Media statement on the Northern Territory education luminary, Nancy Giese

The Menzies School of Health Research is deeply saddened to hear of the passing of education pioneer and 2001 Northern Territory Senior Australian of the Year, Nancy Giese, AO OBE MBE.

Nancy 'Nan' Giese was resolute in her commitment to providing educational opportunities for Territorians, and along with her late husband, Harry, "central to the establishment of the Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin," says Menzies' Professor Bart Currie, Infectious Diseases Physician at the Royal Darwin Hospital.

Nan's unwavering passion for education and its ability to improve the Territory's social and cultural fabric saw her elected Chancellor of the Northern Territory University for 10 years (1993-2004) and receive an honorary Doctorate in Education (2004).

As she once said: "If you are passionate and obsessive about what you are hoping to achieve, prepared to work hard, and never, never give up, despite all the setbacks, you will succeed in the end."

Senior Australian of Year (2000) and former Menzies' microbiologist, Dr Valerie Asche, AM, says of Nan: "She was devoted to the advancement of education in the Northern Territory. She supported her husband in the setting up of the Menzies School of Health Research, and continued this interest up to the School's amalgamation with the Northern Territory University. She was meticulous in her preparation for meetings and incredibly intelligent – she kept her zeal for education her whole life."

Menzies Operations Manager, Susan Hutton adds that "Nan was a wonderful, gracious lady who, along with Harry and their family, made Menzies' matters a priority – years before the School was established in Darwin."

The Menzies community extends its sincere condolences to the Giese family as we remember and draw inspiration from Nan's leadership, as well as from her profound belief in the importance of education and research that belonged to, and served, the NT.

"She was a wonderful friend of the Territory, and of course of Menzies," says the School's director, Professor Jonathan Carapetis.

Executive Director of The Menzies Foundation, Professor John Mathews, offers this final sentiment: "Nan Giese was a warm and gracious person with a deep commitment to the Northern Territory and to education. I first came to know Nan when Menzies was being established, and through the Council of what was then the Northern Territory University. As someone who understood the north, Nan Giese was a crucial player in helping to build a university ethos in a frontier society. We greatly admired her as a person and we mourn her passing."

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