
Sir Douglas Nicholls



Sir Douglas and Lady Nicholls

“This is a tremendous thing. It’s something for all Aborigines, not just for me” said Douglas Nicholls after being knighted Sir Douglas Nicholls in the Queen’s birthday honours list. Already having received the Order of the British Empire (OBE) award, Sir Douglas is the first Aboriginal to receive a knighthood.

The 65-year old pastor of the Church of Christ has spent his life working for the welfare of his people. It was appropriate therefore that the award should read “For distinguished services to the advancement of the Aboriginal people.”

In his younger days Sir Douglas was a good boxer, a top-class sprinter and a champion Australian rules footballer for Northcote, Fitzroy and Victoria. Today he is the grandfather of twenty children, the youngest of whom was born on the day his knighthood was announced.

At the moment he works as public relations officer for the Aborigines Advancement League. He took up this position in March of this year. Last September he quit as chairman and director of the league in Victoria because of what he described as the frustration and desperation of years of working for his people. He returned at that time to Cumeragunga, a reserve on the banks of the Murray, to live with the people with whom he grew up, the Yoti Yoti tribe.

Throughout his long career Sir Douglas has been a pastor of the Church of Christ Aborigines Mission. At various times he has also held executive positions on the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and on the National Tribal Council. He has been chairman of the National Aboriginal Sports Foundation.

Today Sir Douglas Nicholls continues his work for the welfare of his people with the Advancement League for whom he has worked for the last 15 years.