



Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Parliament of Queensland

Media Statement

Tuesday 18 May 2010

PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY CELEBRATES ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Queensland's colonial history was brought to life today as part of celebrations of the Queensland Parliamentary Library's 150th anniversary.

The parliament's first librarian, Colonel Charles Gray, was honoured as part of the celebrations with the launch of his biography and the donation of his portrait to the parliament at a function in the historic Legislative Council Chamber.

The author of Colonel Gray's biography, Emeritus Professor Kenneth Dutton, said the parliament's first librarian was a highly respected figure in the early days of the Queensland colony due to his military history.

"Colonel Gray came from a military family and as captain in the Rifle Brigade fought against Napoleon's army in 1810 and 1811," Professor Dutton said.

"After his army service, Gray came to Australia and made an enduring mark on the new colony of Queensland – initially as Police Magistrate at Ipswich, the highest ranking official in Ipswich at that time.

"In 1860 Colonel Gray was handpicked by Queensland's first Governor, Sir George Bowen, to be the Librarian and Usher of the Black Rod for Queensland's first parliament," Professor Dutton said.

The biography of Colonel Gray, 'That Gallant Gentleman' was officially launched by Speaker John Mickel at a function attended by descendants of Colonel Gray and past and present staff of the Parliamentary Library.

Mr Mickel said that the people of Queensland could be proud of the Parliamentary Library and its 150 year history.

"This week we mark 150 years of parliamentary democracy in Queensland which is a significant achievement for anywhere in the world to claim.

"For each and all of those 150 years, the Queensland Parliament has been professionally served by a library that has informed and educated Members of Parliament and preserved Queensland's history through its records, archives and significant collections.

"This rich history of information that is managed by the Parliamentary Library is a treasure belonging to the people of Queensland and I congratulate the library on their 150th anniversary," Mr Mickel said.

Mr Mickel also thanked Colonel Gray's descendants, represented by the Hancock family and in particular Colonel Gray's great great grand-daughter Mrs Ann Hancock, for their generous donation to the parliament of a portrait of Colonel Gray.

"I take a special interest in parliamentary portraits and on behalf of the Queensland Parliament I'm very pleased to receive the portrait of the first ever Parliamentary Librarian and Usher of the Black Rod," Mr Mickel said.

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