



ROCA AWARD OF MERIT 1996 – Robert Knappstein

Bob Knappstein (RDOen, 1947) was born into a grape growing winemaking family in the Clare Valley. After primary and secondary schooling at Clare, he arrived at Roseworthy in 1943. In 1947, he graduated with a first class honours Diploma in Oenology, was dux of his year and won the Gold Medal.

From 1947 to 1959 he worked in the McLaren Vale region, firstly as a wine chemist and eventually as the technical manager for S Smith & Co at its Tatachilla Vineyards. He then spent a short time as cellar master at Woodley Wines, Glen Osmond. After 17 vintages in Australia he joined Penfolds Wines (NZ) Ltd in Auckland in 1964 for the first of his 23 New Zealand vintages. In 1974 Bob transferred to McWilliams Wines at Napier, Hawkes Bay, as Production Manager and Alternate Director and continued with the merged company of Cooks McWilliams until his retirement in 1986. During his years of winemaking. Bob undertook pioneering work with New Zealand brandy and with oak maturation of Chardonnay. He produced many top award winning wines, including the landmark 1978 McWilliams Chardonnay.

Bob's contribution to the industry extended beyond his involvement with individual wine companies. He was a member of the Wine Council Committee for five years between 1970 and 1974 and was a supporter of the formation of the Wine Institute of New Zealand.

Bob was also a wine judge, judging at both the National Wine Show and the Easter Show for whom he played a key administrative role as a member of the A&P Wine Show Committee. In other industry roles, Bob, with both viticultural and winery workers, and between 1979 and 1986 was on industry viticultural research committees. At regional levels Bob was also very active and was Charter Chairman

of Hawkes Bay Vintners between 1979 and 1981. This was a consortium of all local winemakers set up to promote Hawkes Bay as a Premium Wine Region of New Zealand.

Following his retirement in 1986 Bob acted as competition Director for the Air New Zealand Wine Awards, a role he distinguished for five years. In 1995 he was awarded a Fellowship of the Wine Institute of New Zealand for services to the New Zealand Industry. The citation for that award sums up what his extraordinary commitment to the industry. *“Mr Robert O (Bob) Knappstein made a lifelong commitment to producing quality wine through the senior positions held with New Zealand wine companies and his active involvement in industry affairs.”*

