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Oct 1, 2017



The McCormicks: Special awards will be presented for success at solo drumming championships

Australia's first principal of drumming Alex McCormick will be honoured at the 2017 Australian Solo Drumming Championships in Canberra next weekend where more than 45 drummers have entered for the premier event being hosted by Canberra College of Piping and Drumming.

Champions and placegetters in each event at the titles will receive The Alex McCormick Award certificate recognising their achievement. The certificates have been developed by Pipe Bands Australia and Principal Drumming Dean Hall.

Alex was born in Clydebank, Scotland, in December 1913. In 1936 Alex joined the City of Glasgow Police Pipe Band, winning the Worlds in 1936 to 1939, and again in 1946, 1949 and 1951 and the drum corps 1938, 1946, 1951 and 1952 – the last two with Alex as drum sergeant.

He came to Australia in 1952 along with several other leading Scottish pipers and drummers recruited to reform the Castlemaine Highland Pipe Band before then competing with Melbourne Highland and later teaching at Scotch College.

From 1949 to 1952, Alex had been Principal of Drumming at the Scottish Pipe Band Association College. In this position he was involved as a teacher and also active in the development of the syllabus.

In Australia, he continued SPBA College examinations in Australia for a time and was a leading proponent of the idea of an Australian college examination system. This did not happen until 1967, when Alex became the founding Principal of Drumming of the Australian Pipe Band College, a position he held until 1979. Alex retired to Ballarat and until his passing in 2007 aged 93, continued to teach and assist bands as well as being a respected drumming adjudicator.

PBA president Chris Earl said: "Alex McCormick is rightly regarded as one of the greats of the pipe band world who contributed to the advancement of drumming in his native Scotland and his adopted Australia.

"We are committed to recognising those in our history who have made profound contributions to advancement of our movement and Alex McCormick is certainly one of those people."

Principal Drumming Dean Hall said: "Every drummer in Australia owes so much to the passion, drive and vision of Alex McCormick establishing a world-recognised education

passion, drive and vision of Alex McCormick solidifying a world recognised education and training syllabus in Australia.

"Without a doubt one of the greatest, if not the greatest, pipe band drumming teachers we have ever had, Alex influenced generations of young drummers."

Both said the McCormick Awards would be highly appreciated by today's drummers forging the same pathways in performance that Alex had encouraged throughout his life.

The Australian Solo Drumming Championships will be held on Sunday 8 October.



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