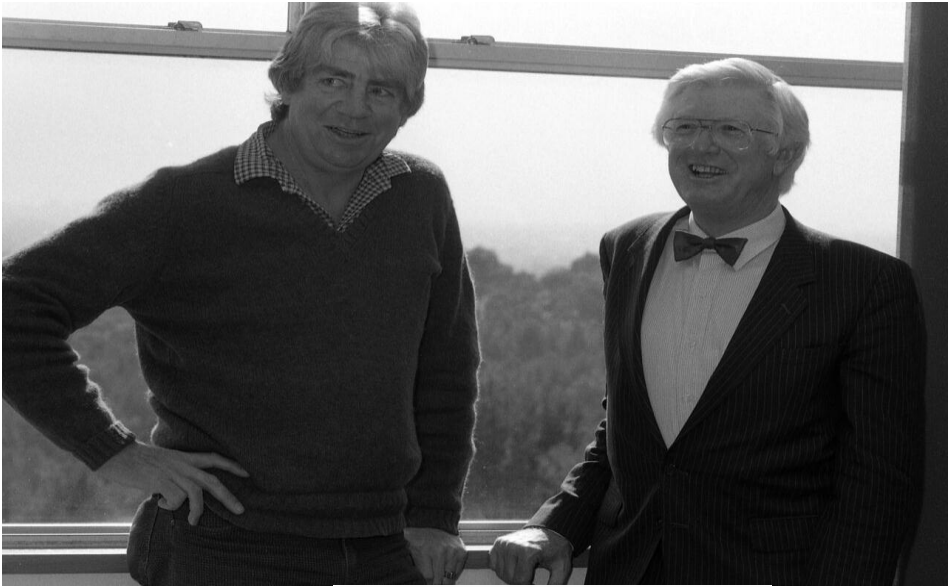


## **New Literatures “Pioneer”: Syd Harrex**



Syd Harrex with Professor John Lovering, Flinders VC (1987-1995)

I would have registered the presence of Syd Harrex in my undergraduate years at Flinders University as an amiable, somewhat shambling chap with the ability to talk about poetry in a quietly enthusiastic and not at all esoteric manner. Later, as I became caught up in the thrills of being at the cutting edge of things by studying Australian and then Commonwealth writing, I would experience Syd's good humour and his ability to prod things along genially without entering into the rancour and polemic of academic change. On the basis of his personality and his generous hospitality, both at home and at work, Syd built up a close circle of committed scholars and friends, a journal reviewing literature from across the globe, many conferences, and worked with the Adelaide Festival of Arts and his own Centre for Research in the New Literatures in English to turn a small faculty a long way from metropolitan bustle into a lively centre of constant visits by writers and critics from India, Africa, the West Indies, Canada, South East Asia and beyond. It was probably New Zealand scholar-poet Vincent O'Sullivan who pronounced Syd "a legend in his own lunchtime," and around the lunch table gathered people like Haydn Williams, Andrew Taylor, Bruce Bennett, Helen Tiffin, Anna Rutherford, C.D. Narasimhaiah, Jack Unterecker, Eddie Baugh, Wilson Harris, Albert Wendt, R.K. Narayan, Ee Tiang Hong, Edwin Thumboo, Yasmine Gooneratne and host of others. Apart from having the gift of keeping Vice Chancellors willing

to underwrite such an enterprise, Syd was an avid tennis player, a cricket enthusiast and increasingly over time, an accomplished poet. He leaves a great legacy amongst all those he taught, supervised and supported so congenially.

**Paul Sharrad**  
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