

# ABC journo's legacy to education

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In an office overlooking Foveaux street in Sydney's inner-city Surry Hills, the goddaughter of late ABC journalist Caroline Jones handed over the last of her estate - a \$1.7m bequest to the high school education of Indigenous students.

Two years after Jones's death, Kate Cadell, who referred to Jones as her "twin", said it was a relief and a privilege to finalise her affairs, with two scholarships to the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF).

"In making this bequest, we hope that by lending Caroline's name it may assist the AIEF in its activities," Ms Cadell told the room, packed with AIEF staff including foundation executive director Andrew Penfold.

One of the scholarships was named after Jones, who died aged 84; the other was named after her parents, who inspired her sense of public duty and social justice from an early age.

"Caroline requested, if possible, a scholarship be designed in the name of her parents Brian and Nancy James. Caroline was too humble to request personal recognition," Ms Cadell said.

Her friend and ABC colleague Helen Grasswill said Jones's commitment to the "betterment of conditions of Indigenous people began very young" and continued throughout her career.

"When Caroline entered journalism, she dedicated her work to social justice issues ... and Indi-



BRITTA CAMPION

**Andrew and Michelle Penfold with Caroline Jones's goddaughter Kate Cadell and friend Helen Graswill**



genous rights and welfare were among her priorities," said Ms Grasswill, who worked on Australian Story with Jones for about two decades.

When Jones retired in 2017, the ABC set up a cadet scholarship in her name for up-and-coming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytellers.

"It began in 2018 and each year Caroline wrote to every single applicant - not simply the winners - offering her support and in many cases, mentorship," Ms Grasswill said.

"And I was thinking recently

how wonderful it would be if, one day, an AIEF education scholarship-holder were to go on to receive one of these ABC cadet scholarships."

Mr Penfold said Jones "was a dedicated supporter of our work" throughout her life.

"Caroline was deeply committed to Reconciliation and supporting young Indigenous people to achieve their dreams," he said.

"When Caroline passed away, we were deeply moved to learn she had left the remainder of her estate to AIEF. This gesture speaks volumes about her belief, shared with her parents, that all children deserve the best education possible."

From 2008 to 2023, AIEF has supported 1200-plus graduates and current students from 400 Indigenous communities.