



Prof. Dr Wichit SRISA-AN
Former Minister of Education, Thailand

The 'Father of Distance Education' in his native Thailand, Professor Dr Wichit Srisa-an, who recently completed a two-year term as his country's Minister of Education. He holds first degrees from Chulalongkorn University and Masters and PhD degrees in Educational Administration from the University of Minnesota, USA.

Over the past 40 years, Professor Wichit has served his country with great distinction both as a civil servant as well as an educationist. He played a major role in the establishment of Thailand's only dedicated open and distance learning university the Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) and served as STOU's Founding President for 10 years from 1978. Since its establishment, STOU has produced nearly 400,000 graduates. It has a current enrolment of 145,000 students who are mainly working adults.

During his career, Professor Wichit has held the office of Rector or Founding Rector of five other universities while serving as the Deputy Permanent Secretary and then Permanent Secretary, Ministry of University Affairs from 1974 to 1994. He has also published five major research reports on higher education and education reform, 10 text books and more than 60 journal papers.

Professor Wichit entered politics in 1988 in an attempt to hasten the adoption of educational reforms. He was Senator from 1988 to 2000 and Member of Parliament from 2001 to 2004. As Minister of Education from 2006 to 2008, he promoted lifelong learning to prepare the Thai people for the challenges of the knowledge-based company.

Professor Wichit's contributions have received recognition through numerous national and international awards. He has also been conferred Honorary Doctorates by six Thai and three overseas universities. He is currently the Executive Vice President of Chulabhorn Research Institute besides holding the Council Chairmanship of five different universities.



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