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AUSTRALIA'S PIONEERING HORDERN FAMILY BACKS QUEENSLAND POLAR EXPLORER ON ANTARCTICA MISSION -- 108 years after backing Mawson's legendary expedition --

(Sydney, October 21, 2019) Veteran Australian explorer Dr Geoff Wilson is about to embark on a three-month unassisted voyage across Antarctica in an attempt to break the record for the longest solo expedition ever made by a human in a polar region.

The expedition commences early November and is made possible in part by a donation from filmmaker and philanthropist Samuel Hordern, the great grandson of Sir Samuel Hordern who supported Sir Douglas Mawson's now-famous Australasian Antarctic Expedition more than 100 years ago.

Mawson named the Antarctic ice-free cape, Cape Hordern, after his benefactor, who donated a generous 2,500 pounds (about \$500,000 today) for the intrepid explorer to complete his voyage.

Dr Wilson, who trained on the beaches near his Gold Coast home in Queensland, will traverse about 5,800km across the icy continent as he strives to become the first Australian to make it to the Pole of Inaccessibility – and the first person to climb Dome Argus, the highest point on the polar plateau, where temperatures can fall to -82.5 degrees.

Naturally, Mawson is one of Dr Wilson's heroes.

"I am honoured to have the support of one of Australia's pioneering families, who have supported exploration for generations," said Dr Wilson.

"To think that 108 years ago the Hordern family enabled the great explorer Mawson, my absolute hero, to accomplish his Antarctic mission, and that today they are supporting mine. It is truly humbling."

The Hordern family financial contribution will go towards Wilson's compulsory search and rescue (SAR) operation in Antarctica – including paying for a Russian support aircraft and a pilot on standby each day for the 91 days.

“Since my family arrived in Australia in 1825 we have been pioneers and supporters of pioneers,” said Mr Hordern, who met the explorer in May when he was invited to join Wilson in New Zealand to experience his polar training first hand.

The two bonded over Mawson, a shared concern for how climate change is affecting the polar caps, and Cape Hordern, the ice-free cape Mawson named after Mr Hordern’s great grandfather. Dr Wilson is even training Hordern to face the elements so that he may fulfil his own goal of revisiting the Cape, which the two plan to do together in 2020.

“The legacy side is very important to me – continuing our family’s tradition with supporting Antarctic exploration,” said Mr Hordern.

“When I went training with Geoff I was able to see his faith and the way that guides him: in those conditions he was in his element. When Geoff is in those polar conditions it is like he is coming home. He may be from the Gold Coast, but he has the soul of an Eskimo and the spirit of a white wolf!”

The Horderns rose to prominence in Australia in the late 1800s as the founders of Anthony Hordern and Sons, Australia’s largest department store. They were also pioneers in the agricultural and animal industries and Hordern’s great, great uncle Lebbeus Hordern introduced the first seaplane to Australia.

“Our family has been at the forefront of leading Australia into new and exciting areas and human exploration epitomises this,” said Mr Hordern. “It is a journey into the unknown; it is treading the path that others are too afraid to walk.

Dr Wilson will commence his voyage on November 7, providing live feeds, video and photos via The Longest Journey website using the latest satellite phone technology. For updates visit: <https://www.thelongestjourney.com.au/>

About The Longest Journey: In November, 2019, Dr Geoff Wilson will embark on a three-month journey across Antarctica, one of the harshest environments on the planet, in an attempt to complete the longest solo journey ever made by a human in a polar region by traversing alone and unassisted across approximately 5,800km. Dr Wilson also strives to be the first Australian to make it to the Pole of Inaccessibility on the Antarctic Plateau, and the first person to climb Dome Argus (the coldest naturally occurring place on earth). The expedition is made possible thanks to the generous support of sponsors and partners: The Hordern Family, Pivotal, Iridium, Wild Earth, VetLove, Rhythm Snow Sports, Marmot, Salomon and Scarpa.

About Geoff Wilson

Dr Geoff Wilson is a veterinary surgeon, founder of 5th Element Expeditions and World Record holding adventurer. Recognised in the Australian Museum’s “50 Trailblazers” of all time, Dr Wilson holds the current record for the fastest Coast to Coast crossing via the South Pole of the Antarctic continent (53 days), the fastest crossing of Greenland south to north (18 days), the first and only wind assisted crossings of the Sahara Desert (42 days) and the infamous Torres Strait (3 days).