Professor Fred Henry George Gruen AO (1921–1997) was an early and influential voice in favour of free trade and Australian tariff reductions in the 1960s and 1970s. He was born in Vienna, Austria and was sent to school in England in 1936. At the outbreak of World War II he was classified as an enemy alien. In 1940 he was sent to Australia on the prison ship Dunera and interned at Hay, NSW, where, at age 19, his portrait was painted by Erwin Fabian, another Jewish alien in Hay.

Fred enrolled in Melbourne University in 1941 and served in the Australian Army before completing his commerce degree. He then joined the exceptional NSW Department of Agriculture where he worked for twelve years. His first appointment at ANU was in 1959 with the Economics Department in the Research School of Social Sciences. He then became the Professor of Agricultural Economics at Monash. He also bought a farm there and says that in his early years at Monash “he was one lecture ahead of his students and one fence ahead of the cattle.”

In 1971 Fred accepted a professorship in the Research School of Social Sciences at ANU but spent 1972-1975 advising the Whitlam government on economic policy. During this period he served on the Rattigan Committee that recommended the 25 per cent tariff reduction of July 1973. As head of the RSSS Economics, 1975 - 1985, he founded the university’s pioneering Centre for Economic Policy Research. He became President of the Economic Society of Australia and of the Academy of the Social Sciences. He continued to advise on economic policy into the 1990s.

The Gruen family endowment to the ANU has led to the establishment of the FH Gruen Public Lectures and Distinguished Fellowships for researchers in the fields of economic and welfare policy.

“Fred Gruen was a remarkable influence in Australian economics. He had a presence, a charisma and a rare sense of what really matters for the economics profession.”  Bob Gregory

Due to his contribution to the ANU in the economics sphere, the Research School of Economics has decided to re-name the Arndt Faculty Suite in his honour.