



Australian & New Zealand Academy of Management

TRIBUTE TO BRUCE GURD

It is with great sadness we acknowledge the passing of long time ANZAM scholar, Professor Bruce Gurd. Professor Gurd was an active and intellectually generous ANZAM scholar, contributing to the executive leadership of our association over a period of several years, in the positions of: *Treasurer (2011-2012; 2014)*, *Executive committee (2009-2011)*, *President Elect (2012)*, *President (2013)*, *Immediate past president (2014)* and *awarded ANZAM Life Fellow (2015)*.

Bruce was a huge supporter of ANZAM especially as a mentor and senior scholar. Our thoughts are with Bruce's family at this time.

Professor Kerry Brown, ANZAM President 2022

Bruce Gurd, a much loved and respected member of the business education community, passed away on the 27th of May a week after a tragic bicycling accident. He was 65.

Bruce retired from university life in 2018 at the relatively young age of 61. This was not due to a lack of passion for the academic profession, but rather due to his other great passions in life that he was looking forward to devoting his time to. When I spoke to him recently he was very much enjoying retirement time with his beloved family, and especially his wife Rosemary, his mother, his children and beloved grandchildren, and spending time on church pursuits.

I first met Bruce in 2000 as a member of the selection panel for my first academic role at the University of South Australia. His human warmth was obvious and unmistakable. When I took the job our kindly and wise dean Rod Oxenberry asked Bruce to be my mentor. Bruce took on this role with gusto, and we became firm friends.

Bruce's deep empathy for the people around him was a characteristic of his career. In all the years I knew him, I never heard him speak ill of anyone. He had a wry sense of humour, but this was never at anyone else's expense. He always gave wise counsel and never broke a confidence. He was a person who personified trust and responsibility.

His PhD, completed at the University of Adelaide in 1999, was ostensibly focused on the introduction of activity-based costing in a government utility. However, it was in reality a study of the human and organisational risks of a doctrinal approach to change management. He later wrote the following:

I had experienced with the staff their frustration towards management and their ultimate political masters, their sadness at the rapid departure of so many long-term valued colleagues, their turmoil of continuing restructurings and change, the feelings of humiliation as they experienced the devaluation of long-developed skills and knowledge, the sense of unfairness of benchmarking against organisations removed in time and space, the concern of the abandonment of any community obligations.

This passage was pure Bruce – nothing can ever be good if it destroys communities or humiliates individuals.

While strictly an accounting academic, Bruce was never too concerned with intellectual boundaries. Once freed from the shackles of the PhD he read and wrote widely. As a PhD advisor he often adapted to the interests of his students, becoming interested in all manner of fields. He won multiple conference awards with his students in diverse areas of research.

His last teaching activities were in the University of Adelaide's MBA program, teaching innovation management. This was a fitting end to his academic career. He was a true renaissance academic – full of ideas while embracing the new.

Bruce became actively involved in ANZAM in the 2000s, culminating in his presidency in 2013 and appointment as a Life Fellow in 2015. His role in ANZAM allowed colleagues nationally and internationally to meet Bruce. All who did remember his good humour, care for propriety and for the people around him.

Anyone who knew Bruce beyond an academic level knew of his great passion and commitment to his Christadelphian faith. In many ways his faith defined his world view, enhancing his appreciation of the human condition while empathising with and practically helping those less fortunate. Bruce's own life journey, and especially his travels to Asia, mellowed him as he encountered life's rich tapestry in China and Southeast Asia. Along the way he met and mentored dozens of PhD and Master's students. His premature greyness and happy countenance was the epitome of the ideal academic for his students abroad. He left an enduring legacy wherever he taught.

Those of us who knew and loved Bruce find it hard to imagine he's no longer with us. One of his former PhD students said to me recently that Bruce, more than anyone, is responsible for the good life he and his family now enjoy. As a person who cared for and built up those around him, Bruce would be delighted to hear these words. He made a positive difference wherever he happened to be. This more than anything, is the legacy of our wonderful colleague and friend.

Tribute written by Professor John Rice, MBA, PhD, College of Business, Zayed University