



Judge Pepuleai Roma, first USP law graduate to the bench

Judge Pepuleai with his wife at the swearing in ceremony.

For the first time in the legal history of Samoa, a graduate of The University of the South Pacific (USP) was sworn in as a Judge.

Judge Pepuleai graduated from USP Vanuatu Law Campus in 1998 and entered the bar in 1999.

"Your admission to the bar in Fiji meant that you immediately became eligible to apply to practice in 12 jurisdictions of the USP member countries, a first for any law school," said Mareva Betham – Annandale, President of the Samoa Law Society.

At the time of Judge Pepuleai's admission to the Samoan bar in 1999, the USP law graduate was "an unknown quantity".

"It was a time when many questioned the quality of law students produced by the USP Law School, and their credibility as lawyers," said Mareva.

Attorney General Aumua Ming Leung Wai remembered how Pepuleai's family went to the Prime Minister to allow Pepuleai to take law in New Zealand.

However, the change in Government policies would not allow it, as all law students had to go to USP to take up law and Pepuleai was one of them.

Aumua believes the appointment of Pepuleai to the bench will be a challenge to all USP law graduates.

In his welcome speech, Chief Justice Patu Tiavaasue Falefatu Sapolu cautioned Pepuleai of the tough work ahead of him.

He said that the Courts have had an eye on Pepuleai for some time but wondered if an offer would be accepted or not.

His Honour spoke highly of Pepuleai's character as a lawyer who has appeared regularly before the Court, as calm, committed, soft-spoken and always well prepared in representing the interests of his clients – characteristics he is certain will do him well in his new position as a Judge.

Pepuleai's appointment brings the number of judges to eight, 4 for the Supreme and 4 for the District Courts. He will mainly deal with Court of Appeal cases in the Lands and Titles Court which is a growing area of cases following the decisions of the lower court.

Judge Pepuleai was emotional when he acknowledged the appointment and the support from his lawyer colleagues, family and friends.

He made special mention of his former mentor Ms. Katalaina Sapolu and legal partner Patrick Pepuleai.

In June 2001, he joined the Sapolu and Lussick Barristers and Solicitors firm as a staff solicitor.

"She encouraged me to research more and persevere in following the law," said Judge Pepuleai of her mentor Katalaina who has since left Samoa to work for the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.

"It was Katalaina who encouraged me to continue the firm by myself when she left to work with the Commonwealth," said Judge Pepuleai.

Against all odds, he established his own law firm known as Ameperosa T. Roma Law which he operated for six years before merging with Patrick Pepuleai to form the Pepuleai & Roma Law Firm.

Pepuleai's legal career started at the Inland Revenue Department in 1998 before taking up a legal position with the Samoa National Provident Fund from 2000 to 2001.

Bringing a light hearted moment to the subdued swearing in ceremony, Judge Pepuleai referred to his role as Secretary of the Samoa Rugby Union which he said the Board had one of the hardest jobs because of criticisms from the public.

"Now when the Sevens team wins, the public praise the players and when the team loses (as in recent sevens competitions), people blame the Board." There was laughter from the bench and guests.

"With my appointment as Judge, I now end my association with the Union as Secretary," he said as there was more laughter.

Bringing to the bench 14 years of legal experience, Pepuleai is the youngest Judge to be appointed at 37 years old.

He is married to Diana Peters, also a lawyer by profession and have five children.

Source: Lagi Keresoma, Talamua Media & Publications



Crediting his success to his humble childhood upbringing, Manueli Daurewa is reaping the rewards of the Engineering degree he obtained at The University of the South Pacific.

Securing a job as a graduate Engineer Trainee in 2008 with TOTAL (Fiji), Manueli has quickly climbed the engineering corporate ladder to now hold a senior position with ExxonMobil.

But the man from Rewa is humble about his achievements saying "The high level of knowledge we were exposed to and the courses provided were practical outside the classroom. The faculty also created a friendly environment that enabled the students to feel comfortable in approaching them for advice,

Engineering Innovations

I would advise students not waste the opportunity provided by this institution and utilise the available resources at your disposal.

quick problem solving and project work. So I was certain that I would be able to secure a career in engineering when I graduated because Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering is a professional career that is in high demand both locally and globally".

Thanks to the flexible learning environment, Manueli lists his greatest achievement as a student as "the opportunity to design and deliver a scrummaging machine for the Fiji Rugby Union High Performance Unit in 2007-2008".

An active member of the Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment (FSTE) Alumni, Manueli still takes the time to speak to 2nd and 3rd year Mechanical/ Manufacturing engineering students' about life in the engineering field.

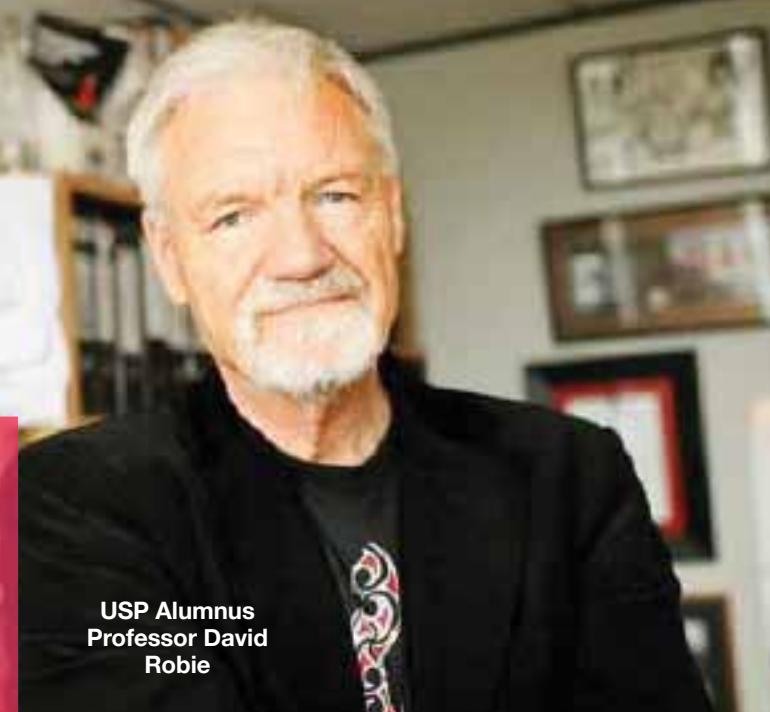
I remember my days as a student, "I was not confident on my first day but being in a group helped me a lot so I became proactive in helping fellow peers. Our life was mainly associated around the lectures, tutorials, library and Mango Tree Kona peer studying. It was a great balance between studying and social life".

"In 10 years' time, I hope to complete my Master of Business Administration (MBA) and also hold an executive role in the fuel industry".

When asked if he had any advice for students, Manuel said "I would advise students not to waste the opportunity provided by this institution and utilise the available resources at your disposal. Do not limit yourself to what you can achieve, continuously pursue for higher standards and knowing that there is a career waiting for you once graduated".



Reporting the Truth with Integrity and Fairness



**USP Alumnus
Professor David
Robie**

Originally from the Land of the Long White Cloud, Aotearoa/New Zealand Professor David Robie is a former staff member and Alumnus of The University of the South Pacific (USP) and current Professor of Journalism and Director of the Pacific Media Centre at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

A journalist for more than 40 years, Prof Robie was the Head of USP's Journalism School for 5 years and prior to that was head of journalism at the University of Papua New Guinea. Reflecting on his time as a student, he said: 'It was a very hectic and stimulating time for me, trying to do a PhD at the same time as running a demanding and challenging programme such as journalism – and in the middle of an attempted coup'.

Completing his PhD was a great achievement on both a personal and professional level as 'this was the first journalism doctorate (in History/Politics) in the Pacific region and New Zealand and I wear The USP doctoral red and Pacific blue colours with great pride today at New Zealand graduations, added Prof Robie.

Being awarded the first journalism professorship in New Zealand (and the Pacific) in 2012 was definitely a career highlight for Prof Robie after graduating with his PhD in 2004.

An international journalist and accomplished author, Prof Robie has written ten books on the region's politics and media, including his 10th and most recent book *Don't Spoil My Beautiful Face: Media, Mayhem and Human Rights in the Pacific* (Little Island Press, 2014), *Mekim Nius: South Pacific politics, media and education* (USP, 2004), and a book about the bombing of the Rainbow Warrior (second and memorial edition, 2005).

According to Prof Robie: "It is a huge challenge to move from being a fulltime practising journalist to one who also reflects, researches and analyses the methodologies of journalism and the state of the global media. While the media in a democracy often does a thorough job in investigating many sectors, for the most part it is reluctant to put its own industry under the microscope".

"Yet this is critically important for professional improvements and is one of the reasons that journalism has sometimes lost credibility in recent years. Journalism education is not about replicating journalism's failures and weaknesses but enhancing and building on

the qualities of media and its contribution to a society's wellbeing in the future and a constant search for the truth. Journalism educators should be leading criticism and change".

Prof Robie is the founding editor of the Pacific Journalism Review (PJR), the only research journal to investigate media issues in the South Pacific, Asia-Pacific, Australia and New Zealand. Through his role as Director of the Pacific Media Centre and with the assistance of a postgraduate student journalist intern, he edits Pacific Media Watch, a daily digital archive of dispatches about Pacific journalism and media, ethics and professionalism and jointly publishes the high profile independent Pacific Scoop news website with industry partner Scoop Media.

Three of his students recently won Pacific Scoop the 2014 Ossie Award for best Use of Convergent Media for their coverage of the Fiji General Elections. Two were in Fiji for two weeks on internship, with Repùblika Magazine and Wansolwara at USP. The third was in Auckland collating the multimedia stories as project editor.

A mini-documentary about 20 years of publication of the research journal Pacific Journalism Review can be accessed on YouTube via https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Brq_AgBS-ys

Prof Robie challenges current and future journalism students to "learn as much as you can as a critical thinker at university and go forward with courage to work for the truth as an independent journalist with the skills you have absorbed. But also consider what you can contribute to your society".

"I enjoyed working at USP and the beauty and cultural richness of the campus – a total contrast to other urban campuses I have worked at in other countries. USP has left its mark on the way I view things in the region and apply my professional approach.

"Many inspirational journalists have left their mark in my career, but the most inspirational influence has actually come from my wife and partner, Del."

In 10 years' time, I hope to consolidate the long-term future of the Pacific Media Centre as an independent media producer and researcher. And producing many more independent books to contribute to the literature of Asia-Pacific journalism, concluded Prof Robie.



Movono to start PhD studies

Scholarship recipient Apisalome Movono.

USP Alumnus, Apisalome Movono was recently awarded an Australia Awards Scholarship (AAS) to do his PhD at Griffith University's Tourism Research Centre.

Mr. Apisalome Movono said while he was still experiencing his new study environment, he was honoured to be given the opportunity.

"It was always in my interest to serve my village, community and country and understanding tourism impacts on the environment and more importantly, on the indigenous Fijian communities," he said.

"My PhD will assess the impacts of tourism on sustainable development in Fiji and hopefully measure the extent to which tourism contributes to the environment, economy and to society at a national level," he noted.

"Hopefully I will be able to draw on policy and practical implications in making tourism a sustainable industry for the future," he added.

Mr Movono said being given such experiences is important so that they can return home and continue the work

in building our nation and becoming more responsible custodians of the region. He shared that studying at USP has played a major part in where he is today.

"USP has been a pivotal starting point in my career, in particular, the School of

Movono added.

Head of School, Professor Marcus L. Stephenson said, "Our school is very proud of Mr Movono, who has worked hard to achieve his academic objectives". "He made a strong contribution to the work of our School

“STHM has also given me the confidence to compete and place myself on the international scene because STHM is truly of an international standard.”

Graduations

Throughout the year, we have welcomed a total of 2527 graduates to The University of the South Pacific Alumni Network (USPAN). For the April Laucala graduation there were 1258 graduates, for the September Laucala graduation there were 840 graduates, for the September Solomon Islands graduation there were 154 graduates, for the September Tonga graduation there were 53 graduates, for the October Niue graduation there were 4 graduates, for the December Emalus graduation there were 140 graduates and for the December Alafua graduation there were 78 graduates. **Welcome to The University of the South Pacific Alumni Network.**

Timote at USP's Tonga graduation with Vice-Chancellor and President of USP Prof. Rajesh Chandra and USP's Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council Ikbal Jannif.



Tailevu Beauty, Hibiscus Queen 2014



“ Science has always fascinated me and it still does so maybe I will embark on that medical career ... ”

For USP alumnus, Nanise Rainima, the saying “The journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step” by Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu holds true.

With ambitions of a career in medicine, Nanise however also applied to USP as a ‘back up plan’ she says and ‘I’ve never regretted it one bit. The experience as a USP student could not be compared because I was exposed to a different world altogether and it allowed me to see so many things happening at once that I would not have seen elsewhere’.

Humble and down to earth with a ready smile, the Bachelor of Science graduate is also the reigning Miss Hibiscus 2014.

From Namuka, Nakelo in Tailevu and maternal links to Bau, Tailevu, Rainima signed up to join the Hibiscus Festival

on the last day saying “I used to watch the (Hibiscus) contestants from the other side of the telly and I decided it was time for a change and so I signed up without any expectations but just for the experience”.

A missionary by profession, Rainima says it’s amazing to look back and think my plan was totally different to what I am doing now but yet it feels as if this was the plan all along’.

With the support of family, friends and her Hibiscus sponsor, Rainima scooped 4 awards including the Best research topic, Miss Personality, Miss People’s Choice and Miss National Tourism before winning the Hibiscus Crown. Gracious in victory, Rainima acknowledged God, her friends, work colleagues and her parents for their support during her

journey as a Hibiscus contestant.

“Miss Hibiscus is not just a crown for me, but I wear it with pride and hope to impact the lives of others during my reign,” she shares.

On the future and life after the Pageants, ‘Science has always fascinated me and it still does so maybe I will embark on that medical career but I’d love to continue working as a missionary and see where God takes me’, concluded Rainima.

Nanise represented Fiji at the 28th Miss South Pacific Pageant in Apia Samoa from dec 14 – 20, 2014. Competing against 8 finalists from American Samoa, Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, PNG, Samoa, Tonga Nanise did Fiji proud to win the Miss Photogenic and 2nd runner up title.



Planning with Numbers

USP alumnus Jale Samuwai.

Planning with Numbers

The challenge to excel in a field that not many i-Taukei people choose was the driving ambition behind Jale Samuwai deciding to study Accounting. In 2008, the man from Cogea Bua Fiji graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Accounting and Information Systems.

‘I knew it would be a challenge but the

benefit was worth the struggle’ commented Samuwai

With the support of his parents, Samuwai’s pursuit of postgraduate studies was successful when he graduated with a Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting in 2011. It was during his postgraduate studies however, that a research opportunity presented itself. ‘It all started when my colleague and co-author Glen Finau and I submitted our major project for

AF 411. Our lecturer advised us to modify our assignment for journal publication as the topic was relevant and ideal for research’ Samuwai added.

For the USP Faculty Research Committee, this paper checked all the boxes in ‘working towards nurturing a strong and dynamic postgraduate student culture within the Faculty and to support and contribute to the expansion of the University’s research culture’.

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With support from USP's Research Office, the Faculty Dean and Head of Department Prof. Patel together with Prof. Biman Prasad, Glen Finau, Aklesh Prasad and Peter Green of Queensland University of Technology (QUT) work began on our Research paper On Facilitating Regional Integration and Economic Development with Collaborative Technologies in the South Pacific.

'Our paper investigated the value of collaborative technologies (such as cloud technologies) in providing a platform in which regional integration in the Pacific can be achieved. Through our study, we identified factors that act as a hindrance to IT driven integration in the Pacific region. Our paper also suggests strategies on how these barriers could be addressed.'

'It took a year to complete but it is our hope that this paper will contribute towards the development of a regional integration model that is backed by IT and more importantly, provide guidance to international donors and national leaders on the areas that need to be addressed so they leverage the current IT innovations that are now available for the betterment of the whole region' concluded Samuwai.

The research paper is available in the USP Library under reference: Prasad, A., Finau, G., Samuwai, J., Prasad, B., and Green, P. (2013) On Facilitating Regional Integration and Economic Development with Collaborative Technologies in the South Pacific, Pacific Asia Journal of the Association for Information Systems, Vol.5, 2, 23–36.

Educating the Community

The University of the South Pacific's (USP) alumnus Beney Kelen, who recently graduated with a Master of Education degree, is working hard at the Ministry of Education office in the Republic of the Marshall Islands to help her community.

Beney's uphill academic road began in 1977 at Uliga's Young Men's Christian



**Beney at work in the Marshall Islands
Photo courtesy of Karen Earnshaw**

Association young children's programme in Uliga and reached a turning point in 1997, when she was working as a teacher for HeadStart on Ejit Island.

Wanting to raise her academic bar, Beney attended a one-year Pacific Pre-School Teacher's Certificate course at USP's Majuro Campus after which she started a two-year Diploma in Early Childhood Education programme in 2001.

"When I first started working at HeadStart I didn't know how to teach. Later I attended USP's early childhood programme only to realise that the way I was teaching was completely wrong. For starters, the way my classroom was set up was unacceptable," Beney said.

"I learnt that teaching wasn't about controlling kids and that they couldn't sit for hours in chairs. Instead, I arranged different learning centers where children could sit on the floor and explore different things," she said.

Her cooperative family and husband supported her to pursue a Bachelor of Early Childhood Degree, which she did after being awarded a scholarship from Australia's AusAID programme. "Sometimes it was such a struggle being a mother, teacher and wife. But I got all the assignments in on time. The instructors and Irene (Dr. Irene Taafaki, Director of USP's Majuro Campus) really helped me," Beney said.

She was optimistic that these difficult days would be over soon and kept reassuring herself that: "I can do this".

In 2005, the HeadStart programme closed and she switched to teaching kindergarten at Ejit Elementary School. Having to deal with a larger class and juggling with family time, Beney completed her undergraduate degree in five years.

Much to her delight, she received further funding from the AusAID programme to pursue a Master's degree in Education. She said the Masters programme was challenging however she utilised her independent study time very wisely.

Living on Ejit Island had always added its own complications.

"Sometimes we didn't have Internet at home and I had to get a paper in. Even though the weather was nasty, I'd have to get in the boat and end up getting wet on the way to campus."

As a 'Kindergarten Specialist,' she regularly visits Majuro's kindergarten classes to observe what the teachers are doing and to update them with new concepts.

"The plan is for me to visit more outer islands in the next year. This year I went to Jabor on Jaluit and conducted training on the kindergarten programme with the school's six teachers."

Beney credits her expertise to the wonderful Masters programme and following in her footsteps are five other Marshallese currently enrolled into the Master's degree in Education.

"I would like to advise them all—don't give up. The Ministry of Education needs you and so does Marshall Islands."

I learnt that teaching wasn't about controlling kids and that they couldn't sit for hours in chairs.

Vandhana Heads to France

A student of The University of the South Pacific has been accepted to do her PhD in France under the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Institute of Research for Development (IRD) scholarship.

IRD is a French research organisation and the IPCC is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change that was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

Vandhana Kumar graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Chemistry in 2011 and is currently doing her Master of Science in Climate Change.

In the same year, she won a Gold medal for Chemistry.

When asked about her interests, Vandhana said she chose to study physical oceanography, focusing on sea level rise, as it is a critical issue being faced in the Pacific islands today.

"I had always wanted to be part of the scientific community. Of course, in school I had never thought that my career path would be in physical oceanography. But then, I did not really know that I had it as an option at that time. The greater part of my career plans shaped out during my university years. I knew I wanted to have a doctorate degree when I learnt about it, and it is a colourful combination of planning as well as a bit of spontaneity that has brought me to where I am today. I wouldn't be honest if I said that I have achieved what I wanted, but I can certainly say that I am on my way there," she shared.

"Our region is among the most vulnerable to sea level rise and the associated impacts of climate change. Most of our island/atoll neighbours, and even some of our Fijian communities have already started experiencing problems such as inundation, coastal erosion, more frequent floods, storm surges and contamination of gardens and fresh water lenses with rising sea levels over the last few years," she said.

In her research, Vandhana will be using



“ I am looking forward to working with internationally renowned experts in the field of physical oceanography, and being at the centre of excellence. ”

climate models, satellite observations and past records to make projections for sea level variations in the South Pacific over the coming decades, and for the end of the century.

"With the findings on near and long-term projections on sea level, I am hoping that proposed work will be able to greatly complement vulnerability assessments, adaptation planning and climate resilience building in the Pacific. In this way, I intend to play my part in serving my country and the region," she noted.

Vandhana travels to France at the end of September and is grateful to have been selected.

"While finishing my Masters, I was applying for almost all of the scholarships I came across. Of course I was hoping to hear a positive response whenever I sent any application, but you really can't be sure with the competition at international level. So I was indeed elated to have been selected for these scholarships," she said.

Vandhana will be travelling between Toulouse (France), Fiji and New Caledonia during her 3-year programme.

"I am looking forward to working with internationally renowned experts in the field of physical oceanography, and being at the centre of excellence. Nonetheless, I believe that learning is not only academic, and I look forward to all the new experiences and adventure that France has to offer."

Vandhana is grateful to her MSc. supervisor, Dr. Helene Jacot Des Combes who has been a mentor and a source of inspiration for her.

"I would also like to acknowledge my co-supervisor in Fiji, Dr. Awnesh Singh for his invaluable assistance when I was applying for these scholarships. Thanks also to the PACE-SD team, both staff and fellow students - they are an awesome team to be part of. Last, but not least, my family for always being there for me," she added.

Elizabeth Reade

Country: Fiji

Graduating Year : 1977

Why did you choose your field of study? In my Prelim II (Foundation) I was introduced to a range of subjects and the study of society and how people live together fascinated me. In addition to this I felt the need to do something practical that would get me into the workforce at the time and decided on a second major in administration. Together they turned out to be a great combination and after a six month stint with the civil service I joined the USP Library in 1978 as a graduate trainee and here I am 37 years later sharing my sociology, management, library and other skills with the Region.

Briefly reflect on your student life at USP? Those years were some of the best years of my life. To be at USP in the early 70s was a privilege. I was young and truly believed the world was my oyster. I studied hard and 'played' hard too but never losing sight of that graduation day. I, like many, was the first in my family to attend university.

USP was like a village in its early days. Everyone knew everyone and the friendships (today called networking!) I made then remain today. I can travel to any regional country or visit any regional institution and will know someone, many of whom are in leadership positions.

Greatest achievement[s] as a student: Representing the University on the USP/UPNG Student Exchange in the second semester of 1976; being the Chairperson of the Development Committee of the USPSA; being part of the USP Cultural Group that toured Tonga, Niue and Samoa under Ueta Solomona.

Career Highlights since Graduation

- Recipient of a British Council scholarship to undertake post-graduate studies in library science in London, UK in 1979 and in 1995;
- Appointment as Deputy University Librarian, USP;
- Appointed member of the Suva City Council;
- Member of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), Regional Committee for Asia and Oceania;
- President/VP of the Fiji Library Association and Chairperson of Fiji National Library Weeks and
- Chairperson/Member (USP representative) of the Fiji Country Coordinating Mechanism of the Global Fund in its fight against TB in Fiji

Who/what do you credit your success to? What inspires you?

A community of people made up of supportive parents, a catholic upbringing and education, siblings, husband and close friends. My mother was a disciplinarian and a perfectionist and my father firmly believed in working for what you want to achieve as it does not come any other way. He also gave me an appreciation for those who help you get where you are. An understanding and supportive spouse - when I was studying for my Master's by distance and working full-time and on duty travel, my husband Moses looked after children and home whilst also working full-time!



People who strive at all times and especially under adversity to make the world a better place inspire me to also make a contribution, small that it may be. I am inspired by Nelson Mandela who in the face of adversity stood tall and Mother Teresa "who saw the face of Jesus in all those she helped."

How do you think USP helped you in your career? USP has been the backbone to my career and a good employer and I hope it remains so in light of changes to staffing classifications. As a member of the comparable staff (Professional now) I took advantage of study leave, training leave and

conference leave and work opportunities that have taken me to the Region and many parts of the world thus contributing immensely to my professional and personal development and to USP. Individuals at the USP who have helped me get where I am today include Harold Holdsworth, (the 1st University Librarian), Dr Esther Williams, Professor Melvyn Rainey including past and present library colleagues and Professors Konai Thaman and Randolph Thaman who taught me in their first year at USP and in Foundation and who remain friends and mentors.

Describe any challenges you faced to reach where you are today and how you overcame those challenges? I have been in a management position for a long time. Human resource management, in particular, is challenging because it involves individuals with different backgrounds, experiences, sensitivities and views. I have overcome the challenges associated with managing people by taking a professional approach, tempered by compassion, to arrive at a decision that is right, just and fair for the individual and all concerned. An important aspect is that I take time to explain to the person concerned my reasons for the decision that is often the result of wider consultation. At the end of the day, I am able to live with my decision.

I am strong on documenting issues. Having a record of discussions, conversations has significantly reduced misinterpretation and misunderstandings in the workplace making for a better working environment.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years (career and/or personal goals)? Retired and my own boss and spending quality time my two children and their families and especially my grand-children whilst still contributing to the community via libraries, the Church and voluntary organisations such as Counterstroke Fiji.

What advice would you give to current and future students of USP? Whilst a student, be of inquisitive and questioning mind whilst using the opportunity to venture out of your comfort zone to try new things that may show that you have talent in areas you never thought you had.

To future students, there is no other institution like USP in our region – "come and learn to be the change you want to be."

What has your involvement been with the University since you graduated? All my working life of 37 years.

Any other information you would like to share. I am a very proud alumnus of the USP. When it comes to regional cooperation, USP is the success story that no other regional organisation can lay claim to. It has met its purpose a thousand fold and will continue to do so. It has produced leaders and built a cadre of educated Pacific people who can stand up in the international arena and ably lead and represent our Region and people.



“ My professors taught me to be grounded in what I have – my culture and my local knowledge and grow that as well as acquire knowledge from class interaction and the literature. ”

Stanley Houma

Country: Solomon Islands

Graduating Year: 1986

Which country do you currently live in if different from above? New Zealand

What programme(s) did you graduate in and in which year? BAGCED – History/Politics, Sociology & Education – graduated in 1986

What was your most memorable moment as a student?

When we visited the brewery in Suva. After visiting the factory, the manager told us that we could relax in the workers lounge and everybody is welcome to have a few glasses. Our lecturer got more than a few of his share and he got abit drunk. So he announced – “the test for tomorrow has been postponed for next week”. Everybody shouted in reply “we will give you excellent during course evaluation.”

Describe your experience while studying at USP?

Looking back, it was a very enriching experience. As a teacher, the courses and the knowledge and skills I acquired were very much suitable and aligned to the school curriculum and to the pacific context. I had some of the very best academics in their subject disciplines, people like Professor Hauofa, Professor Konai Thaman, Professor Nandan, Dr. William Sutherland, Dr. Mike Howard and many more. Outside of study, I made many life time friends from the Solomons as well as the rest of the pacific and outside. Today, these bonds remained as strong as ever. I still chat with my friend Steve who now lives in Canberra every week.

What was your greatest achievement while studying at USP? I got some kind of an award with my class mate Steve Williams for a research paper I did in one Professor Epeli Hauofa's 300 level sociology courses. Can't remember what it was. But I remember the VC Geoffrey Caston presented me an award. Never got an award since primary school. So that was great.

After graduating from USP, what were some of the highlights of your career? Became head of secondary teacher training at SICHE in the Solomons and helped to train and graduate heaps of secondary school teachers, it was great. I did the same at USP to help train many Pacific teachers. So I have student friends who are now teachers or who hold senior positions in education around the region. If I have another opportunity I would love to do that again.

How do you think USP helped you in your career?

My professors taught me to be grounded in what I have – my culture and my local knowledge and grow that as well as acquire knowledge from class interaction and the literature. The support I got from wantoks, student friends and lecturers was huge. It was face-to-face dialogue and sharing with jokes and fun. It was like in the village. With internet today people might say that's old school.

After graduating from USP, what has been your greatest achievement? You mean work wise – to join USP as a lecturer for a number of years. That was an achievement for me personally. As a student, I dreamt of becoming a lecturer at USP. At least for once I was proud of myself. What about finding a wife and have 3 children? That was a great achievement mate.

What inspires you and why? My mum she always loves to serve people even with very little she had as a single mum after Dad passed on too early. The many inspiring stories I continue to hear about Dad in his service as a primary school teacher and village leader. My teachers, lecturers, work colleagues and friends who are role models in their service for others. Above all my Lord Jesus whose words of wisdom “Love Others as You Love Yourself” lays the foundation of my desire to serve others.

What advice would you give to current and future students of USP? Much is expected of those to whom much is given. A lot of people have invested much on you – your parents, communities and countries. Do them proud by successfully completing your programmes. Then go out to explore and serve.

In this edition of the Alumni Newsletter,
we feature Alumni from 1971 - 1989

Where are they? Now?



Dr. Padma Lal graduated was one of the first graduates from USP in **1971** with a science degree. She received USP's first ever Gold medal. Dr Lal now resides in Australia and works as a Visiting Scientist with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)



Usman Ali is originally from Fiji but currently resides in New Zealand. He is one of the first graduates of USP in **1971**. He later completed a Honours Degree in Urban Planning from the University of Newcastle in UK. He started his career as a teacher and later became a lawyer.



John Samy originally from Fiji but currently residing in New Zealand, graduated with a BA from USP in **1972** majoring in Economics and Sociology. He continued his studies at the University of Sussex and graduated with Master of Philosophy in 1977.



Anirudh Singh graduated from USP with a BSc in **1972**. He graduated with MSc from the University of Auckland. He then obtained his PhD from the University of Leicester. Currently he is working at USP as Associate Professor of Physics in the School of Engineering and Physics.



Shashikant Nair is originally from Fiji but now residing in New Zealand. He graduated from USP in **1973** with a BA and Graduate Certificate in Education. He later did his post-graduate studies at the University of Hawaii and East-West Centre Grant.



Jeet Prasad is originally from Fiji but now residing in New Zealand. He graduated from USP in **1974** with a Bachelor of Science. After graduating he worked for FSC and a ginger processing plant in Fiji. He is currently working for New Zealand Starch Ltd



Dr. Melanaite Taumoefolau graduated from USP in **1976** with a BA and CGCEd respectively. She completed her PhD from the University of Auckland. She is a senior lecturer of Pacific Studies at the University of Auckland



Hon. Joe Natuman graduated from USP in **1976** and he is the current Prime Minister of Vanuatu and is an active member of the Vanuatu alumni association.



Elizabeth Reade graduated from USP in **1977**. USP has been the backbone to my career she says. Elizabeth is the Deputy University Librarian at USP where she has worked for 37 years.



Jagdishwar Singh is originally from Fiji but currently lives in Melbourne, Australia. He has graduated twice from The University of South Pacific - with Gold Medals on both occasions - for his BA in **1977** and MA in 1988.



H.E. Mr Beniamino Salacakau graduated from USP in **1977** with a B.A. and a Graduate Certificate majoring in History and Geography. Currently, Mr Salacakau is the High Commissioner for Fiji in South Africa.



Dharmendra Sharma originally from Fiji but now residing in Australia, graduated from USP with a BSc in **1979** and a Postgraduate Diploma in Mathematics and a MSc in 1988. He later completed his PhD in Computer Science at the Australian National University.



Bikenibeu Paeniu is from Tuvalu but currently resides in Fiji. He graduated from USP in **1980** with a Bachelor of Agriculture. He has served as the Prime Minister of Tuvalu 3 times. He is now a freelance consultant.



Anna Pasikale originally from Fiji but now residing in New Zealand, graduated with a Diploma of Education from USP in **1981**. Anna has worked as a teacher in Fiji and New Zealand, a researcher, policy advisor and managed a variety of specialist teams in education, health and development assistance.

In this edition of the Alumni Newsletter,
we feature Alumni from 1971 - 1989

Where are they? Now?



Narendra Prasad is from Dreketi Vanualevu but now resides in New Zealand. A graduate in **1982**, Narendra completed a Diploma in Education then came back to USP to complete his undergraduate degree in 1989. He went on to complete his Masters.



Winifereti Nainoca graduated from USP in **1983** with a BSc and Graduate Certificate in Education. She later completed her Masters from University of Wollongong in Australia and PhD from Massey University in New Zealand.



Frances Brebner is from Samoa and graduated from USP in **1984** with a BA in Public Administration. She later did Grad. Cert. in Health Economics and Financing from the University of York and MA in Public Policy from the Australian National University.



Biman Prasad graduated from USP with BA and Graduate Certificate in Education in 1985 and a Post Graduate Diploma in Education in **1988**. He completed his Master of Commerce from UNSW in 1991. He is now a Fiji Member of Parliament.



Sanjay Mishra is originally from Fiji but now resides in Canada. A Bachelor of Science graduate in **1984**, Sanjay says the highlight of him being a student was the honor of being the President of the USP Science Club.



Rajni Kant originally from Fiji, graduated from USP with a BA in Accounting in **1985**. He was a part-time tutor at USP for year 1 and 2 accounting students till he migrated to Sydney, Australia.



Stanley Houma, originally from Solomon Islands but now residing in New Zealand, graduated from USP with a BA and Graduate Certificate in Education in **1986**. Upon graduation, Stanley entered the field of education.



Vinod Kumar originally from Fiji, graduated from USP with a BA in **1986**. After graduating he worked at few companies in Fiji such as KPMG, Air Pacific Ltd, and Golden Manufacturers Ltd. After a successful career in Fiji, Vinod migrated to Australia.



Jone Usamate graduated from USP with a Bachelor of Arts in Administration and Economic in **1987**. He is currently the Minister for Health and Medical Services in Fiji.



Harjeet Singh, originally from Fiji, graduated from USP with a BA in Accounting & Economics in **1987**. After graduating he worked as an Accountant/Auditor for 2 years at Coopers and Lybrand (Lautoka) and then migrated to USA in 1989.



Michael Mangawai from Vanuatu, graduated with Bachelor of Arts majoring in Land Management and Development in **1988** and is currently pursing MBA. He works as the Executive Officer under Corporate Services Unit under the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources.



Aisake Tuapati is from Fiji and first graduated from USP in **1989** after completing his foundation studies. 20 years later, Aisake graduated with a Bachelor of Education in 2009 and Masters in Education in 2011. USP has helped me to be a quality and confident leader.



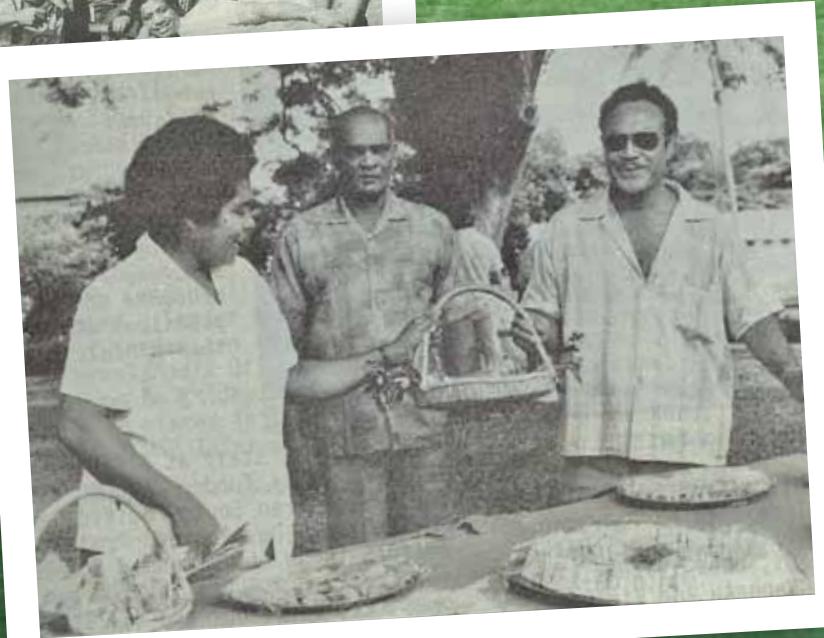
Kathleen Poole, from USA, graduated with a Postgraduate Diploma in Pacific Studies from USP in 1989. She has held various positions in the field of Higher Education. She is currently the Interim Executive Director at AHA International, University of Oregon, in USA.



Medals winners, Helen Joke Mee Low, Patricia Ngamata Tuara and Catherine Kumar after their graduation.



Students who took agricultural studies at Alafua campus.



Fundraising for hurricane relief in Cook Islands, Vanuatu and Tokelau.

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