

## **Personal Reminiscences of Prof. Guy Powles**

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Let me preface my personal reminiscences of Professor Guy Powles by expressing my very deep appreciation and gratitude for all his kindness towards me. God knows that to my dying day, I never can forget his goodness, his kindness, and his love.

My association with Professor Guy Powles was both personal and professional. On a personal level, we were deeply bonded. Although Guy and I were not kindred of blood, I came to know him so well over a period of almost thirty years as a wonderful and rare source of wisdom and wit that I believe that I can speak with confidence that Guy was an exceptional man with a natural instinct for academic excellence. Guy possessed the finest brain and the most marvelous intellect ever yet vouchsafed to a human being. Guy was a great guy!

I stumbled on Guy online when I googled “leading scholars in the field of Pacific Studies” while designing a Pacific Comparative Law course at the University of Papua New Guinea. The first time we met was in 1987 in Guy’s office in the Faculty of Law, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria, Australia. I flew from Papua New Guinea to meet Guy in order to solicit his help for my research project on the legal systems of the Pacific island states. I recall very vividly his cordial hospitality and warm reception. Guy did not only advise me on this project. He inspired me and actually embraced the project with as much enthusiasm and commitment as if it were his own project.

Energized by the support and ideas that Guy provided for the research project, I formed a distinguished editorial committee, consisting of Guy himself, Tony Angelo, Jean Zorn and Stephen Zorn. Under my general editorship, we embarked upon a pioneering journey to compile and publish a compendium of the laws of all the island states of the South Pacific. With the help of this committee, we assembled a team of fellow law professors as contributors from a number of

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academic institutions, including such diverse locations as De Paul University, Chicago; City Polytechnic, Hong Kong; University of Tasmania, Australia; Victoria University Wellington, New Zealand; University of the South Pacific, Vanuatu; and University of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby; to give the research project a broad international and intellectual support. With chapters from the editorial committee and the other contributors and a generous substantial financial support from the Asia Foundation, *South Pacific Islands Legal Systems*, was published by the University of Hawaii Press in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1993, and remains an important reference work for scholars and practitioners and anyone else interested in South Pacific law, history or government. It is with great admiration and respect that I recall how Guy applied his originality, charm and steadfast enthusiasm to ensure the successful publication of *South Pacific Islands Legal Systems*. In particular, I value his influence and positive impact on my life which has, in some ways, altered the trajectory of my life: My original journey to search for research materials turned out to be more than a journey; it became an adventure that would last a life time. I need not say more than that I believe I owe the success of my entire legal career in the Pacific to Guy. Out of respect for Guy, and in honour of his memory, I sincerely hope that his lifetime associates, including myself, will continue the work on the Pacific, to which he devoted his life.

Those of us who have been privileged to have crossed the path of Guy will never forget the distinct characteristics that defined his personality. Guy was creative, energetic, optimistic, extroverted, compassionate, prudent, and much more. He was a committed and distinguished law professor. He fully embraced reverence for diverse and multiple cultures, frequently championing their causes, including advocating equality of persons and beliefs in multi-ethnic societies.

For me, his core strengths, which he leveraged to generate engagement and energy were his delight in new ideas and new legal concepts, and his ability to enthuse his friends to inculcate these ideas and concepts into fruitful projects. Personally, I am a very hearty admirer of Guy and I consider it a very special honour and privilege to have known him. Indeed, I count myself lucky to have had the opportunity to share in his knowledge and expertise in law.

I remember Guy as a colleague, mentor and friend. He was a man with deep moral vision and, when it came to the crunch, the courage of his convictions. Guy will be remembered as a man of

rare accomplishments and honoured for his commitment to law and constitutional reform in the Pacific. So, today, while I grieve the loss of a professional colleague and a personal friend, I celebrate the legacy of Guy's selfless devotion to human rights and law reform which has made so much difference in the world that he has left behind.

I am sure that I speak for the entire *South Pacific Islands Legal Systems* research team (comprising Professor Don Paterson, Professor Jean Zorn, Professor Steve Zorn, Professor Martin Tsamenyi, Professor John Nonggorr, Professor Direndra Srivasta, Professor Tony Angelo, Professor Bruce Ottley, Professor Isaacus Adzoxornu and the entire secretarial support staff), in extending heartfelt sympathies to Maureen, (Guy's widow) and his family. Adieu Guy! You will be sorely missed. But rest in peace. Your legacy and good deeds will forever remain in our hearts.