

Professor Kerry Jacobs 1968-2018

It is with great sadness that on behalf of the *Journal of Accounting & Organizational Change* (JAOC) I write this tribute note for Professor Kerry Jacobs of the University of New South Wales, Canberra, at ADFA, who died on 28 of February 2018, after battling with cancer at his home in Canberra. He was only 49 years 11 months and 27 days old when he passed away. He died one day before his birth day. Kerry left behind his wife Sharon and two children, Nicholas and Abigail.

Originally from Christchurch, New Zealand, Kerry completed his Bachelor and Master of Commerce from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and PhD from the University of Edinburgh, UK. He was a Professor of Accounting at the Australian National University from December 2006 to October 2013. Kerry also worked at the La Trobe University (from October 2003 to November 2006) before I started in December 2006. He spent about seven years at the University of Edinburgh as Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Accounting. Kerry was on the Audit Committees of Queensland Auditor-General Office (from 2013 – until his death) and Victorian Auditor-General Office (from 2010 to 2015). His research interests lied in the areas of public accounts committees, public sector accounting, performance auditing and critical studies in accounting. He published widely in prestigious journals in accounting/public sector.

I have known Kerry for about 24 years. I first met him at the Victoria University of Wellington in 1994 when he came to meet up with me. We had a long chat about our research interests, as we both shared similar research interests – public sector accounting. He shared his passion for critical studies in public sector management, accounting and accountability. Kerry and I have been friends since then. We had our last catch up over the telephone a couple of months before he passed away. In fact, he called me to ask if I would be willing to collaborate with him and his former PhD student, now my colleague Dr Tarek Rana, on a couple of working papers. I couldn't say "No" to his request. I am now feeling so good to see that one of the two working papers came out in a recent issue (2018) of *Public Money and Management*.

It isn't possible to put into words the contribution Kerry made to the JAOC since day one when we first launched the journal in May 2005. Kerry was one of the founding editorial board members who offered constructive advice on various matters, whenever needed. We have lost an active member of our JAOC family.

I would like to conclude my tribute to Kerry by presenting tributes from some of his close associates:

I met Kerry as a young and bouncy academic who I likened – to his face – as the academic equivalent of a Labrador puppy. In the early days he sometimes listened to advice and sometimes didn't! He was full of ideas and enthusiasm and was a joy to work with – most of the time!! He commented on my approach to our somewhat robust discussions while working together – 'If she growls at you it is because she cares and thinks it is worth the effort. So listen.' And I listened to him too. He matured to provide significant academic insights and give leadership to others, especially young academics. It is difficult to understand that such a force of nature is no longer here. I shall miss Kerry. (Professor Jane Broadbent, Royal Holloway University of London)

I first came to know Kerry when we were both fledgling accounting academics in the 1990s. Over time, we developed a very productive working relationship and co-authored one published paper together. I always enjoyed the process of working with him. He was one of those people you could



just sit down with and the creativity would start flowing right away. Although we did not always agree on specific issues, something reflected in a critical exchange in *Financial Accountability and Management* in 2013, I always found him to be an incredibly supportive and generous colleague. I guess that is one of the best signs of true academic friendship! (Sven Modell, Professor of Management Accounting, Alliance Manchester Business School)

Professor Kerry Jacobs late of University of New South Wales Canberra was a leading international researcher in public sector accounting and accountability. Hailing from New Zealand and an Edinburgh University PhD, he became a leading figure in Australian academe. His many books and papers on public sector accountability and governance have made a profound contribution to our discipline. We mourn his passing as a fine scholar and caring mentor to so many in our global academic community. Most of all, we will remember him as an energetic, engaging and caring man of faith. His influence on all of us will endure. (Professor Lee Parker, RMIT University, Australia)

The passing of Professor Kerry Jacobs was a great loss to critical and interdisciplinary accounting research community. Kerry was my PhD supervisor at the University of New South Wales – Canberra, Australia. Kerry was a fine public sector accounting scholar and as a person an inspiring and colourful character. Kerry was larger than life to those who worked with him. I am particularly grateful to Kerry for his inspirational supervision of my PhD and countless philosophical chats about meaning of life, religion as a governance tool and importance of coffee for creative work. He was intellectually curious and who actively engaged with the accounting profession and with public sector organisations on issues related to governance and accountability. His love of interdisciplinary, critical and practice research inspired me to embark on public sector accounting, auditing and accountability projects for many years to come. He inspired me, like many other PhD students, to think differently and broadly, as to how the accounting functions in the societal and political spaces often departing from the conventional thinking of its calculative role. His helpful suggestions and fearless criticisms shaped my inquiries about the ‘logic of things’ and warnings about the ‘things of logic’ for my research work. (Dr Tarek Rana, La Trobe University, Australia)

Kerry was a true academic – he loved the exchange of ideas, and was an incredibly creative thinker. He was also a fantastic mentor and source of support for many of his fellow academics, including me. His interest in Christian spirituality and his faith strongly influenced both the way he lived his life and also his research, with some of his best-known papers drawing on these themes. Kerry was a true gentleman, and I am proud to have been able to call him a friend. Kerry has left us far too soon, and he will be sorely missed. (Professor David Smith, University of Queensland, Australia)

Kerry was a great cheerful person who will live in our memories forever. My heart goes out to Kerry’s family, in this difficult time. May God rest Kerry’s soul in peace.

Zahirul Hoque
Editor-in-Chief – *JAOC*
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