

Tribute to Gary Bouma written by Associate Professor Pete Lentini, Monash University:

Emeritus Professor Gary is many things to many people. He is Australia's pre-eminent scholar of the sociology of religion. As an ordained Anglican priest, Gary is noted for his pastoral care to his parishioners and others who sought his counsel and spiritual support. Moreover, his deep commitment to social justice and harmony greatly influenced Gary's participation in Inter-Faith dialogue. That Gary contributed so much to scholarship and building bridges between religious communities, he was justly rewarded with an AM for those achievements in the 2012 Australia Day Honours. These accomplishments are but a few examples of Gary's career and life—indeed, it is hard to believe that he gave and achieved so much in such a single lifetime. Nonetheless, they neatly sum up some of the things that make him stand out among individuals: his commitment to learning, peace, and care for fellow human beings.

Moreover, in his capacities as an Anglican priest, Gary was a prime mover in the drive for women's ordination and a voice that advocated showing Christian love, compassion and understanding for those living with HIV/AIDS. In these matters, he was at the forefront of progressive theological and sociological currents within his Church. All of this was underpinned by a deep commitment to social justice, which he learned from his family. The Ku Klux Klan burned a cross on his front lawn because of his father's participation in the American Civil Rights Movement and support for racial equality.

For the Monash Community, Gary is someone who deserves to be known as a builder. Gary served in key capacities as Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), Associate Dean (Research, Faculty of Arts) and Head of the School of Political and Social Inquiry (PSI) (now the School of Social Sciences). It is not too much of a stretch to claim that during the time Gary was ADR for the Arts Faculty, he established the basis for the research success and international notoriety the Faculty is currently experiencing. When Gary took over as ADR, the Faculty had fewer than 30% research active staff members. His encouragement for staff members to apply for grants, building solid research teams and creating incentives for increasing publications gradually began to change the culture in the Arts Faculty. Its results are now plainly clear. Additionally, Gary strongly believed that growth in academic productivity was initiated at the grassroots. As such, as Head of PSI Gary made many key appointments at Levels B and C. Many of those who entered the School and Faculty during Gary's tenure as Head have stayed with us, risen through the ranks and established themselves as some of our current Faculty and University leadership, earned reputations as leading scholars in their fields both in Australia and globally, and have made Monash a world leader amongst research-oriented universities.

But we also have to acknowledge Gary, the person. Gary was a great mentor for his colleagues. He always had time to converse and advise with his colleagues—regardless of rank and stature. Moreover, he was always interested in them, their families and their feelings. Perhaps one of his greatest qualities was that he never held a grudge. There were times that he may have disagreed vehemently with people in staff meetings. However, as soon as the meeting was over he would be speaking with them and discussing family, research plans and other matters in a jovial manner. In these respects, he was certainly a great soul. This is among the many reasons he is so beloved amongst the Monash community. He is the quintessential wise person: knowledgeable, but using that knowledge to better his community, not just for personal gain.

I first met Gary in 1995, during an ARC small grant advisory session. His advice helped lead to my first successful grant outcome. However, our friendship strengthened mostly from

1999 when we were colleagues in PSI. Thereafter, I had the honour of serving with him in other capacities at School, Faculty and University levels. He was a textbook perfect mentor. However, most of all he was a dear friend. I had the honour and privilege of getting to know his family, and I grieve with them in their loss. However, amidst the sorrow there will also be smiles. I had the privilege of knowing one of the great souls (and scholars) who has graced our Faculty and institution and having him as a part of my life. But most of all, while we mourn his physical presence, we will always be surrounded with what he contributed to Monash. So many of us carry so much of what he gave to scholarship and the community. Therefore, we should all feel proud to be part of the legacy of this magnificent, magnanimous human being, which is too big to be confined to a single lifetime. And so it continues.