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OBITUARY

Sigrid McCausland, 1953–2016

Sigrid McCausland and partner Phil Griffiths at the Australian Society of Archivists trade stand, ICA Congress, Kuala Lumpur, 2008.

The archival profession nationally and internationally is significantly diminished with the untimely passing in November 2016 of Dr Sigrid McCausland from a rare form of abdominal cancer. Sigrid's archival career spanned five decades and was characterised by an unusual, if not unprecedented, variety of roles and settings, all of which were performed to the highest levels of professional integrity and with unerring grace, intelligence, vision, generosity, humour and passion.

Sigrid was born in England in 1953 and grew up in Bathurst, NSW. She excelled as a scholar at high school and later as an undergraduate at the Australian National University (ANU) from 1971 to 1974, where she completed an Honours degree on the history of modern painting in Sydney from 1935 to 1945. The head of the ANU History Department, Manning Clark, recognised her talents and employed her as his research assistant during 1975. Sigrid loved recounting how she broke the news of the Whitlam sacking to a dumbstruck Professor Clark on 11 November 1975, before she took off to Parliament House to join the masses of protesters airing their outrage at the Governor-General's action.

After more than a year of overseas travel, she returned to Canberra and secured work as a public servant. In May 1978 she was recruited by Australian Archives, where she had previously worked on two occasions during her student years as a vacation clerk in the Nissan Huts by Lake Burley Griffin doing arrangement and description. She worked at Australian Archives until January 1984, mostly as a reference archivist but also in arrangement and description. This gave her a solid grounding in archival practice and in the Australian Series System at a time when, by her own account, reference work was widely regarded by self-proclaimed 'real archivists' as a second-class endeavour and at best an afterthought. Her background and interest in historical research – an interest that she never lost – sustained her belief that ultimately the archival endeavour is all about enabling access to and use of records. While that may seem self-evident today, Sigrid never tired of recounting how researchers (and those who wished to serve them) were considered a 'damn nuisance' by many of the gatekeepers at Australian Archives during the 1970s.

During her time at Australian Archives, Sigrid joined the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) in 1981 and in the following year secured a Public Service Board award to study archival administration full time at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Sydney. From 1984 to 1986 she worked in the Manuscripts Section of the Mitchell Library at the State Library of New South Wales – her first, but by no means last, stint in the world of collecting archives. During 1986 and 1987 she returned to UNSW as a tutor in the archives course, working with Ann Pedersen and Peter Orlovich. Many of the students she taught during that time went on to be archival leaders and luminaries themselves.

Her first senior archival appointment was yet another change of professional direction for her, this time with a shift to local government. In 1988 she was appointed as City Archivist for the City of Sydney. After four years as City Archivist she moved on to the world of university archives, as the University Archivist for the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), where she worked from 1991 to 1997. Whilst at UTS Sigrid completed her PhD thesis on the history of the anti-uranium mining movement in Australia.

In 1998 she moved back to Canberra to take up the challenging role of University Archivist at her alma mater, ANU, where she stayed until early 2005. Those six years at ANU proved to be the most difficult of her professional life. She was at the centre of the struggle to save the Noel Butlin Archives – Australia's pre-eminent collection of trade union and business records – from closure and dispersal by ANU 'bean counters'. Being at odds with your own employer for a higher purpose is a stressful business – something that requires enormous fortitude, resilience, wisdom and energy. As most readers would know, the campaign to save the Noel Butlin from closure was ultimately successful – a success that owes much to Sigrid's dogged persistence and unwillingness to be browbeaten into acquiescence. Sigrid drew much support and sustenance during this campaign from the active support she received from a broad coalition including the archival profession, the historical research community, individual trade unions, the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Australian Labor Party. Nevertheless, the saga took its toll. For a time ANU management forbade Sigrid from having any contact with the Noel Butlin Archives – an extraordinary direction to give to a university archivist and one that was finessed via a mix of subterfuge and in some cases open and career-limiting defiance.

A year or so after leaving ANU, Sigrid took on the role of part-time Education Officer for the ASA – a role where she undoubtedly put in many hours of unpaid work to build up and deliver a strong program of professional training and educational support activities that benefited hundreds of her colleagues and fellow ASA members nationwide. Sigrid filled that role until the deteriorating finances of the ASA forced the Society to dispense with her services in 2009. During that time, she moved to South-East Queensland (initially Toowoomba and later Brisbane) accompanying her partner, historian and political economy academic Phil Griffiths.

In 2009, she was appointed as a part-time lecturer (later senior lecturer) in archival science at the Charles Sturt University (CSU) School of Information Systems, enabling Sigrid to further pursue her love of archival education. As the CSU course was delivered via distance education, Sigrid could work from Queensland making heavy use of the Internet and teleconference, while also making frequent trips to Wagga Wagga. Being an archival distance educator in Australia is a tough and lonely business. Despite those difficulties, Sigrid single-handedly built up the CSU archives course to being internationally recognised and respected in its field. Her success was grounded in her diverse and versatile practitioner experience and informed by her deep knowledge of archival theory and the extensive literature in the field, literature to which she made many notable contributions over many years. In 2013 CSU awarded her the Faculty of Education Award for Academic Excellence.

To supplement her part-time work at CSU, in 2013 Sigrid also commenced working part time as an archivist for the Community and Personal Histories unit within the Queensland Department of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs, helping members of the Stolen Generation reconnect with lost kinfolk with the help of archival records – a position in accord with Sigrid's passion for social justice.

While the foregoing is impressive enough as a summary of Sigrid's employment history, it by no means tells the full story of her immense contributions to and impact on the archival profession. In 2016 she was, somewhat belatedly it must be said, inducted as a fellow of the Australian Society of Archivists. In large part that was in recognition of her numerous extra-curricular contributions to the field. During the 1980s she was a key member of the editorial team for the landmark first edition of the ASA textbook, *Keeping Archives*. Around that time she also ran numerous 'Keeping Archives' training workshops all over Australia. Her list of professional publications is extensive, with numerous publications being regularly cited in the international literature. She was a frequent speaker at professional conferences and seminars. From 2002 until her death she was a member of the Editorial Board of *Archives and Manuscripts*. Sigrid was also Chair of the ASA's Accreditation/Course Recognition Committee from 1997 to 2002, the committee that established standards and criteria for equitable program evaluation for the discipline across Australia. From 2002 to 2004 she was a member of the inaugural ACT Territory Records Advisory Council. Towards the end of her life she represented the education sector on the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Committee.

Internationally, Sigrid is probably best remembered as the Secretary General of the International Council on Archives Section on Archival Education from 2012 until 2016. She was also very active and visible in the international Archival Education and Research Initiative. On top of it all, she was awarded a Gold Medal by the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History and served as President of the Canberra Region Branch of the Society.

No obituary for Sigrid would be complete without some discussion of her many, varied and widely read publications. Sigrid's archival writings reflected the breadth and diversity of her interests. They ranged from exploring the role of access, reference services and finding aids through use of the Australian Series System in small archives, local government archives, business and labour archives, archival buildings to archival education, and the history and content of this journal, *Archives and Manuscripts*. Her final publication, on archival public programming, appeared posthumously in the second edition of *Currents of Archival Thinking* edited by Heather MacNeil and Terry Eastwood (Libraries Unlimited, 2017) – a monograph that was very fittingly dedicated to Sigrid's memory. Mention should also be made of Sigrid's lifelong interest in the somewhat neglected topic of the need to pursue a coordinated, holistic and systematic approach to documenting Australian society – a topic that was aired at recent successive ASA conferences by Sigrid and like-minded professionals such as Kim Eberhard, Michael Piggott, Maggie Shapley and Colleen McEwen.

Dr Sigrid McCausland was a model archival professional and a visionary and inspirational leader in our field. She will be greatly missed.

Appendix. Publications by Dr Sigrid McCausland

Articles and book chapters

'Archival Public Programming', in Heather MacNeil and Terry Eastwood (eds), *Currents of Archival Thinking*, 2nd ed., Libraries Unlimited, Santa Barbara, CA, 2017, pp. 225–44.

With KM Thompson, 'The Community Heritage Grants Program in Australia: Report of a Survey', in SK Hastings (ed.), *Annual Review of Cultural Heritage Informatics*, AltaMira Press, Lanham, MD, 2014, pp. 169–78.

'Temporary or "Temple"? Archives Buildings and the Image of Archives in Australia', *Australian Library Journal*, vol. 62, no. 2, 2013, pp. 90–9.

With Z Yi and D Lodge, 'Australian Academic Librarians' Perceptions of Marketing Services and Resources', *Library Management*, vol. 34, nos. 8/9, 2013, pp. 585–602.

'Archives and Manuscripts: A Window into Australian Archival Writing, 1955–2011', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2012, pp. 122–35.

'Educating Archivists in Australia and Beyond: The Contribution of the University of New South Wales Course, 1973–2000', *Comma. International Journal on Archives,* vol. 1, 2011, pp. 79–87.

'A Future without Mediation? Online Access, Archivists and the Future of Archival Research', *Australian Academic and Research Libraries*, vol. 42, no. 4, 2011, pp. 308–19.

With P Hider, M Kennan, L Hay and A Qayyum, 'Moving from LIS to IS+L: Curriculum Renewal at Charles Sturt University, Australia', *Australian Library Journal*, vol. 60, no. 3, 2011, pp. 205–17.

'Formation des archivistes en Australie : le rôle de l'association des archivistes', *Gazette des archives* (Journal of the French Association of Archivists), vol. 218, 2010, pp. 253–62.

'Access: The Success of Advocacy', in *Made, Kept and Used: Celebrating 30 Years of the Australian Society of Archivists*, Australian Society of Archivists, Canberra, 2007, pp. 18–27.

With A Bell and J Martin, 'Labour's Memory: Comparing the Evolution of, and Challenges to, Labour History Archives in Australia, England, Wales and Scotland', *Labour History*, vol. 88, 2005, pp. 25–44.

With M Piggott, 'The Australian Business Archives Scene: Comments and Comparisons', *Business Archives: Principles and Practice*, vol. 87, 2004, pp. 1–15.

'Prospects', in B Howarth and E Maidment (eds), *Light from the Tunnel: Collecting the Archives of Australian Business and Labour at the Australian National University, 1953–2003*, Friends of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Canberra, 2004, pp. 154–9.

'Voices of Opposition: Documenting Australian Protest Movements', *Archives and Manuscripts*, 2001, vol. 29, no. 2, pp. 48–63.

With S Mowbray, 'The Local Government Archives Project', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1995, pp. 322–37.

'Adapting the Series System: A Study of Small Archives Applications', in S McKemmish and M Piggott (eds), *The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives First Fifty Years*, Ancora Press in association with Australian Archives, Clayton, Vic., pp. 173–86.

'Access and Reference Services', in J Ellis (ed.), *Keeping Archives*, 2nd ed., D W Thorpe, Melbourne, 1993, pp. 273–305.

'FOI (Freedom of Information) and Local Government Records in New South Wales: An Overview', in V Weldrick and J Sloggett (eds), *Local Studies: Access and Attitudes*, ALIA Local Studies Section (NSW Group), Sydney, 1993, pp. 17–21.

'The Australian Historic Records Register', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1992, pp. 77–84 (review article).

'Archives in the 1990s: A View of Our Present and Our Future', *Archifacts* (Journal of the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand), April 1991, pp. 1–7.

'The Keeping Archives Workshops Program', *Archives and Manuscripts* vol. 17, no. 2, circa 1987–1989, pp. 151–63.

With K Oakes, 'Finding Aids', in A Pederson (ed.), *Keeping Archives*, ASA Inc., Sydney, 1987, pp. 159–88.

With S Hinchey, 'Access and Reference Services', in A Pederson (ed.), *Keeping Archives*, ASA Inc., Sydney, 1987, pp. 189–218.

Conference papers
With B Pymm, M Carroll and M Kennan, 'Big Data: Opportunities and Barriers across the Cultural Heritage Sectors', paper presented at 'Theory and Research on the Convergence of Professional Identity in Cultural Heritage Institutions (Libraries, Museums, and Archives) beyond Technology', IFLA Library Theory and Research Section, Satellite Meeting, 13–14 August 2014, available at <*http://satel-liteturin2014.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/iflaltrsatellite2014_pymm-et-al.pdf*>, accessed 11 May 2017.

 'Safeguarding Access: Community Expectations and Access to Online and Local Sources', paper presented at inForum, Gold Coast Convention Centre, 6 September 2010, available at <*http://members.rimpa.com.au/lib/StaticContent/StaticPages/pubs/nat/natcon2010/McCauslandNotes.pdf*>, accessed 11 May 2017.

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