

OBITUARY

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Susan MacDougall (1942-2019)

In 2019 Australia lost two important figures in East Asian librarianship and East Asian studies, Susan MacDougall and her husband Iain. Iain was a brilliant linguist, who taught Japanese at the Australian National University and later at the University of Canberra. I would like to pay a tribute to Susan for her significant contribution to Asian librarianship and her qualities as a person.

Born Susan Jones, she was brought up in the English university city of Cambridge. She studied Chinese in the class of 1965 at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, where she was a fellow student and friend of Susan Prentice. In 1965 she married Iain MacDougall.

After moving to Canberra Susan worked at the Australian National University Library from 1979 to 1987 with other distinguished Asian studies librarians including Enid Gibson (Bishop), Y.S. Chan, Susan Prentice and George Miller. Between 1987 and 1996 Susan was Tutor, Lecturer and Faculty Network Manager at the University of Canberra, She lectured in library science, with a special focus on indexing, online searching and non-Roman scripts, especially Chinese, Japanese and Korean (CJK). Her master's degree thesis was entitled "Dual Chinese Romanisation systems [Pinyin and Wade-Giles] and authority control on the Australian Bibliographic Network: a case study." University of Canberra, 1991. She wrote a number of books, conference papers and articles on East Asian library topics, though also on other subjects she loved, such as Chinese painting.

To my mind one of Susan's greatest achievements was editing the East Asian Library Resources Group of Australia (EALRGA) Newsletter, now the ALRA Newsletter, for more than 15 years. This remarkable and unmatched feat was undertaken with her usual quiet efficiency. She took over as editor from Sidney Wang with issue no. 11 in 1987. The last newsletter to include her distinctive editor's note was no. 45 in 2002. During this long period she managed to bring out two newsletters a year plus special issues. She had a knack for encouraging people to contribute articles and news. She also wrote for the newsletter herself, particularly about new developments in technology affecting East Asian librarianship in Australia and around the world. At the same time as being editor she was an active member of the EALRGA Committee.

Susan was highly principled and practised her beliefs. A Christian, and member of the Liberal Catholic Church, she was also a Buddhist. The funeral for Susan and Iain on 3rd July 2019 contained Christian and Buddhist elements. Susan was devoted to her husband and family and was actively involved in her grandchildren's lives. Until his health declined, Susan regularly brought Iain to library lunches. She was also a vegetarian, who loved animals, for example caring for possums with possum boxes in her garden. A strong campaigner for voluntary euthanasia, she stood for the Australian Senate in 2013 as a candidate in the ACT

for the Voluntary Euthanasia Party. On her Facebook page Susan listed her interests as family, fairness, social justice, good governance, democracy, wisdom / compassion.

Susan also had a love of life and good sense of humour. In retirement she worked for a while at the Australian Federal Police Library, a job she described as “helping the police with their inquiries.” When I was President of EALRGA between 1997 and 2003 and she was editor of the Newsletter she would occasionally address me in mock Marilyn Monroe style as “Mr President.” Among other musical interests she had a great fondness for Elvis Presley, lecturing about him at the University of the Third Age. She regularly attended the annual Parkes Elvis Festival in the town of Parkes, central western New South Wales.

At the funeral service for Susan and Iain we sang the Welsh hymn, *Calon Lan* (Pure Heart), which was appropriate given Susan’s Welsh heritage. The words certainly fit Susan’s character. In English translation the hymn begins “I ask not for ease and riches, nor earth’s jewels for my part, but I have the best of wishes, for a pure and honest heart.”

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