



For all of his working life, Kerry Webb was a proud and passionate public servant, a helpful colleague and mentor to many. His knowledge of all things to do with the World Wide Web made him an apt exemplar of nominative determinism! JANINE SCHMIDT and Kerry's wife, JUDITH GATES, tell us about his life.

Kerry Adrian Webb was born in Brisbane on 30 October 1947 and died at home on 7 November 2015, following a brief but challenging fight with cancer. At the end of his life, Kerry was physically a shadow of his former self, but his indomitable spirit, ready wit, personal charm, inquiring mind and prodigious knowledge the world of everything were undiminished. He leaves behind his mother, Joy; four children whom he adored; five much-cherished grandchildren; his former wife, Jenny; and his beloved wife, Judith, a childhood friend with whom he re-established contact later in life.

Kerry's early life

Kerry grew up in Brisbane, did well at school, was a Boy Scout, played rugby and spent weekends at the beach where his father was a surf lifesaver. Aspiring to a life in the sky, Kerry commenced studies at the RAAF Academy at Point Cook, Victoria, after he left school, but it was not to be. After various career forays, Kerry moved to Canberra in 1968 to undertake an arts degree at ANU while working as a trainee programmer at the Australian Bureau of Statistics. He met and married Jenny, the mother of his four children: Honey, Geordie, Giselle and Rose.

Kerry's library life

In 1973 Kerry moved from the Australian Bureau of Statistics to the National Library of Australia, joining the fledgling Systems Development department. For over 20 years, he played a strong role in shaping information technology developments in Australian libraries. He went on to work for CSIRO and the ACT Government as a web architect, retiring in 2012. He published articles and books, organised conferences, presented papers at conferences (such as ALIA's Information Online and VALA) and was very involved with ALIA activities, serving as president of the ACT branch.

Webb's web

Kerry's outstanding contribution to Australian librarianship was his column 'Webb's Web' in *INCITE*. Originally dubbed 'The Internet Pages', Kerry's column ran from 1994 to 2012, alerting all Australian librarians to changes in information and communications technology. It highlighted new websites, provided hints on effective search strategies, explained metadata, drew attention to issues of concern and heralded developments in social media. Librarians throughout Australia found his contributions insightful.

Divergent interests

Kerry described himself on LibraryThing as ageing gracefully, reading as much as ever and delighting in the World Wide Web. His surname was truly apt and his delight in the web was evident in his Twitter account, Facebook page and contributions as a Wikimedian. Kerry's eclectic interests included the compilation of a list of librarian songs, one of which – by a former Director-General of the National Library, Harrison Bryan – addressed the mysteries of cataloguing. Kerry's erudition is evident in his many blog contributions, research into English novelist Patrick O'Brian, and activities such as bibliographies of items on the American Civil War.

Kerry's passing leaves a huge gap in the lives of his immediate family. He will be sorely missed by his friends and colleagues. ☹️

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