

Editorial

Felicity Hand

felicity.hand@uab.cat

Copyright© 2020 Felicity Hand. This text may be archived and redistributed both in electronic form and in hard copy, provided that the author and journal are properly cited and no fee is charged, in accordance with our Creative Commons Licence.

Abstract: An introduction to the special *In memoriam* issue of the journal dedicated to the memory of Geoff Davis.

Keywords: Geoff Davis, moving tributes, admiration

I am greatly honoured to have been asked to guest edit this special issue of *Coolabah* to commemorate the life and achievements of the late Geoff Davis. I met Geoff several years ago at an EACLALS conference and since that first encounter, he always remembered me and was ready for a convivial chat. I am grateful to him for having encouraged my colleague Esther Pujolràs-Noguer and myself to publish our volume on South African Indian writers in the Brill-Rodopi Cross/Cultures series that so many of the contributors to this issue have mentioned. Geoff was so natural and down to earth, he had no airs and was the ideal person to have a drink with during a conference. I have fond memories of a friendly supper we had in Brussels in the course of a conference on South African drama in 2017. Last year, 2018, I coincided with him at two excellent conferences, SPACLALS in February at the University of New England, Parramatta, and, thanks to his encouragement again, the 44th Annual African Literature Association Conference in Washington DC. As I had seen and chatted to him twice that year I was absolutely taken aback when I heard about his death. He seemed to be larger than life and now, having read all the wonderful tributes that colleagues and friends have submitted to the journal, I realise what a great scholar and human being Geoff Davis was. I feel extremely privileged to have made his acquaintance.

This special issue begins with a homage from three professors from the University of Barcelona, home of the journal *Coolabah* and is followed by fifteen contributions from fellow scholars and personal friends, all of which are at the same time moving and funny – some are really hilarious - as Geoff was anything but the typical academic who takes himself too seriously. I have arranged the contributions in strict alphabetical order as they are all exceptional documents on an exceptional man. I am grateful to Geoff's widow Mrs. Ingrid Davis for allowing us to reproduce the photographs, which show his vitality and bonhomie as well as his love of our postcolonial world.

Bionote: Felicity Hand is senior lecturer in the English Department of the Autonomous University of Barcelona. She teaches post-colonial literature and history and culture of Britain and the U.S. She has published articles on various Indian Ocean writers including M.G.Vassanji, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown and Lindsey Collen. She is co-head of the research group *Ratnakara* <http://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/ratnakara> which explores the literatures and cultures of the South West Indian Ocean. At present the group is working on community life writing. Felicity is also the editor of the electronic journal *Indi@logs. Spanish Journal of India Studies* <http://revistes.uab.cat/indialogs>