

Farewell to Joanne Cunningham

Quentin Abraham and Peter Coleman



An editorial board member recently passed away after a courageous period of time battling illness. We remember her contribution to this journal and to the wider education sector in her work as an educational psychologist and a mentor to those entering the profession. Jo was on the editorial board of *Kairaranga: Weaving educational threads. Weaving educational practice* - a professional practice journal for teachers, specialist teachers and those working within inclusive education. She supported those contributing to the journal, including taking on the editorial role for Volume 8(2) in 2007.

One of the many characteristics of Jo was her quiet but determined ability to influence across many groups within education. Her generous, insightful and down-to-earth manner meant she connected well with diverse individuals and groups. Always with the learner in mind, Jo helped others to develop their professional skills in supporting young people. She was generous with her time, and used her many networks and skills to support those across the wider educational community.

Jo was also the first Educational Psychology Practice Advisor appointed by Victoria University for their new educational psychology programme in 2012. She left a legacy in terms of establishing their contemporary EdPsych Test Library and providing support to the first cohort of interns. One of the graduates recently noted that 'Jo was a great teacher and mentor. My year group are fortunate to have been able to learn from such an experienced practitioner'.

We are reprinting the obituary written for the NZPsS e-circular Connections.

OBITUARY JOANNE CUNNINGHAM

We are sad to advise members of New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPsS) of the untimely passing of Joanne Cunningham, a valued friend and colleague to many psychologists in Wellington and across the country. She had been unwell for some time but true to her modest style remained more concerned for others than for herself. Many psychologists will remain extremely grateful for the sound and thoughtful advice which she provided for them, often in a personally difficult time. She was also very forthright about issues facing practitioners and in defending their independent professionalism.

Jo qualified as a psychologist in 1983 when she gained her M.A. (Applied) in Psychology from Victoria University. She subsequently worked as a psychologist in the Ministry of Education for about 30 years, covering a wide range of developmental, academic and behavioural issues for pupils aged 5 to 18 within a multidisciplinary team before joining the faculty of Victoria University to establish supervision and casework arrangements for interns, and teaching and designing a lecture series. Above all Jo was a skilled psychologist, an enthusiastic mentor to her younger and less experienced colleagues and was also a loyal servant to the Society and the profession.

Jo was a member of the Wellington Family Courts Association from 1984 -1997 and on the executive of the Psychological Service Association (which represented Dept of Education Psychologists from 1982 to 1991). She was a long-standing member of the NZ Educational Institute and heavily-involved with negotiating pay and conditions in post 'Tomorrows Schools' transition. Jo received training for the Board's Complaints Assessment

Committee in 2004 and chaired several committees under the HPCA legislation from this time. From 2004 to 2007 Jo was a co-opted member of the New Zealand Psychologists Board Supervision Review Panel. She joined the editorial board of the RTLJ *Kairaranga* when it was managed by the Ministry of Education. Jo also founded 'HAGS', a group supervision team of private senior Clinical and Educational Psychologists within the Wellington area.

Jo had been a member of NZPsS since 1980 and was on the Executive of the Society for 7 years. She became Secretary/Treasurer of Women's Division of the Society. She was the Treasurer for the Wellington Branch of NZPsS from 1995-1998 and coordinator of the educational subcommittee. She was heavily-involved in setting up and contributing to the Society's 'Supervision 2000' ('Option D' supervision-to-registration) scheme which ran until about 2006 and directly supervised five 'Interns' within the Ministry of Education. She was the Director of Professional Affairs for the NZPsS from 2005 to 2012, and acted as Convenor of the Ethical Issues Committee over the same period.

As well as being a very committed practitioner, Jo was an unfailingly kind, thoughtful and a deeply-respected colleague. In her typically understated manner, she had a very long reach and influence on psychology within Aotearoa/New Zealand and accordingly, this year, she was elected as a Fellow of the Society. We will all honour and mourn her passing.

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