

*UWAASA Philippa Maddern Award 2015 for an Academic Still Working at UWA -
Professor Greg Acciaioli*

Universities are multibillion-dollar corporate enterprises, but they are also communities. As communities, they are built and held together by the ongoing efforts of key individuals who contribute far more than their title, job description or academic portfolio might suggest. Greg Acciaioli is one such individual. He is an exemplary academic who embodies the motto “Seek Wisdom.”

All of those that are lucky enough to know Greg as a colleague or teacher are grateful for his unbridled enthusiasm, his pursuit of knowledge, his generosity and his scholarly integrity.

Greg’s intellectual generosity is legendary. Despite an enormous supervisory load, he provides rich, detailed, and thoughtful written commentary on every piece of work submitted by his postgraduate and undergraduate students. He shows similar care with article manuscript submissions in his role as co-editor of *Anthropological Forum*.

He encourages all students to meet with him in person to discuss their work at length. In seminars, Greg’s critical questions are never simple. He suggests new perspectives or invites elaboration. Such inspirational encouragement does more than help individual students, authors or speakers to improve their work. It reminds us all of the precious nature of our learning journey.

Greg’s generosity extends far beyond UWA into the global anthropological community where he is committed to a vision of a decolonized anthropology that pays attention to knowledge produced beyond metropolitan centres. (*Connaissance sans frontières*)

He serves on the executive of national and international associations, devoting considerable energy to organizing conferences (including UWA conferences in anthropology in 2011, and Asian Studies in 2014), and supports emerging anthropological associations in Malaysia and Indonesia, the sites of his field research. He is equally committed to applying academic knowledge to real world problems, particularly in the context of international conservation and development, and in forging interdisciplinary research and teaching connections with colleagues in environmental sciences and geography.

He is highly valued by the West Australian Anthropology and Sociology Students Association (WAASSA) both as a guiding counsel to the executive team and for his generosity with his time and patience in helping students develop their own leadership skills. WAASSA students have previously recognised his contribution and importance to the Association by making him an Honorary Life member.

The anthropological work that Greg undertakes and that he teaches students is informed by his encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of anthropology. It is also shaped by the ongoing relationships that he and his wife Ninek maintain with communities in Southern Sulawesi where his primary field research has focused.

Greg also contributes to collegial life in non-intellectual ways. No Discipline Group function, event or honours seminar is complete without Greg taking photographs (to record history), or baking delicious cookies, cakes or brownies – the latter often extending to undergraduate classes too.

It must be admitted that Greg is perhaps too dedicated and too selfless. During periods of official leave, he seems to work non-stop, reading students’ work, reviewing journal submissions, presenting papers in conferences and even visiting students in their field sites. His reluctance to promote himself means that he remains on an academic level that doesn’t reflect his wisdom and contribution. He always finds time for others.