

UWAASA Centenary Award 2013 (Posthumous) – Dr Brenton Knott (1942-2013)

During his 40 years at the University of Western Australia, Dr Brenton Knott was a major contributor and foundation coordinator of an introductory biology unit for 1st year medical, dental and podiatry students. He produced and ran 2nd, 3rd and 4th year units in his discipline area of Zoology in General and Arthropod Biology, and in particular Invertebrate Biology. He challenged students to engage in rigorous and thoughtful challenges to prevailing paradigms and was greatly admired as a courageous, articulate, energetic and perceptive academic, who made a difference to the lives of his students and colleagues. In testament to Dr Knott's accessibility as a 'special' teacher, students would bring their friends to his now famous "Parasite Lectures".

Dr Brenton Knott contributed his expertise in Biology to the State Curriculum Year 12 Committee for Biology. Twenty of his PhD students now hold senior academic and industry positions around the world.

As a foundation contributor and enthusiastic supporter of indigenous education, Dr Brenton Knott involved himself especially in those that supported and assisted indigenous students entering the medical and dental health programmes at UWA.

He was a courageous and energetic contributor to the Future Courses Review of the undergraduate teaching program and continued this contribution by chairing the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Teaching and Learning Committee, to implement the changes.

Brenton's commitment to his undergraduate and postgraduate students over many years did not wane in the face of debilitating effects from his cancer treatment, continuing to coordinate his medical unit from his hospital bed after surgery, and preparing the practical manual for new units while in palliative care. He continued to attend the lab classes and interacted with the students in these units until his retirement from the University at the end of 2012. His passion for his life's work ended only with his death in March 2013 at the age of seventy.

The tributes from his students after his death were testament to the high esteem, respect and love they held for this wonderful man. In addition to the formal and public recognition from the many medical and science graduates whom he taught, his students established a permanent web site <http://www.legacy.com/guestbooks/thewest-au/brenton-knott-condolences/163632024> where their acknowledgements remain permanently lodged. These same students acknowledged Dr Knott's passing with a commemorative t-shirt bearing a dedication to his memory with a picture of one of his beloved crustaceans. Such student recognition is unprecedented.

Dr Brenton Knott is described as a man of unassuming nature indicative of his devotion and attention to his students.