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Obituary

Associate Professor Joseph John Hallein

Academic and consultant

Born Needham, Massachusetts, 10 February 1943

Died Mackay, Queensland, 26 April 2005, aged 62

There was an air about Joe Hallein that people instinctively liked. Something of a rough diamond, he was both an inspired university teacher and a great lover of nature. Perhaps curiously for such a knockabout man, his field was school librarianship and his passion was promoting libraries in developing countries. He applied this same enthusiasm to his love of the outdoors, where he could effortlessly find the most beautiful wilderness areas for his hiking and camping exploits.

In 1977 Joe left an academic career in his native USA after being recruited as a lecturer by Sydney's Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education. There he worked with leading Australian librarian, the late Margaret Trask to build a centre of excellence in Library and Information Studies, along with eminent academics Dagmar Schmidmaier, now NSW state librarian, the retired dean of the University of Technology Sydney Mairéad Browne, and Janine Schmidt, now McGill University director of libraries.

Joe was born in Needham, an old parkland suburb of Boston, Massachusetts, where, far from absorbing upper-crust affectations, he and his brother Ned were free to explore the New England countryside of Thoreau and Louisa May Alcott. As a lad, he hunted with his golden retriever, fished from a rowboat and pored over history books and encyclopaedias. His Italian mother and Irish father, both bankers, correctly predicted an academic career for their unconventional son because of his ability to hold forth on any subject.

Joe pursued his interest in history by completing a BA in American Studies at the University of Wyoming and a MSc in Librarianship at the University of Western Michigan. As a student he was able to indulge his passion for the outdoors, including climbing the mountains of Mexico, Wyoming, Maine and New Hampshire.

His early career was spent in Canada's island province of Newfoundland, first as Supervisor of Libraries for the Catholic School Board, then as Head of the Curriculum Materials Centre at Memorial University. Newfoundland, something of a bleak and backward outpost,

offered Joe plenty of scope for library modernisation and plenty of opportunity for camping, canoeing, fishing and hiking.

A move to the Virgin Islands, again working with school libraries, sparked a love for developing countries. Joe believed information empowered. His mantra was: 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.' From this point his career was sprinkled with international consultancies — including in the Cook Islands, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, Vanuatu, Western Samoa and Vietnam.

In 1986 Joe left Sydney for Monash University's campus in Churchill, Victoria. He also spent time as a visiting professor at the University of Hawaii and the University of Namibia.

In 1995 he was appointed Associate Professor and Head of the Mackay Campus of the University of Central Queensland. There in the Whitsundays Joe immersed himself in an environment where, like Bob Dylan, the weather suited his clothes.

Then in 1999, during a World Bank consultancy in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Joe sustained severe head and spinal injuries in a fall down a marble staircase. The accident left him a paraplegic. He returned to Mackay but could not resume his professional career. Despite this handicap, with the help of his partner Pamela Bazin, Joe continued to enjoy life — travelling, participating in the Rotary Club, delighting in country music, and partying with a wide circle of friends.

Joe leaves behind an extensive network of professional colleagues, friends and ex-students around the world who will regret his passing and remember what he gave them.

Joe is survived by his son Evan, his daughter Yashka and her two children, Nathaniel and Megan, and his partner of later years Pamela Bazin.

Ingrid Jackson, Executive Management Solutions

