

EDITORIAL

The tenth volume of *Island Studies Journal*; and a tribute to one who helped make it happen.

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ABSTRACT: This brief editorial offers some sober reflections on ten years of *Island Studies Journal*, announces a change of the journal's editorship, and pays tribute to a longstanding supporter and contributor to ISJ, Professor Jerome McElroy, poignantly articulated by eight of his former students and co-authors with him of his various papers on small island economics.

Keywords: island studies, island studies journal, Jerome McElroy

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Introduction

I last penned an editorial to *Island Studies Journal (ISJ)* when the Journal turned five years old, in May 2010. Five more years have gone by, and *ISJ* keeps going. We will be receiving our 300th manuscript submission very soon now. The Journal is the official journal of ISISA (the International Small Islands Studies Association) and RETI (the Network of Island Universities). Hay (2006) remains the most cited paper in the Journal, according to Google Scholar (84 citations to date). The Journal is proudly indexed and abstracted by Thomson Reuters (in the *Social Sciences Citation Index*, *Journal Citation Reports* and *Current Contents Connect*): <http://ssci.thomsonreuters-database.org/index.php?word=I>

In response to a round of consultations last year, and starting from this issue, the journal cover will feature a photo or image based on a theme or paper discussed in the same issue. This also means that the parchment and inkwell that graced previous covers have now been removed.

Has *Island Studies Journal* made a difference, or left an impact? Writing in 1918, almost 100 years ago, Lucien Febvre made some quite categorical pronouncements about the geographical significance of isolation,

What value, then, have these [naturally bounded regions, including islands] which we have been successively reviewing? They are a means, not an end ... Their value for us is only of a practical kind. They are convenient for study. That is the only way in which they interest us and in which they can help us to discover a series of less superficial and better established relations between the possibilities of an environment and the societies exploiting them (Febvre, 1932, p. 235).

Fast forward to 1988, and the co-authors of a detailed anthropological study of Eastern Fiji reach a similar conclusion, acknowledging that they have not advanced “a single step” from Fevre’s observation,

Herein lies the value of islands for geography. It is not the unique characteristics of their ecosystems, nor the special adjustments to resource limitations that their inhabitants are supposed to have made, nor their particular vulnerability to external impacts. They are not essentially different, but merely more extreme, and conveniently replicated versions, of what is found in the more familiar continental world of conventional geographical study (Bayliss-Smith, Bedford, Brookfield & Latham, 1988, p. 284).

Perhaps 1988 was the watershed. That year marked the launch of *The Contemporary Pacific*, the first of what is now a clutch of island studies scholarly journals. In that year, UNCTAD was on track towards the recognition of a wide array of disadvantages facing what are now called ‘small island developing states’, or SIDS. In that year, a concerted effort by a group of small island states put climate change on the UN agenda, when Malta pushed for the General Assembly to recognize the potential for ‘severe economic and social consequences’ from climate change: the group eventually coalesced as the Alliance Of Small and Island States (AOSIS). Also in that year, a group of scholars met to discuss islands in Victoria, Vancouver Island, Canada; the initiative paved the way to the setting up and launch of the International Small Islands Studies Association (ISISA) in 1994.

One is now much less likely to find scholars or policy makers who declare so brazenly (at least in public) that islands are just a means, not an end; and have no particular interest to them. For those coming from the world’s sovereign island states or various subnational island jurisdictions, islands and their residents are their natural constituencies. Statements like those by Fevre and Bayliss-Smith et al. still (and are bound to continue to) appear; but they are more likely to surprise us today, when more of us are aware that islands are the homes of no less than one tenth of the world’s population, and when 2014 was declared IYSIDS (the International Year of Small Island Developing States) by the United Nations.

ISJ is hopefully doing its own small part to mainstream, share knowledge and encourage scholarly collaboration in island studies. If it is anything to go by, we have graduated beyond feeling obliged to explain (and defend) why ‘island studies’ is a legitimate field of academic inquiry.

Expressions of interest

I hope that *ISJ*’s good work will continue as we move closer to December 2016 and the end of the current four-year term of the International Editorial Board. At that point, this Editor will be hanging up his boots and officially handing over to a suitable successor. Formal expressions of interest in the position of *ISJ* Editor (and possibly other positions that may open up on the Editorial Team) will be circulated in September 2015.

Saluting an exceptional colleague

A journal is only the sum total of the work of so many: the hopeful contributors who want to get published, the peer reviewers who assess their work, and those who oil the cogs and gears behind the wings – book reviewers, proofs readers, book publishers, a dedicated editorial team. In these endeavours, we cross paths with some truly exceptional people.

Here, I want to single out Professor Jerome McElroy: Jerry to his friends. A steady contributor to *ISJ* (his last contribution appeared in the November 2014 issue), a member of our international editorial board, a loyal manuscript reviewer (he never turned an opportunity away), and a scholar who was exceptionally capable of co-authoring quality papers with his students at Saint Mary's College, Indiana, USA, where he taught for 32 years. We lost Jerry on December 17, 2014. He was 77. He is thus pithily described by his wife Birdie,

a man, a professor, a collaborator, an economist and poet. ... truly a Renaissance Man.



With the kind assistance of Jerry's colleague at Saint Mary's, Dr Richard Measell, and the enthusiastic responses of his former pupils, we have here collated some lovely and poignant, and at times humorous, tributes to our Jerry from eight of the students who experienced being co-authors with him. (No less than 17 students co-authored papers with 'McElroy').

It is difficult to put into a few words what Dr. McElroy meant to me, but I hope the following can help in placing a tribute to his memory: Studying under, and then publishing with, Dr. McElroy gave me the opportunity to have a true mentor. He was a knowledgeable teacher, a modest expert, a caring coach, a supportive counselor, an encouraging tutor, a faithful guide, a compassionate role model, a humble inspiration ... a true blessing.

Patricia Olazarri

G. Baldacchino and collaborators

I am a former student of Dr. McElroy and worked with him on a paper on island economics. Dr. McElroy's enthusiasm in teaching economics made me fall in love with the subject. He was so knowledgeable yet so humble, always caring and loving. In the process of working on a research paper, Dr. McElroy provided the perfect amount of guidance and freedom to help me maximize my learning and discover my voice. He had the magic power to make me feel always motivated yet never stressed. We are extremely sad to lose him. He has truly impacted my life.

Jingqiu Guan

I am a former student of Professor McElroy and wanted to share with you a quick tribute about my experience working with him.

I graduated in 2009. I was a double major in math and economics. After graduation, I participated in a master's program at Notre Dame (ESTEEM program focused on Engineering, Science, Entrepreneurship). I now work with Deloitte as a Senior Consultant in our Risk Analytics practice. I first met Professor McElroy during my freshman year at Saint Mary's College: he taught my first business course, Principles of Macroeconomics. He was a great storyteller in the classroom; he really made the material come to life for his students. He had a passion for taking complicated concepts and breaking them down into simpler ideas that were easier to understand. His lectures gave often abstract economics theory meaningful application in the "real world". Several years later, after I had graduated from SMC and ND, I even had the honour of teaching this class on his behalf while he was on sabbatical.

While I was a student (and even after I graduated) I frequently helped Prof. McElroy with data analysis, research, and independent review of several publications. We worked well as a pair - he would identify a hypothesis (often in an area of island research, his specialty) and I would run the data to prove / disprove the hypothesis. I would identify the needed datasets, clean the data, and run the models. Together we published an article my senior year, based on my senior thesis. I also helped him with another article after I graduated.

I will remember Professor McElroy as a wonderful person: a beloved teacher and mentor. I became very close with the McElroy family over the years: their family was so loving and open to Saint Mary's students. In many ways, they *were* Saint Mary's: kind, generous in spirit, faithful, and supportive. They often had students over for dinner and kept in touch long after students had left Saint Mary's or South Bend.

Courtney E. Parry

Thank you for paying tribute to Dr. McElroy in such a special way. I am sorry this took so long to get to you, but it was hard to memorialize a dynamic individual that had such a special place in my life into three sentences.

I always left Dr. Mac's class with a smile on my face; his energy, love for life, and passion for the subject matter made the day much brighter. A treasured opportunity to have studied and collaborated together; to have learned from the best. Dr. McElroy was the epitome of all things good.

Kara Pearce Schroer

Thank you for allowing me and my former classmates to honour 'Doc Mac' with a small tribute. My heart still aches when I imagine this world without him.

Dr. McElroy was giddy with passion for small island economics, people, and environments. One could not help but thoroughly enjoy working with him. He was focused, always encouraging, and frankly, funny. I remember him rhyming to catch my attention once. It was never guns and roses with Doc Mac, but real people and real voices. I felt his love for every voice in the classroom and for every unique, beautiful voice of each small island he studied.

Dr. McElroy wore cowboy boots to class, dark jeans, and a dress sweater. I still picture him bouncing on his heels with his arms stretched wide and a smile the size of Texas as he finished the punch line of one of his examples. He inspired me to care about small island economies and people, and I will carry his love and passion with me for the rest of my days.

Ashley (Oberst) Dingler

Mac and I were the first batch of successful applicants for the Lilith Award Endowment for collaboration and research between students and professors. Our collaboration gave me one strong insight; how humility can lead to invaluable insight, understanding and strength. Doc Mac was one of my earliest and most influential mentors. His clear but gentle guidance, and the credit he shared with his students left a life-long impression.

For the last 15 years, I have been working in humanitarian response, mostly in Africa. What I learned plays a critical role every day. I learned that through collaboration and sharing, you can achieve so much more. I learned you can be strong and gentle. While it took me more years to get better at that learning, the seed and importance were planted early on, and I will never forget Mac. He will forever be with me.

Lika Dioguardi

I am honoured to have been contacted for this memorial. First, I am embarrassed to admit it has been many years since I thought of island economics (yikes... I feel myself getting to be less of an intellectual with every year I am in the corporate world!). Second, my pithy comment has very little to do with "Economics", but always with what I recall when I think of him.

Hanging out with Dr. Mac for four years, you would think he would learn my name: Megan Mahoney. Nice Irish, Catholic name for a Saint Mary's girl. Day after day, year after year, class after class, paper after paper, he continued to refer to me/introduce me as "Meg", the one nickname that I can NOT stand. It makes my skin crawl; but, given his easy nature, I never had the heart to correct him. To this day, he is the only person who ever got away using the detested moniker!

I hope this little memory is usable in some form, or at least brings a smile to your face as you think of him.

Megan L. Mahoney

G. Baldacchino and collaborators

Dr. McElroy inspired me as a student and continues to do so in my professional life. I have spoken to my own students countless times about Dr. McElroy and have strived to create the unique environment he could in the classroom. He was able to pass on his passion for research to his students and now, more than 10 years after being a student of his, some of my research still focuses on ideas that began to develop in the work I did with him.

Leslie Dunn, Ph.D.

Further commentary is superfluous. (Spare a thought: might we scholars and lecturers be so privileged to have so many of our former students thinking so fondly of us when we are gone?)

To me at least, it makes sense to celebrate *ISJ* while, and by, celebrating Jerry. He does not only represent those who make outcomes like *ISJ* happen; he stands for what we scholars stand for, and why we do what we do. In celebrating Jerry, we also celebrate and thank the many who continue to support this Journal, and to whom I convey my sincere thanks and appreciation.

18 March 2015

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