



John Lewis awarded GTA NSW & ACT Honorary Life Membership

Citation

John Lewis has been a member of the Geography Teachers Association of NSW & ACT (GTA NSW&ACT) Council since 2003. During these 17 years, John freely gave his time and shared his expertise to support the work of the Association; to do so he travelled to Sydney and other areas of NSW as required, from the Central Coast of NSW and more recently from Newcastle. Now in the era of zoom, John still prioritises his attendance at GTA NSW&ACT meetings, events, and planning sessions which often go for several hours.

John is known for his generous and extensive support to many annual events of the Association including:

- the Annual Conference;
- the series of lectures for HSC Exam Preparation in Geography;
- marking of entries for the Arthur Phillip Fieldwork Awards during school- holidays;
- the Arthur Phillip Fieldwork Awards Ceremony; and
- contributing to Reviews of HSC Geography.

At each event, every year, John prefers to work quietly behind the scenes. His ability to monitor the room, anticipate potential issues or areas of concern, and desire to ensure a smooth 'on-the-day' operation for organisers and attendees, results in John taking responsibility for registration and sign-in procedures; proactively liaising with representatives from the Professional Teachers' Council of NSW and GTA NSW&ACT Council to mitigate possible problems; and be available for all set-up and pull-down activities connected with the running of each event. At all times, John demonstrates care for the work of the Association and proactively assists a range of Councillors and Executive to support the work of Geography teachers across NSW and ACT.

Of particular note to the Association is John's contribution to the two-day Annual Conference. His presence and positive, upbeat approach towards completing the necessary yet unglamorous jobs of a Conference have been instrumental to their success. John's main work at the Annual Conference include:

- the 'meet and greet' of conference delegates together with registration of their attendance;
- co-ordinating the distribution of conference resources and presentation of awards whilst ensuring any last-minute adjustments are always accounted for;
- setting up the function room; and
- assisting with all enquiries from conference delegates, invited guests, conference sponsors, and conference venue personnel.

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John's outstanding contribution to conferences and workshops for almost two decades is widely acknowledged by all on Council. Such contribution demonstrates his reliable, professional and service-oriented approach towards geographical education.

Another area of note is John's regular attendance at Council meetings. He always exceeds the minimum expectation of attendance and makes valuable contributions to agenda items under discussion. Furthermore, John confidently presents ideas and opinions about Geography teaching and Association activities; he also ensures important matters and items are not forgotten. John worked closely on the development of the Constitution and the recent name-change procedures which enabled formal recognition of the ACT to be included in the identity of the Association. On several occasions John assisted GTA NSW & ACT in the relocation of premises, for example from Leichhardt to Ashfield, and then from Ashfield to Lidcombe – each move involved the packing, unpacking, sorting, relocation and reorganisation of GTA's office-space and resources. John is a valuable source of information about the GTA NSW & ACT and its work given his long and continuous involvement which means he is often called upon to answer historical questions about the Association.

John's attention to detail, work ethic and good humour have made him a pleasure to work alongside. The length of time he has fulfilled the role of Councillor, along with his level of active involvement is testament to his commitment to the Association overall and the Council of GTA NSW & ACT.

In recognition of his significant and continuous contribution to the Geography Teachers Association of NSW & ACT it is deemed appropriate for John to be awarded the honour of Lifetime Membership to the Association.

The Life Membership Award

The Lifetime Membership award is conferred on members of GTANSW & ACT for their exceptional support, outstanding service and sustained contribution and commitment to the Association and Geography Education more generally.

Members awarded 'Lifetime Membership' have demonstrated, over time, their commitment and contribution to advancing Geography Education through their long-term membership, dedication, involvement and active participation in the GTA NSW & ACT.

The GTA NSW & ACT is appreciative of our Life Members' long-term support and contribution to the Association.

GTA NSW& ACT Life members:

- Dr Susan Bliss
- Dr Grant Kleeman
- Nick Hutchinson
- Barbara Heath
- Paul Alger

2020 Brock Rowe Award recipient Samantha Coburn

Citation

It is not a statement that I make lightly but, Samantha Coburn is the up-and-coming Eddie Woo of Geography. She is one of the co-creators and driving forces behind the extremely successful YouTube Channel – Geography Explained Online. This channel provides instructional videos for both teachers (Primary through to HSC) and students covering aspects of both the Junior and Senior Geography courses – including instructional videos for various geographical skills, video “how to’s” for Senior students addressing past HSC questions as well as other areas of geographical content. These videos have been extremely well received with 5200 + “views” on YouTube worldwide, 820 subscribers, these clips have been watched for over 1100 hours and received 170 positive comments from both Primary and Secondary teachers.



During the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent difficulties with arranging fieldwork – Samantha collaborated with experts from the Hunter Wetlands to create a virtual fieldtrip. This video is now being used by Hunter Wetlands as a resource and has been accessed by teachers across NSW. This is just one of many examples of the collegiality that Samantha has shown. She created and ran professional learning for teachers in our school concerning the use and application of Google Classroom during our period of “at home” learning. She also provided this learning opportunity to a nearby primary school.

In recognition of her innovation, engagement and expertise Samantha was chosen last year by the DET and Teachers Mutual bank as a Learning Edge Ambassador to mentor other teachers wanting to engage with digital resources. This was an outstanding achievement for someone only in their fifth year of teaching.

It is not only Samantha’s technological ability and innovation which would make her such a worthy recipient of the Brock Rowe award but, also her genuine love and enthusiasm for the teaching and learning of Geography. Samantha’s efforts and ability have seen Geography as a subject at our school grow exponentially. Senior Geography as a subject previously ran possibly once every two years, now we have three HSC classes of enthusiastic and engaged students who love Geography because of the teaching methodologies of Samantha. Overall, these are just some of the attributes that I could mention about this extremely talented young teacher whose passion for the teaching and learning of Geography have, and will, benefit so many students fortunate enough to be taught by her as well as the members of our profession who can learn from her.

It is with great pride that I nominate Samantha for the Geography Teachers Association Brock Rowe Award.

Nominated by Peter West (Head Teacher) and endorsed by Joshua Gane, Principal Maitland Grossman High School

The Brock Rowe Award

The Brock Rowe Award, an award for excellence in teaching geography in schools, is granted jointly by the Councils of the Geography Teachers’ Association of New South Wales and ACT Inc. (GTA NSW & ACT) and the Geographical Society of New South Wales Inc. (GS NSW), annually to persons who have demonstrated consistently, over a period, excellence in the teaching of Geography in schools.

Past Brock Rowe Award recipients:

2018 Glen Halliday

2015 Sally Egan

2004 Pam Gregg

2017 Susan Summerfield

2013 Lorraine Chaffer

2002 David Thomas

2016 Catherine Donnelly

2006 Sharon McLean

1998 Jeffrey Paul Hart

Geoff Conolly Memorial Award

Selection criteria

The Geography Teachers Association of NSW and ACT (GTA NSW&ACT) recognise contributions of significance to the *Geography Bulletin*, journal of the Association. Such contributions are recognised through a peer review process for the prestigious Geoff Conolly Memorial Award.

The Geoff Conolly Memorial Award is presented to an author or authoring team who made an outstanding contribution to the *Geography Bulletin*.

During 2019 and 2020, five contributors were nominated for the Award. Each contributor submitted an article for publication in the journal and the article was published without amendment. A peer review process occurs to identify the author or authoring team who submitted the most meritorious article within a given timeframe.

2020 Award Recipients



Fleur Farah, for her article entitled *Low-cost fieldwork in a pandemic*, published in Volume 52, No 4, 2020, was selected as the meritorious article for 2020. The peer review panel agreed your article was the one of most relevance to teachers of Geography in 2020. The peer review panel were impressed by the quality of the article itself and overall transferability of ideas to different school contexts. Additionally, the panel were also impressed by the:

- clarity of links to the syllabus;
- inclusion of pre-fieldwork activities and post-fieldwork activities;
- clear and achievable instructions about fieldwork and required equipment;
- inclusion of a student workbook; and
- inclusion of an assessment task with marking criteria.



Sharon McLean for her article entitled *Sydney's 'Central District City' a liveable and sustainable city?*, published in Volume 51, No 2, 2019, was selected as the meritorious article for 2020. The peer review panel agreed your article was the one of most relevance to teachers of Geography in 2019. The peer review panel were impressed by the quality of the article itself, its ease of implementation 'as-is', and the overall transferability of ideas to different city or suburb contexts. Additionally, the panel were also impressed by the:

- clarity of links to the syllabus;
- inclusion of pre-fieldwork and post-fieldwork activities;
- sustained use of creative and complex inquiry questions;
- sustained emphasis upon the key concepts of Geography;
- clear and achievable instructions about conduct of the tasks;
- range of supporting tools and resources; and
- emphasis on student focused learning through fieldwork.

GTA NSW & ACT congratulates the award recipients on writing these wonderful articles; which will greatly assist teachers in developing a range of targeted fieldwork activities to suit their local context. Alternatively, teachers will be able to implement the activities using the given place-specific contexts.