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TO A MENTOR AND FRIEND

CAROLINE PHILLIPS

Roger Green was my academic mentor for 37 years. Throughout that period I was his research assistant, undergraduate to post-graduate student, illustrator, fellow academic and co-author. He was also a friend.

In those many roles during that time, there were various moments that I treasure and would like to share a few of them here – all say something about Roger the person.

I first met Roger in 1972 when he was in his second year of the James Cook Fellowship. Based at Auckland Museum, surrounded by boxes of Lapita pottery and faunal remains from the Solomons, he asked me to illustrate the artefacts, draw plans and sections. Roger knew how the figures should look, but said he could only draw postholes, whereas I was ignorant of the conventions of archaeological illustrations but could draw. He taught me what became for many years my chief employment. It was at this time I understood that doctor's handwriting didn't only apply to those in General Practice.

He also asked me to measure, record, label or identify faunal remains and pottery. On one notable occasion I dropped a tray of Lapita plain ware. For him to only say "Oh Caroline" was very tolerant indeed – fortunately none were broken. Despite this, he supported my attending university as a senior student, and later supervised my MA and, jointly with Harry Allen, my PhD theses (Figure 1). In both he was keen to ensure that I was aware of the full range of past and recent literature from his prodigious reading and knowledge, but less helpfully suggested his own version of grammar and punctuation, which I have to admit I ignored.

Roger later supported the publication of my first book, and was overjoyed when I finally 'got' why he sent me Kent Flannery's chapter "A visit to the master". The book was all the better for this addition, and Roger kindly sent a copy of it to Flannery.

I assisted Roger in several field schools. On one occasion when I was tutoring a field school, I backed the anthropology van into his car - and his telling words were “we’ve know each other too long to fall out over a car”.



Figure 1. Roger celebrating the author's PhD graduation in 1995 with Harry Allen (photograph by Jocelyn Logan).

He really enjoyed fieldwork and became a different person out of the office – an almost boyish demeanour took over in his excitement of uncovering new ground. A similar transformation occurred when Roger dressed up as Santa Claus to hand out presents in the Anthropology Department Christmas lunches, which used to surprise students and any new members of staff.

Roger used to say “I teach so that I can learn” – and although this is not a new sentiment, for Roger it was absolutely true. I think he could fall asleep while still lecturing his four hour Friday afternoon Method and Theory paper – a rite of passage for all archaeology MA students. But if you challenged his ideas he awoke and became enthusiastic. Although long, and at times boring, those lectures proved to be full of valuable insights – as not only I have dis-

covered. One former student remarked that she later looked at her notes from those sessions and realised how thorough they were, and useful when writing academic articles.

Once as a student I submitted an essay, a bit nervously, in which I criticised a paper of his and yet still received an A for it. Another time, on a field school Roger and I developed a game whereby if a student found a posthole or corner of a pit we'd each guess its size – and I was right several times in a row. I should not have been concerned – Roger was keener on the facts or ideas and whether you could prove them.

He was also committed to giving back to the communities he worked with. In the Solomons it was through his encouragement of Islanders such as Lawrence Foana'ota, and the Honiara Museum. Here in New Zealand he supported Hirini Mead, a former student of Roger's, when Hirini began the process of setting up Te Whare Wananga o Awaniarangi at Whakatane. He continued supporting the wananga for many years, by teaching a Masters paper for koha. Roger was proud of this contribution to Maori education. He also honoured me by handing over his mantle of teaching there – an experience I treasure.

Roger liked parties and celebrations, not only Christmas in the department, but graduations where he enthusiastically shared in the success of all his students and dressed up in his wonderful Harvard regalia, birthdays and other occasions. He had several retirement parties in Auckland (although he never actually left) and another at Whakatane, and was extremely generous over the last few decades by hosting birthdays and other milestones for friends and colleagues.

In recent years he was doggedly trying to complete all his backlog of fieldwork, half-finished research and an ever-growing set of new ideas. In this work he enlisted the assistance of many former students and colleagues, but still found time to be interested in the projects that others were doing. I was very pleased to be a small part of that and enjoyed my visits to Roger and Val, and their hospitality.

I know that these are just my stories. And that he equally intersected and was a positive influence with many others.

Since his death, one of this former students remarked that she heard of someone's new research findings and wanted to talk to Roger about it, but then realised she couldn't. A feeling and a realisation I am sure many will share – he has always been there – a permanent rock, fountain of wisdom and references.

Thank you, Roger, for your tolerance, support, enthusiasm, knowledge, hospitality and friendship – I miss you.