


Paul W Miller: 30 December 1955–27 November 2013

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Paul Miller was a brilliant economist, a committed researcher and a loving husband and father. He was a recognised and distinguished scholar both nationally in Australia and internationally. He extended the field of labour economics, with pioneering work on the economics of education, immigration and language, with a particular focus on skill formation and its labour market consequences. He published extensively on three continents and received numerous awards for his research.

Paul gained his Honours Bachelor's degree at the University of New England and his Master's (1978) and PhD (1982) in Economics from the Australian National University in Canberra. After appointments in Canada, the UK and the US, he came to Western Australia. He led the Department of Economics at UWA from 1994 to 2001, before returning to his teaching and research role, first at UWA and, after 2010, at Curtin University. He was held in high esteem for his creative development and adaptation of models for hypothesis testing, and for his care with data quality and with ensuring the robustness of findings through the use of alternative methods and data sets. His purpose was never econometrics for its own sake, but to enhance our understanding of issues with important policy consequences.

Between 2005 and 2010, Paul was also Australian Professorial Fellow of the Australian Research Council, and from 2006, he played an important role as Editor of the *Economic Record*. In 2011, he was a recipient of an Honorary Fellowship of the Economics Society of Australia for his life-long research work on migration, skill, education and risk-taking. Further recognitions included his election as Fellow, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, and his induction into the ANU Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame.

Others have written of Paul's public importance. I wish to recount of my own private experience of Paul Miller, my friend Paul.

Paul was my first Australian friend. He was the first person I got in touch with in my second trip to Australia and my first visit in Western Australia. Still a PhD student in Economics in the mid-1990s, I was exploring options of academic jobs in WA where my partner Brett had recently moved to take a lecturer position at Murdoch University.

If Paul had the Head of Department hat on his head, he did not let me see it. In one of my following visits, I met Tram who was about to become his wife. Paul, Tram and I shared the passion for labour research, particularly on workers' migration and education. At a more personal level, we shared the strange spatial and temporal sense that comes from being slightly out of place. It was only later on that Paul told me he was from regional NSW, from Dunedoo, a village, more than a town, of 836 inhabitants situated within the Warrumbungle Shire of central western New South Wales, Australia. I never

told him that I, like him, grew up in a small town, even smaller than his Dunedoo, in the middle of the Appennines Mountains.

I saw him again in 2008 during my visit to UWA and just before his move to Curtin University. Tram and Paul brought their young children to the friendly diner on the waterfront I used to know so well. With his usual generosity, it was again a time of sharing: research, family, children, balancing life, enjoying friends. I don't think he knew then that he was going to get so ill. We don't know the future. After his departure, on 27 November last year, I was left with these memories of his kindness, of his friendship, of his caring simplicity. Paul, dear friend, R.I.P.

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