

OBITUARY: IAN GEOFFREY ORD

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Dr Geoff Ord, who completed his masters degree at the University of Queensland and obtained his doctorate from the University of Waikato, died on July 17, 1988 after battling cancer for more than one year. Geoff spent some of his most vigorous working years as a psychologist in Papua New Guinea. In this context he should be remembered first and foremost for his work with the Australian Army Psychology Corps in Papua New Guinea, specifically in connection with the recruitment and training of the Pacific Islands Regiment. He was the central figure in the development of the *PIR Tests* and their derivatives such as the *Pacific Design Construction Test* and *The Queensland Test*. In the early 1970s, these tests were models of cultural content reduction in the attempt to transcend contextual barriers to the assessment of general cognitive ability.

Geoff became the Chief Psychologist of the Psychological Services Branch of the Public Services Board. He nurtured this government service organisation from a small unit in Konedobu (Port Moresby) to one with regional offices in Goroka, Lae, and Rabaul. A major part of the work of the Branch was devoted to selection, placement, and training in the Public Service. But the Branch also provided specialist services to Health, Justice, and private industry, in addition to operating the School Leaver Testing Programme.

From Papua New Guinea Geoff moved back to the University of Waikato where during the 1970s he taught psychological measurement and industrial/organisational psychology. Among his publications from those years, two stand out. *Mental Tests for Pre-literates* (London: Ginn, 1970) is a descriptive and technical account of ability testing in Papua New Guinea; it has already assumed an important place in the history of western psychology in Papua New Guinea. The second major contribution that comes to mind is his monograph, 'Testing for Educational and Occupational Selection in Developing Countries' (*Occupational Psychology*, 46, 3 [whole number], 1972). In this work he brought together findings, approaches, and issues confronting the murky topic of test-driven selection as an aid to national efficiency in the third world. Although he might have given more attention to the role of training rather than testing in this process, Geoff's monograph played its part in provoking thought about the virtue of training versus testing.

Geoff moved from Waikato to head the Behavioural Science and Applied Psychology programme at Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education in Toowoomba, Australia. There he had scant time for conducting research, but he never forgot the questions that had interested him, nor the work that had still to be done. As recently as the month before his death, we were writing about the need to synthesise the cross-cultural ability work that Geoff had inspired, to see where it stands in relation to contemporary knowledge.

Family and friends miss Geoff; that is as it should be. But his place in applied psychology in Papua New Guinea is also worth remembering. This too is as it should be.