

STATEMENT FROM NORTH AMERICAN GAPMIL

In Memoriam: Barrie McMahon
May 17, 2017

“The focus of media education is a sense-making process, or the making of meaning. And to me, as an educator, that was the critical factor -- that was the connection between education and media. Because if it’s not rote learning, education is about how to make sense of the world.” -- Barrie McMahon, 2011

With deep sadness, we share the news that Barrie McMahan, a leading Australian media literacy educator and pioneer, has passed away at age 77 in Perth, Australia. Barrie has had a world-wide influence on the development and implementation of media literacy, and his generosity has particularly benefitted us in North America through his speaking, writing and counsel through the years in both Canada and the U.S.

A charming raconteur who published a novel, **Copyboy**, in 2014 during his retirement, Barrie’s career began in a small country town in Australia in 1959. His experience encompassed being a classroom teacher, a media studies consultant and a curriculum manager with the Department of Education and Training in Western Australia. His one-year fellowship in England in 1972 led to his long career focus on media education, and to his subsequent work in global media literacy.

His international outreach and his seminal writings (often co-written with his close colleague Robyn Quin) brought him into contact and with media educators from around the world. While he was clearly an international “star” in the field of media literacy and moved in circles with other international leaders, he was always just as interested in the beginning teacher. He would gladly spend time mentoring those who were new to the field, providing concrete suggestions and strategies, humorous anecdotes, and inspiration. Barry was a very bright, guiding light.

Barrie’s insights, experience and contributions in advancing the media literacy field are still having an impact, as Australia requires media education as part of its national curriculum.

Barrie is survived by his wife, Jan, and by his family: Pete and Dale, Mike and Caroline and their children. The Guest Book in memory of Barrie will be available beginning Saturday, May 20 at

<http://www.westannouncements.com.au/obituaries/thewest-au/obituary.aspx?n=barrie-mcmahon&pid=185402690>

For insight into Barrie’s media education career, see his first-person interview for the Voices of Media Literacy: <http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/voices-media-literacy-international-pioneers-speak-barrie-mcmahon-interview-transcript>
