



THE INAUGURAL PAM GILBERT AWARD FOR GENDER EQUITY 2003  
WAS PRESENTED TO MAREE HEDEMANN AT THE BRISBANE BRANCH  
ANNUAL DINNER.

# INAUGURAL PAM GILBERT AWARD FOR GENDER EQUITY

MAREE HEDEMAN

2003



by **Mary Goldsmith**

Pam Gilbert's death was devastating in so many ways. It was devastating for those committed to social justice in education; to the many teachers who benefitted from her mentoring, encouragement and support; to those working towards a more gender just society in the wider politics of the Australian community, and to those of us for whom she was also a life-time friend.

Pam believed in teaching: she believed that it was truly a noble profession, a special trust, a privilege to be able to work with young people, to assist them to name their experiences, to comprehend their own power, to act on their own, and others' lives. She also believed in celebrating, and she believed in doing it seriously and with a full heart. Most times I saw Pam in

recent years, one of her first actions was to bring out the champagne. She especially believed in celebrating the achievements of those whose work was making a difference, enhancing gender justice, and in celebrating each others' courage and endurance.

So it is especially fitting after 20 years of AWE enduring as an organisation, that her life be marked by the inauguration of a memorial award.

It is never possible in these circumstances to make assumptions about the intentions of those who are no longer with us to speak for themselves. However, when I was told who had been selected to receive this first award, I had confidence that Pam would have

approved this choice, simply because we had so often discussed the work of this person—Maree Hedemann.

It has been my very good fortune to have worked alongside Maree for the last ten years. She is one of the survivors in Education Queensland, and I can confidently say that to the extent that Education Queensland is able to rebuild a credible social justice program in the best traditions of public education, Maree will be at the heart of that activity, and she will give heart to all the others involved. Whether such a program is 'mainstreamed', in the glib language of public sector management, or whether it is a purposeful, dedicated program, Maree will be at the epicentre of the developments that really matter to the future of students and school communities.

Not that she will be among those claiming leadership, or publicising advances as her own achievements. That is not her style. Her style is collaborative teamwork, a commitment to scholarly advice, respect for students and teachers.

To the extent that Literate Futures provides a strategy to enable the voiceless to develop a voice, to enable a developing generation to understand their world critically, Maree will again be at the heart of it. To the extent that the role and responsibility of public

sector education as the cornerstone of a socially just society continues to be enlivened in new contexts, Maree will be there.

Most of us here have experienced the finesse with which Maree networks, strengthens partnerships, builds alliances, generates positive directions out of despairing conversations. Having watched her do this daily in the policy context, I can tell you that she is both relentless and courageous.

Building the relationships and networks to bring strategies alive is an art form, it is what underpins successful policy, and Maree's ability to do this is awesome. She is able to face down opposition with respect, humour, intelligence, superb preparation, and sheer guts.

I believe that Maree is simply one of the most adept policy makers in the area of gender justice in Australia. This has not come without cost. Like Pam, Maree has faced huge tests in her personal life. Like Pam, she has come out strong.

Tonight we remember one warm, passionate, steadfast, intelligent advocate for gender justice: Professor Pam Gilbert. We also extend our respect and recognition to another, Maree Hedemann.

## FROM MAREE HEDEMANN

IT WAS A GREAT HONOUR TO RECEIVE THE INAUGURAL PAM GILBERT AWARD FOR GENDER EQUITY IN EDUCATION PRESENTED BY LYN MARTINEZ AT THE AWE DINNER. BOTH PAM AND LYN HAVE BEEN AN INSPIRATION TO ME IN MY GENDER EQUITY WORK OVER THE YEARS.

PAM WAS AT THE CUTTING EDGE IN LITERACY BOTH NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY—NOT SURPRISING GIVEN HER DEDICATION TO SOCIAL JUSTICE. SHE HAD A SPECIAL ABILITY TO BE ABLE TO TOUCH THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF EDUCATORS WANTING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. SHE CHANGED FOREVER THE WAY LITERACY AND GENDER RELATIONS WERE CONCEPTUALISED IN CLASSROOMS IN AUSTRALIA AND BEYOND.

WHEN I BEGAN WORK IN THE

EARLY 90s IN EDUCATION QUEENSLAND'S GENDER EQUITY UNIT, I FOUND MYSELF SURROUNDED BY WONDERFUL WOMEN WHO WERE PASSIONATE ABOUT THEIR WORK. LYN MARTINEZ LED A DYNAMIC TEAM WHOSE COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE AND TO EACH OTHER WAS OUTSTANDING.

IT HAS BEEN A PRIVILEGE TO WORK WITH WOMEN SUCH AS LOUISE IRELAND, KAY BOULDEN, JANICE PARKER, MAREE PARKER, BARBARA HENDERSON, DELIA HART, LORRAINE DINSEY, EILEEN THUMPKIN, JENNY NAYLER AND THERE WERE MANY OTHERS. LYN MARTINEZ INSPIRED US ALL AND SUPPORTED US INTELLECTUALLY AND PERSONALLY.

PAM GILBERT WAS ONE OF THOSE ACADEMICS ALONG WITH OTHERS SUCH AS LEONIE DAWS, SANDRA

TAYLOR, ROB GILBERT, NOLA ALLOWAY, BOB LINGARD, PAM CHRISTIE AND MARTIN MILLS WHO HAVE SUPPORTED US SO GENEROUSLY OVER THE YEARS. SHE IS GREATLY MISSED BY ALL OF US.

PAM GILBERT HAS LEFT A RICH LEGACY THAT I WILL CONTINUE TO VALUE AND DRAW ON EVERY DAY IN MY WORK IN EDUCATION.

