



# **PAM GILBERT AWARD FOR GENDER EQUITY 2003-2013**



**THE AWE** FOUNDED THIS MEMORIAL AWARD IN HONOUR OF THE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS OF PROFESSOR PAM GILBERT. PAM WAS AWARDED THE HONORARY TITLE OF PROFESSOR OF JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY IN RECOGNITION OF HER DISTINGUISHED 20-YEAR CAREER IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH, AND HER PUBLICATIONS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION. PAM WAS A STRONG ADVOCATE FOR STUDENTS LIVING IN POVERTY AND FOR GENDER EQUITY.

**THE RECIPIENTS** OF THIS AWARD WORK IN A BROAD RANGE OF CONTEXTS—SCHOOLS, EDUCATION BUREAUCRACIES, TEACHER UNIONS, AND INTERNATIONAL FIELDS.

**ENJOY OUR** RETROSPECTIVE OF THE PAM GILBERT AWARDEES OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS.

# PAM GILBERT

## OBITUARY

Most AWE members will remember Pam Gilbert as playing a key role in the determining events and activities that went into building gender justice into education programs in Australian schools. Her role in building greater understanding of gender issues in Queensland schools was monumental.

She had been a member of AWE, frequently providing both keynote addresses and workshops at AWE's conferences and other events, as well as articles for *Redress*. She was a member of the Queensland Ministerial Advisory Committee on Gender Equity through the early 1990s and played an important role in the national *Gender Equity and Curriculum Reform* program through the years of the Australian Education Council sponsored national collaborative curriculum development.

Amongst AWE members there will undoubtedly be English teachers who remember working with Pam as an inspirational Head of Department at Heatley State High School in the late 1970s. There are AWE members who were students of Pam at school or at university.

Professor Pam Gilbert died at home with her family on 13th November 2002. She died in Townsville, where she had been born, went to school, attended James Cook University, taught in schools, brought up her two wonderful children (with Rob), gained her doctorate, and was awarded the university's highest honour—Professor of the University. Although internationally renowned, she was very much a citizen of her own community.

Pam had an intense commitment to the teaching profession, and an unshakable belief in teachers' capacity to make profound, positive differences in students' lives, and in the life of the community. She was passionate about her family, her friends, and about the role of education in achieving a just society, and this was her life's work.

Pam's research was, and is, a beacon for feminist educators.

The quality of her research has been recognised in a number of awards. In 1997, not long after a particularly savage onslaught of the cancer that would eventually claim her life, Pam was selected to present the prestigious Radford Memorial Lecture at the national conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, an event that was recalled with particular poignancy at the recent AARE conference in Brisbane in December. Many will remember the event of Pam's lecture as significant marker of her character: this tiny woman, clearly physically diminished by her illness, speaking the luminous truths that arise from unstinting rigour and honest enquiry, defying any expectation that her spirit, intellect, or commitments would likewise be diminished.

The 1990s saw some impressive achievements for gender justice in education. None occurred without Pam's involvement at some level. In Queensland, we had the development of the *Gender Equity in Education Policy*; the *Sexual Harassment Policy and Guidelines*; the *Gender Equity in School Sport Policy*; the *School Dress Standards Policy* (providing for uniforms that enabled girls and boys to have equality of access to all activities); and the *Pregnant and Parenting Students Policy*. At national level, we saw the publication of the groundbreaking *Listening to Girls* report; the *National Action Plan for the Education of Girls in Australian Schools 1993-1997*; the *Gender Equity: a Framework for Australian Schools*; and a range of reports arising from the *Gender Equity in Curriculum Reform Project*. For policy officers working in education systems on these developments, Pam was a generous informal (and often formal) advisor and colleague. Her advice always improved the quality, usefulness and accessibility of these texts, ensuring that the final products were teacher-friendly. Her own numerous publications assisted in nurturing a savvy, well-informed policy community, made up of parents, teachers, students, academics and bureaucrats—the days of sexism going unchallenged in education were disappearing.

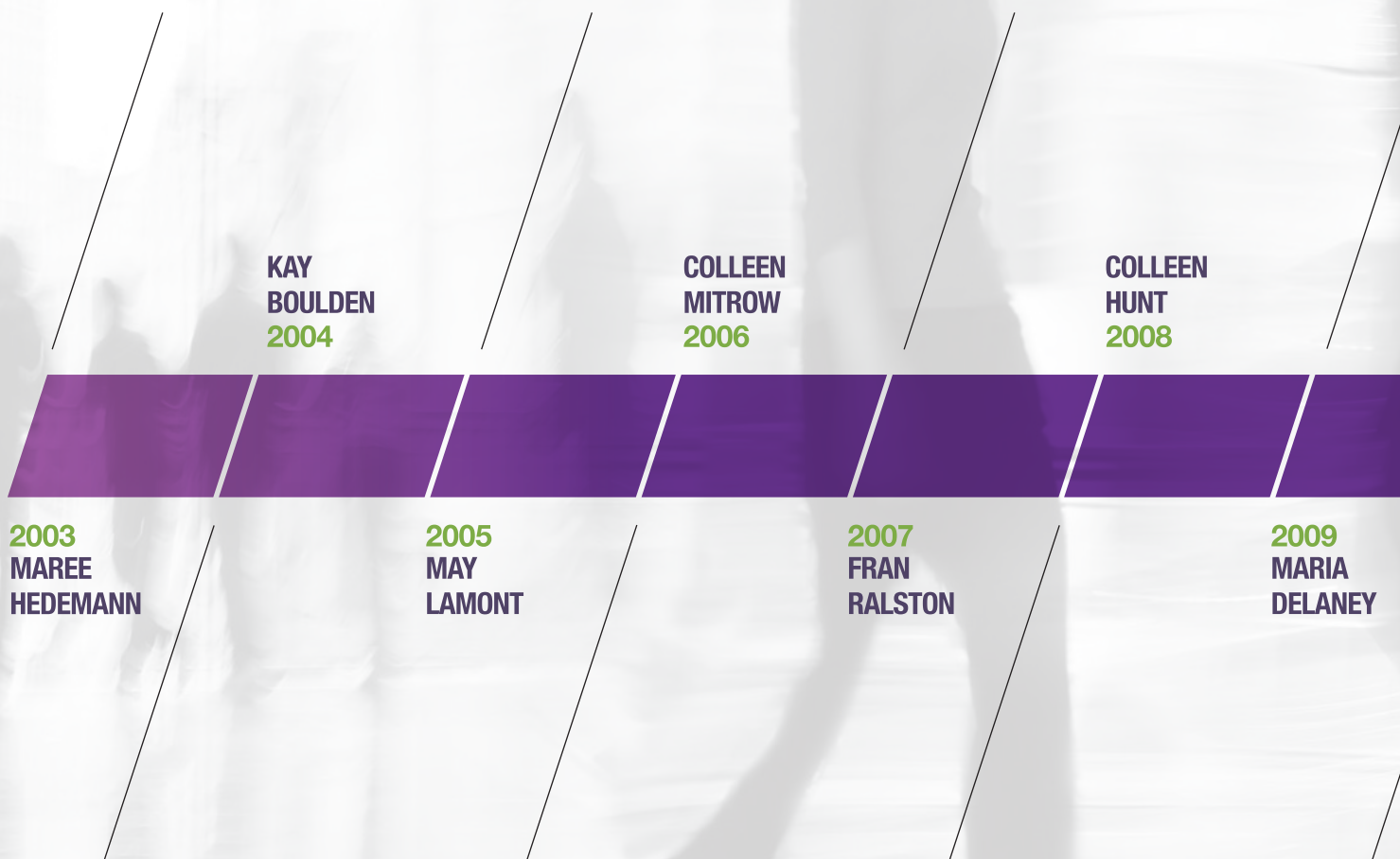
AWE has lost a member, colleague, friend, both deeply respected and warmly loved.

As the media's gender wars began to challenge and offset these gains, and academics researching gender equity were under attack, Pam engaged with the research challenges with renewed energy, despite the devastating impacts of cancer on her physical resources. Pam's Inaugural Professorial Address was a landmark in turning around the gender wars. As these populist debates were being played out in staff rooms, families and bureaucracies, *Masculinity goes to school*, co-authored by Pam Gilbert and Rob Gilbert, brought compelling insights to bear on the direction of decision-making. In the words of Bob Lingard and Fazal Rizvi, the Series Editors, it became essential reading for all those committed to ensuring that schooling contributes to a more gender just society, one which is supportive of many ways of being male and female, of many masculinities and many femininities.

Pam's courage to live, beyond anything medical science could promise, was driven by her determination to see Rebecca and Michael through school and launched into life, and this she did. Her support for her students continued, and her research output continued unabated up to her death. AWE expresses its deepest sympathies to Rob, Rebecca and Michael.

# TIMELINE 2003-2013

## PAM GILBERT AWARD FOR GENDER EQUITY





HOW FAR HAVE WE COME? **AWE CELEBRATES—30 YEARS ON**

**AMANDA  
KEDDIE**  
**2010**

**LESLEY  
McFARLANE**  
**2012**

**2011  
ANN  
REBGETZ**

**2013  
MAREE  
HEDEMANN**

