

Professor Sue White - 13th August 1957 - 15th March 2014

We regret to announce the death of Sue White, Professor of Integrated Catchment Management at Cranfield University, on Saturday, 15th March following a period of illness with cancer.

Following a degree in Civil Engineering (Liverpool) and an MSc in Water Resources Technology (Birmingham), Sue joined Hydraulics Research in Wallingford in 1979 and carried out research and training related to improving water sources and conserving soil for community needs in Asia (especially the Philippines), Africa, and India. This passion to make a difference to peoples' lives through research was a quality that remained with Sue throughout her life. In 1993 she had the opportunity to study for a PhD on the "Estimation of sediment yield from limited data sets: A case study from the Philippines" (Exeter). By now, her strong expertise in water resources and importance of sediment yield, both from an academic perspective and direct understanding of community needs, led her to a 3 year appointment at the Pyrenean Institute of Ecology in Zaragoza, Spain. Whilst there, Sue embraced the town's unique culture, became fluent in Spanish and made many long friendships.

On return to the UK, Sue headed north, where she accepted a post at the University of Durham as a Lecturer in Hydrology and Hydraulics, but in 2002 after 4 years at Durham, she took up a post at Cranfield University - both to further her career and to be closer to her family. In 2005 she gained professorial status in recognition of her contribution to forwarding our understanding of integrated catchment management and its fundamental importance in securing ecosystem-related resources. Shortly afterwards, she became Associate Dean of the Faculty of Environment, Science and Manufacturing and Head of the Integrated Environmental Systems Institute.

Throughout her career Sue worked with a range of organisations across the world whilst remaining passionate about making a contribution to human welfare in Africa. As such she became the lead hydrologist on the 'Valuing the Arc' project where she worked with other internationally acclaimed scientists with the aim of better understanding how the fragile ecosystem in Tanzania could be managed for the benefit of the ecology and the local communities. In 2009, Sue was excited and honoured to be awarded a distinguished Fulbright Scholarship to Stanford and Texas A&M Universities where she was able to immerse herself in investigating approaches to valuing water.

Sue resolutely supported and inspired her students encouraging them to embrace their research topics, resulting in many of them continuing their careers within the environmental sector and making significant contributions themselves. She was patient and coached each individual as needed. She organised activities for students to understand and put in practice theoretical concepts they had learnt during the lectures. She liaised with key organisations she had collaborated with to ensure students saw the practicalities of implementing integrated catchment management. She will be remembered for her devotion to teaching.

Sue's personality always shone through in both her professional and private life. She was always there when support was needed often putting others before herself for friends, family and colleagues. Sue had a passion for life. She sang in her local choir in Woburn Sands, loved music, salsa dancing, her garden, long walks in the countryside where she embraced the natural environment and cooking (often turning up at meetings with homemade cakes 'just because it is a Monday'). More recently, and with the encouragement of her partner Pete, Sue ran in a number of charity fun runs in aid of WaterAid, Macmillan Cancer Support and Cancer Research all of which are charities which Sue vehemently supported.

Sue was a Fellow of the Chartered Institution of Water & Environmental Management (CIWEM) and a Member of British Hydrological Society for 30 years (including serving as a committee member 2002-2005).

Sue will be sorely missed by her friends, her colleagues, family, partner, and the hydrological community. But as a friend and colleague, I know she would want us all to make sure that we all embrace and celebrate life and enjoy each day as it comes. In appreciation of her career contributions, we have been raising money for the Cranfield student charity, SAFAD (<http://www.safad.org.uk>) that sends graduates to work on aid projects in developing countries. You can contribute via <https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/suewhite>.

25th March 2014 by Jenny Mant with contributions from Tim Hess and Monica Rivas-Casado.