

Saluting Professor Sir David Watson, a Pioneering Champion of University Civic Engagement

Remembrances from Colleagues around the World

INTRODUCTION

Anthony P. Monaco
President, Tufts University
Chair of the Steering Committee, Talloires Network

It is a bittersweet occasion to reflect on the late Professor Sir David Watson's many contributions to university civic engagement in the United Kingdom and around the world. We invited colleagues to share their reflections on how David contributed to the global movement and to their own individual efforts, and how can we best honor and sustain his legacy going forward.

I first got to know David when I was serving as Pro-Vice Chancellor for Planning and Resources at the University of Oxford. When David arrived at Oxford from the University of London to become the second Principal of Green Templeton College, it was immediately clear that the university as well as the college would benefit from his presence. David's experience had given him a broad perspective on higher education and a keen understanding of how to advance institutional agendas. It was a pleasure to work with him on university-wide initiatives and committees.

It was when I arrived at Tufts, and joined the Steering Committee of the Talloires Network, that I began to engage with David more directly on how universities can contribute to civic engagement and social responsibility. All of us were looking forward to his joining the Steering Committee, and regret that we will not be able to call on his insights and wisdom as the Talloires Network moves ahead. The remembrances of David by former colleagues that are presented here demonstrate the breadth and depth of his impact on our collective efforts.

David was a highly creative public intellectual whose personal generosity and charm helped to open doors and bring new voices to the academic table. Under his leadership, the University of Brighton became a source of inspiration and guidance to many other universities, while David's generous personal engagement contributed to the development of civic engagement programs at many individual institutions and to the development of regional networks to advance these shared goals.

Understanding the imperatives and challenges of institutional transformation, David knew that a solid intellectual foundation was an essential aspect of a compelling vision and strategy. His own rigorous research, as one colleague puts it, "dispelled the myth that the work of community engagement is not a scholarly activity." His peers remember both the personal inspiration and advice he offered, and his forceful and convincing articulation of the public purposes of higher education, which helped assure his influence in national policy-making.

I am sure David would have been touched by the warmth and respect that thread through all these remembrances. But he would surely have regarded as the possible best tribute to him, an individual and collective commitment to ensuring that higher education serves the public good. His many accomplishments reflected his high standards and personal values. We regret that his passing deprives of his leadership the institutions and causes about which he cared so deeply, and we extend our deepest sympathy to his family.

REMEMBRANCES

Australia

Chris Duke

Professor, Centre for European Studies, RMIT University

Honorary Professor of Lifelong Learning, Universities of Glasgow, Leicester and Stirling in the UK

Like his scholarship, Sir David Watson's knighthood sat light and unpretentious on his shoulders. David was not just highly respected by the higher education policy community globally and nationally. He was also, as his Brighton colleague Yvonne Hiller well observed, 'one of the few truly honest men who combined intellectual prowess with genuine concern and friendship for colleagues' (*THE* 12 February 2015 p. 8). Alumnus of Britain's top school where many prime ministers are made, he wore his wide and deep scholarship lightly, and understood more about more different local and global cultures, and communities of practice, than most. He was a natural co-founder of Talloires, one of the rare breed of vice-chancellors who fully practise the community engagement that they preach. The civic turn-out for his retirement from Brighton before applying for a Chair at the London Institute of Education was an unprecedented demonstration of this rare quality.

I first knew David when he was a senior administrator at the then Oxford Polytechnic where he pioneered modular degrees in Britain. In subsequent years he became a leading national figure in mainstream higher education, finding time to assume the Chair of what is now the UK Universities Association for Lifelong Learning at a difficult time for university adult education and contributing to the work of the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education. Meanwhile he graduated to global stature both before and through Talloires. At Green Templeton College back in Oxford his internationalism marked his College leadership; he continued an invaluable role as a creative public intellectual, frequently cited in the media as well as publishing freely: his output was impressive not only in volume but always with challenging insight and lessons for practice.

David's distinctiveness lay in his personal generosity and charm applied to abiding important matters of higher education locally and globally. He was an influential inner circle leader who was never secretive, always looking outwards. These contributions combined uniquely. They set a standard that few can equal. We can best carry forward our love and honour for him: first by emulating his strong ethical foundations consistently applied with charm, gentle wit and humour; and by using his scholarship, always clear and purposeful. We can echo the application of his essential qualities by celebrating the continuation of his work locally, and notably in Brighton, by sustaining his integrity, humility and steely purpose via Talloires globally, and by remaining optimistic in the face of human and institutional frailties. Beyond the competitive corporatisation, securitisation and monetisation of our times, through whatever tangible legacy is chosen – Brighton's named building, scholarships, named annual lectures – we should honour his legacy by believing that universities can be good at doing public good, and working to ensure that they are.

Janice Reid

**Emeritus Professor and Vice-Chancellor (1998-2013), University of Western Sydney
Founding Member, Talloires Network Steering Committee**

Professor Sir David Watson – David, to his friends and colleagues all over the world – was one of those rare stars in the higher education firmament who was regarded in equal measure with admiration and affection. He was an accomplished and prolific scholar who could turn his mind to the social purposes of universities, the academic culture and its particularities, the shifting national and international higher education landscapes, and the satisfactions and vicissitudes of university leadership. He was constantly sought out for his learned insights and informed advice on a broad spectrum of university affairs, academic management and public policy.

David understood, from his personal experience and his long and acclaimed service to the sector, the imperatives and challenges of institutional transformation. He understood deeply and could explain simply what makes higher education higher. He brought the intellect of a scholar of ideas and education, the passion of an advocate for social responsibility, and the practical wisdom of an accomplished university leader to every undertaking, however momentous or modest.

And yet David wore his distinction lightly, approaching everyone he met with the same warmth and interest, unsparingly giving time to whomever came seeking his guidance and perspective. He inspired, enthused and encouraged university colleagues across the globe, most especially in Australia where he is remembered with warmth and gratitude.

Ben Roche

**Head of Sustainability, Partnerships and Community Engagement, Southern Cross
University
Deputy Chair, Engagement Australia**

On behalf of the Board of Engagement Australia and its members universities:

Engagement Australia (formerly the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance) was honoured to host Professor David Watson as our distinguished keynote speaker and guest at our international conference in 2011 in Sydney. During this visit Professor Watson shared his recent research findings (since published as *The Engaged University: International Perspectives on Civic Engagement*), in his keynote address provided a compelling case for engagement as a strategic driver for universities and was gracious with the amount of time he spent with delegates exploring the varied terrain of engagement in higher education. In his reflections on the 2011 conference (which were captured on film), Professor Watson remarked:

“Community engagement from a university perspective often means taking a university back to the reasons for its founding, if we look carefully we will see nearly all institutions were put there to make life better for communities in terms of prosperity and social cohesion”.

Professor Watson’s reflections are a timely reminder for universities, particularly in Australia, as we contemplate significant reform and change. It is a clarion call from a most eminent leader of the engagement agenda that we must not lose sight of the fundamental premise on which public universities have been founded.

Vale Professor David Watson.

Geoff Scott
Emeritus Professor, University of Western Sydney

David was one of those rare human beings who lived out the values he held so firmly –respect for different perspectives, embracing diversity, being fair, listening, linking then leading, having humility, avoiding condescension, striving to tell the truth, keeping your promises, living with clear moral purpose, and fighting for social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability. He had that unique ability to identify the key issue in a complex situation and express it in plain English. For David education was an investment in the total cultural, intellectual and creative capital of our world not a cost. In particular he saw it as a fundamental factor in improving the life chances of those who were the first in their family to attend university and, through them, to help improve the quality of life in the communities and societies from which they came.

As he said in his 2012 address on ‘Higher education and the question of conscience’ at the Open University Discourses of Inclusion conference at Oxford:

“There is an increasing recognition that life and work in the twenty-first century requires breadth as well as depth of knowledge and skills. There’s also an “ethical turn” in public discourse, not least in response to prominent ethical short-comings in business, professional and political life. This is added to a student-led redefinition of mutuality that elevates environmental and international concerns above traditional political allegiances. Finally, and more practically, there is the international growth (as higher education systems become “universal” with many societies having age-participation rates of more than 50%) of second-cycle participation, moving professional formation from undergraduate to post-graduate levels.”

The result – especially in North America – includes a series of attempts to return the moral educative role of the academy to centre stage.

Canada

Budd L. Hall
Co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, University of Victoria
Secretary, Global Alliance for Community-Engaged Research



Paul Manners, Rajesh Tandon and David Watson at the First Global Dialog on Enhancing North-South Cooperation in Community University Engagement, London, September 2010.

I was at a conference of adult educators in Portugal in 2006 speaking about plans to create an office to support community-based research at the University of Victoria. A colleague from Southampton University told me that we should take a look at what they were doing at the University of Brighton on the south coast of England. They had created a structure called the Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP). As I began my research into their work, I learned that a philanthropic organization, impressed with the social vision of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Brighton, had given them a grant to create their CUPP and that it reported directly to the Vice-Chancellor's office. The Vice-Chancellor was Sir David Watson. His vision of higher education engaged in the issues of direct concern to their communities inspired us at the University of Victoria and we established a strong relationship initially with Prof. Angela Hart and David Wolff, the Co-Directors, whom Sir David had trusted to create this wonderful innovation in higher education.

Upon leaving the University of Brighton, David took up a position as Professor of Higher Education and Director of the post-graduate programme in Higher Education Management at the Institute of Education in London. It was my privilege to be able to work with him as a Visiting Scholar at the Institute of Education during the time that Rajesh Tandon and I were developing the Global Alliance for Community Engaged Research (GACER) which led to the creation of our UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education. David served as the Chair of the process of creating the first Global Communiqué in Community Engagement in Higher Education. The communiqué was titled *Enhancing North South Cooperation in Community University Engagement* and benefited from David's support and enthusiasm. David was in the final stages of the research that he was doing with the Talloires Network on the Engaged University and was convinced that the engagement agenda was being pursued in many countries of the global South in a far more sincere and creative way than was the case in the global North.

David took on the Principalship of Green Templeton College at Oxford University shortly after I finished my Visitorship in London. He continued to be an active supporter of the work of GACER, the notion of a "Big Tent" group of global partners in Higher Education and was one of the partners in the creation of the UNESCO Chair that Rajesh Tandon and I occupy. I visited him at Oxford whenever I was in England. He always listened and he always challenged me to think in ways that he felt were needed. Like with many great persons, when he was with you, you felt that you were the most important person for him at the moment.

I will admit to being somewhat intimidated by the image that I had formed of Sir David Watson before I met him. Sir David was an Etonian (very posh private secondary school in England), knighted former Vice-Chancellor, distinguished scholar, head of many national organisations in the fields of higher and adult education. What would he be like? As Chris Duke notes in his lovely reflections on David in this collection, David "wore his knighthood lightly". It turned out that he has spent a year as a young man teaching in Tanzania, where I had worked for many years. He could talk cricket lore with the best of the Indian cricket aficionados. He was a musician. And he was passionate about issues of social justice, an inclusive global community where all people and all nations count. He believed in the capacity of all people to learn in order to have more say in their destinies and communities. He believed that universities have an historic responsibility to social responsibility and the public good.

Darlene Clover, my wife and I last saw David and his wife Betty at one of his weekly formal dinners at his college in Oxford in November of 2014. About 150 academics, visitors, students (including the Oxford Women's Rugby Team) were gathered in the former Observatory that lies within his college grounds. He graced the gathering with a prayer in Latin, welcomed us all, had some generous words for the visitors and we proceed to a wonderful conversation that ranged from drama and anatomy, African spirituality and contemporary British politics. The atmosphere was that of a group of persons who cared about their communities, their work and who had a capacity for laughter.

The suddenness of David's departure is very difficult to deal with. I did not know him as well as so many who had worked with him for so many years, but I deeply appreciated his support, his friendship and his towering intellect. Above all, as my wife Darlene says, "He is a very nice man".

His influence will continue in the work that my colleague Rajesh Tandon and I and thousands of us do to advance the work that he believed in and supported including, enhancing North South cooperation in community university engagement.

Ireland

Campus Engage Network and Steering Committee

The Campus Engage Network and Steering Committee, Ireland, wish to offer sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Sir David Watson, Professor of Higher, Education Green Templeton College, Oxford University.



For the last decade David has been a close friend to Irish higher education, during a time that gave rise to civic engagement activities within higher education across the island of Ireland. He visited Ireland on a number of occasions offering inspirational addresses and workshops on the purpose of higher education within society and the historically held philosophical arguments for an engaged institution. From his leadership work guiding the University of Brighton, he gave practice insights as to how the theory of an engaged university could be built into practice through his conceiving of the Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP), inspiring both leaders and practitioners across higher education communities. His legacy will live on with us, having addressed a major international conference in June 2014 hosted by Campus Engage on civic and community engagement. David's friends and colleagues in Ireland will miss this fine man, his philosophical reasoning and gentle but firm articulation in a broader and meaningful purpose of higher education.

Lorraine McIlrath

**Coordinator, Community Knowledge Initiative, National University of Ireland Galway
Founding Chair, Campus Engage Ireland
Steering Committee Member, Talloires Network**



Lorraine McIlrath, Barbara Holland and David Watson at the Campus Engage Conference, Dublin Castle, June 2014

It is with a huge sense of loss that I write a memorial to Sir David Watson, mentor, friend, colleague and philosopher who both challenged and inspired my conception of the role of higher education in society through his practical insights, and presentation of historical theories and trends. I first met David a decade ago when the Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) was funded by Atlantic Philanthropies following his vision for a university that was both connected and cherished by the local community. CUPP was founded at the same moment in time as the Community Knowledge Initiative (CKI) which I oversee at NUI Galway and also funded by the same philanthropist as CUPP. Thus, we shared many commonalities in terms of community engagement characteristics while each operating within quite different local contexts. I regularly visited Brighton and took inspiration from the pioneering work that David was overseeing with his team. This inspiring work shaped my own thinking and helped us in Ireland grow a national movement which culminated in the development of a national platform for higher education and civic engagement, namely Campus Engage, and a policy vision that centralizes the importance of civic and community engagement for the entire sector to 2030. In my office, his books are on my closest shelf as I dip in and out of them constantly. David was a particularly generous colleague, he affirmed all those he encountered and quoted their work. He accepted every invite I extended to him in terms of visiting Ireland to offer a range of seminars, keynote address and workshops to colleagues in Galway and nationally through Campus Engage. He made me feel very tall in terms of my contribution to this growing field of work while I saw him, and continue to see him, as a giant. I have very fond memories of his final visit to Dublin in June 2014 when he keynoted in the radiance of Irish sunshine on a beautiful June afternoon. I had the honor of introducing David at the conference. I once again teased him as I mentioned that my mother is so proud of me now for knowing a knight – the only knight I am ever likely to know. In my fairy stories of old, I can recall knights being known for their sense of generosity, respectfulness, wisdom, courage, chivalry, honor, trustworthiness, insight and commitment – David was, in my opinion, the highest order knight. He is missed. He will be missed. His legacy lives on in us all.

Malaysia

Professor Dr. Saran Kaur Gill

Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Industry and Community Partnerships (2007-2014), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Founding Director, AsiaEngage

When I was appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Industry and Community Partnerships in 2007, I was new to the job and reached out to others who had more experience than I did in this field to learn from their vast experience and knowledge. The one person who influenced my style of leadership in this field very early on was Sir David Watson. In the spring of 2008, I had the opportunity to travel to the UK for a conference and organized meeting with him in 2008. He was then with the Institute of Education, University of London. I had read about him and how when he was Vice-Chancellor, he began developing the University of Brighton to become an engaged university – to develop an eco-system that would maximize the richness of academic knowledge in various disciplines to benefit communities. This would be done by encouraging academic staff and students to enhance the core missions of the university – research, teaching and learning and service – by collaborating with communities and other agencies.

We talked about leadership. The one message that struck me and that has stayed with me all these years is the following valued advice from Sir David Watson. He said when leading,

“Do not delegate and abdicate... You need to see the process of developing partnerships with external stakeholders through, until they are ready to be implemented by the respective offices with clear guidelines, roles and responsibilities delineated.”

This approach is much more demanding and it is so much easier to just delegate. From my experience, working collaboratively based on this advice has made a big difference to the quality of implementation of initiatives that my team and I have delivered. For this, and your generosity of spirit, I thank you Sir David Watson. May you always rest in peace.

Dzul Razak

President, International Association of Universities

Vice-Chancellor, Universiti Sains Malaysia (2000-2011)

Returning to 'founding' purposes

Sir David Watson was a long friend of Malaysia since the days he was in Brighton. This is one of the places that Malaysia's National Electricity Board sent its scholars to take up engineering courses. The connection started as early as 1948 when the first batch left for Brighton Technical College then. Many of them have been successful, holding very responsible positions not just related to engineering but also as national leaders of high calibre in various areas and disciplines. To the Brightonians as they called themselves, David Watson was a household name that had stamped his mark on them as a teacher and friend. This explained why Brighton remained a popular educational destination to Malaysia for more than a decade, expanding beyond just the engineering courses. Some of them like the Honorable Datuk Ir. Mohd Annas Mohd Nor who graduated in BSc. (Electrical Engineering) from Brighton Polytechnic, UK was even conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Technology by University of Brighton.

Such is the relationship between Malaysia and the institution where David became the first Vice-Chancellor when in 1992, Brighton Polytechnic was granted university status. When I met David in person for the first time at the turn of the century in Dublin, he wasted no time in telling me how fond he was with the Malaysians. I guess the feel is mutual. Today the Brighton University Alumni Association alone has hundreds of members.

On a more personal note, I am privileged to be introduced to Sir David Watson through a colleague, Budd Hall of University of Victoria, Canada. David then being Professor of Higher Education came into another Malaysia higher education setting as Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) that I helmed was grappling with the issues of community-university partnerships and community-engaged teaching and research. David was a monumental giant in this area, pioneering thoughts and ideas, provided support for USM's vision of becoming a sustainability-led university as part of the mandate under the Accelerated Programme for Excellence (APEX). His leadership and scholarship, no doubt, fired much of enthusiasm and imagination that led USM to greater heights.

There is no denying that Sir David Watson fondly acknowledged and recognised for his passion and contribution to the Malaysian higher education will be dearly missed. Malaysia has much to thank him for as a friend and scholar. His inspiration will be prominently featured in the higher education development landscape in the country.

Sir David had enriched the lives of thousands of Malaysia students, let alone colleagues throughout his career, of which I am fortunate to be part of. As a parting note, I will always remember David's profound words of encouragement when he said to me: "As you know, I encourage universities looking at strategic options to return to their 'founding' purposes, as reflected in charters, legislation and the like. You will very rarely find 'prestige' as an objective there. Even if such concerns (and the drive for 'world-classness') has more or less overwhelmed today's dialogue. Returning to our roots can help to generate a more profound sense of social engagement for a higher education institute."

With these words, Sir David will continue to remain in our memories in our unfinished struggle to re-establish the 'founding' purposes of higher education and universities alike. May you rest in peace, David.

Pakistan

Muhammad Asghar
Rector, National University of Sciences and Technology
Chair, Pakistan Chapter of the Talloires Network
Steering Committee Member, Talloires Network

We at Pakistan Chapter of TN are deeply moved by the sad news of demise of Professor David Watson. All 53 of our member Pakistani universities join us in extending condolence to Professor's bereaved family, colleagues and students.

Professor Watson had been the master of "The Engaged University" concept for universities around the world, transforming it into a global movement of civic and social responsibility. He emphasized throughout his life, the importance of promoting human welfare in the modern world, alongside the significance of lifelong learning. He very rightly identified that the future of the world lies in the hands of the most energetic intellectual capital of the world, which is the youth sitting in the universities. If we can make them socially

responsible human beings, besides making them thorough professional, we have secured a better future for the whole world. Sir Watson was very aptly knighted in 1998 for his valuable contributions.

Universities around the world have inherited a vision of socially engaged university concept from Sir Watson, and it is incumbent upon us all to extend and promote his mission of investing in our youth, in order to make them responsible citizens, thus transforming this world into a caring and prosperous place for all.

South Africa

Julia Preece

Professor of Adult Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal

I - and I am sure, many people - appreciate this initiative and opportunity to formally acknowledge the contribution that David made to the world of adult and continuing education generally and community engagement in particular. I knew him mostly as vice chancellor of Brighton University and head of what was then UACE in the UK. He was one of the most personable Vice Chancellors I have ever met and never lost sight of the ground and the contribution that the new universities could make to the world of higher education. His own commitment and dedication to higher education was rewarded with his knighthood, of course, but his academic contribution to the community engagement movement has added enormous value to raising the profile of this important part of university work. Some of his contributions are to dispell the myth that the work of community engagement is not a scholarly activity, and to highlight the ACU argument that universities need to be part of the conscience of democratic society. That message is at the heart of the Talloires Network and an important strategy for the network would be to find ways of building it into the discourse of university league tables.

United Kingdom

Professor Joy Carter

Vice-Chancellor, University of Winchester

David's demise was a great loss to the sector. He was well-known in the higher education sector in the UK and internationally, valued by all as an academic and a manager of the very highest calibre. I remember him in particular for the support he gave to the Cathedrals Group. He very much shared the values of these church-founded institutions and would always give willingly of his time to speak to us. I particularly remember him coming to preach a sermon in Winchester Cathedral on Education Sunday when the University of Winchester was leading the proceedings. His words were wise and inspirational and have stayed with me and others. We will all treasure his wisdom and good humour forever.'

Paul Manners

Director, National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement

David's influence over the work of the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement was really significant – and he was a very important personal guide and mentor for me too.

It seems odd to say this, but when the NCCPE was established in 2008 to try to persuade more universities to embrace public engagement, it was really hard to imagine quite what that meant.

There were so few models to draw on. But David exemplified what was possible. Not only through his legacy at the University of Brighton – and in particular the Cupp helpdesk and team – but also through his personal charisma and leadership. Here was someone who was both an influential leader and scholar, for whom university engagement was second nature. He allowed us to imagine new possibilities and to see them worked through in reality: new ways of organising university research and teaching that embedded deep, purposeful interaction with the wider world; leadership which placed engagement at the heart of university strategy; and scholarship which unpicked and unravelled in deeply thoughtful and critical ways the challenges and issues arising from this work. Of particular resonance for me was the way David, as a historian, helped us understand how richly the past can illuminate the present, and to place our contemporary efforts in a longer term perspective. Equally importantly, though his work with the Talloires Network, he opened our eyes to the global context for our work, and opened up new friendships and connections.

I have many memories – including a very proud moment when David addressed our first national conference in London in 2010; a remarkable conversation with colleagues from around the world that David orchestrated from the Institute of Education, using a variety of video conferencing technologies to bring us all together; a session he invited me to run for an MBA course, where we agreed to differ about whether universities might ‘expect’ their staff to share a set of institutional values – or whether this was a fundamental erosion of people’s autonomy.

Perhaps my most precious memory is slightly removed from the cut and thrust of university policy and practice. I had popped in to see David in his office in London. He talked to me about a book he had just finished – *Better*, by the American surgeon and recent Reith Lecturer Atul Gawande. David recommended the book, and I wondered quite what its relevance was to the Higher Education engagement agenda. Reading it, the connections slowly dawned. Gawande is a remarkable man: deeply self-aware and self-critical, and critical of the profession he is a part of. His endeavour to be ‘better’ – to serve his patients and collaborate with his colleagues – captures the spirit that David embodied in his work: a deep respect for others, a critical spirit and a profound belief in the common good. This rich legacy lives on through the work and people David inspired, and he is sorely missed.

Tom Schuller

Director, Longview, a UK think tank promoting the value of longitudinal and life course research

I knew David for many years through his commitment to adult learners, especially in universities. David chaired the Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning, which I directed, and we co-authored the final report, *Learning Through Life*. He was always a delight to work with: courteously efficient, always on the ball, and a pleasure to be with outside the formal meetings, with his wide interests and excellent humour.

Our first recommendation in LTL was for a redrawing of the traditional model of the life course, sweeping away the outdated dividing line of 65 and treating 50-75 as the third stage of adult life. It is a very sad irony that David should die at exactly 65.

United States

Lawrence S. Bacow
President Emeritus, Tufts University
Founding Chair, Talloires Network Steering Committee

I first met David when we were organizing what would become the Talloires Network. It was clear from the very beginning that he had thought deeply about the civic roles and social responsibility of colleges and universities. More than thinking deeply, he had acted upon these values and beliefs through his inspired leadership of a number of important academic institutions. But I really got to know David well when we served together on a panel to review the civic engagement initiatives of the University of Western Sydney. David was the most thoughtful and astute observer on the panel. I learned a great deal from him not just about how to bend the arc of an institution towards engagement and social justice, but also about leadership more broadly. He had an uncanny way of pointing the group in the right direction either through a profound question (typically stated elegantly and simply) or through a quietly expressed but extremely insightful observation. When David spoke, the rest of us typically said either out loud or to ourselves, “Of course.” I only wish I had worked more closely with him during my time as President of Tufts. I know I would have been a far more effective president. His death is a great loss for all of higher education.

Robert M. Hollister
Executive Director, Talloires Network
Professor, Tufts University

Others have provided a full picture of David Watson’s extraordinary contributions to the global higher education civic engagement movement and to the Talloires Network, so I would like to reflect on one experience with David that I shall always cherish. I had the privilege of co-authoring a book with him, together with Susan Stroud and Liz Babcock, *The Engaged University: International Perspectives on Civic Engagement*. David’s leadership of this project illustrated several of his marvelous qualities – the ability to apply knowledge of the history of higher education to contemporary issues of institutional reform, great drive, contagious intellectual enthusiasm, and a great capacity to link theory and practice, to combine lofty visions and concrete tools and action. It was a rare treat to watch this distinguished public historian in action. He got us to undertake and to complete a significant piece of research and to present it in a form that added to the collective knowledge base and that also reinforced the leadership of the 20 participating institutions.

In 2009 or thereabouts, David and Susan agreed there was an urgent need and opportunity to produce a comprehensive, comparative study of university civic engagement around the world. Shortly afterwards David advocated that we organize the research so that it examined the complete range of global experience and also reinforced and contributed to development of the Talloires Network. Largely due to his vision, we came up with a two-stage process: first, preparation of descriptions by participating institutions, and second, verification and gathering of the data through site visits by the authors. His methodological instinct was so smart – organize the effort as a collaboration with 20 Talloires Network member institutions, engage them in describing their work, add objective research by the co-authors, and produce a document that both publicized the innovative leadership of the partner institutions and also constituted a comparative analysis.

David relished all aspects of this research process, even as he was appropriately impatient with how his co-authors had trouble keeping up with him. He loved designing the study and also approached each the site visit with enthusiasm. After he finished each site visit, in just a few days his co-authors would receive copious notes on his interviews and observations. He was a very talented poser of questions and a great listener. He

led our interactions about how to analyse and present the case profiles, and then to tease out common patterns and to develop common findings and implications for public policy.

David, thank you for giving me an exquisite tutorial in collaborative research. Thank you for your infectious commitment to elevating the public purposes of higher education. Thank you for being both a tireless community organizer and a world-class intellectual. Thank you exemplifying so many of the values and strategies that drive our movement. We miss you a lot. And we will carry you in our minds and hearts as we keep walking the path you charted, striving to make the engaged university the gold standard of higher education around the world.