

‘Be courageous in your quest for truth,’ PMC director tells Pacific journalism graduates

PACIFIC journalism academic Professor David Robie believes the media play a critical role in exposing abuses of power in a world increasingly hostile towards journalists.

However, journalists in the Pacific are frequently “persecuted by small-minded politicians with scant regard for the role of the media,” he says.

Speaking at the 18th University of the South Pacific Journalism Student Awards ceremony at Laucala campus in Suva, Fiji, last October, Dr Robie said despite the growing global dangers surrounding the profession, journalism was critically important for democracy.

Dr Robie said that while such “ghastly fates” for journalists—such as the extrajudicial killing of Saudi dissident writer Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey earlier that month—may seem remote in the Pacific, there were plenty of attacks on media freedom to contend with, while trolls in the region and state threats to internet freedom were “also rife”.

It was important that journalists played their part too with responsibilities as well as rights.

Along with the right to provide information without fear or favour, and free from pressure or threats, “you have a duty to provide voters with accurate, objective and constructive information”.



Professor David Robie with University of the South Pacific journalism award winners in Suva.

Dr Robie also paid tribute to two whistleblowers and journalists in the Pacific.

“Firstly, Iranian-born Behrouz Boochani, the refugee journalist, documentary maker and poet who pricked the Australian conscience about the terrible human rights violations against asylum seekers on Manus Island and Nauru,” Dr Robie said.

“And activist lawyer communicator Joe Moses, who campaigned tirelessly for the rights of the villagers of Paga Hill in Port Moresby.”—*Geraldine Panapasa in Suva*

Full story: www.pmc.aut.ac.nz

New communication award created for Pasifika women

GERALDINE Lopdell’s family was looking for a fitting way to celebrate a “life well lived” when they decided to set up one of Auckland University of Technology’s newest awards.

During life, Geraldine (pictured) had been an excellent teacher and artist, a supportive and generous friend and a captivating storyteller with an adventurous spirit.

Her early years were spent in Tonga and Samoa where her family travelled for her father’s work, and she had a firm belief that more women’s stories and views—particularly those of Pasifika women—needed to be told and heard.

The Geraldine Lopdell Award for Diversity in Communication will encourage Pasifika women to tell their stories. The first



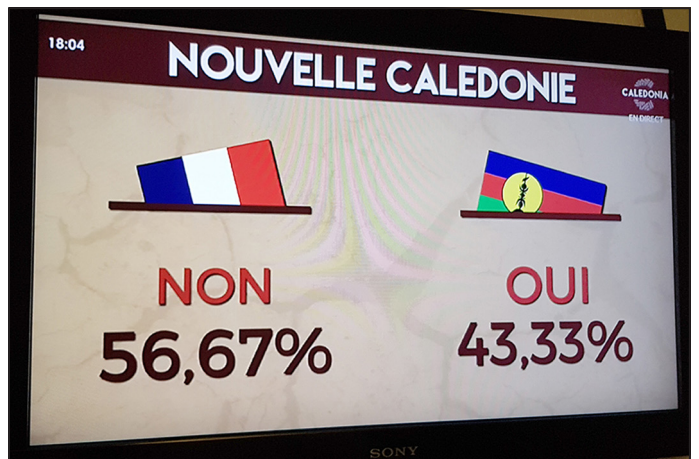
Geraldine Lopdell ... her legacy is supporting the next generation of young Pasifika women. Image: AUT/Lopdell Family

prize will be given in April 2019, nearly one year after Geraldine’s passing. It will be set at \$1,200, and is anticipated to be offered annually for an initial term of 10 years.

Deciding a memorial award to support something she cared about would be a fitting way to celebrate her life, Geraldine’s partner Colin and her two daughters Alex and Anne had approached their family friend, Professor David Robie, and have worked with the AUT Foundation to establish the award in the School of Communication Studies—*By Karyn Tattersfield*

Read full story: www.pmc.aut.ac.nz

Coverage of New Caledonia/Kanaky referendum, November 2018.



Wansolwara and Asia Pacific Report coverage of Fiji elections, November 2018.



Seminar on Okinawa media's responses to US military presence on the island, September 2018.



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