

## Obituary

### Paul W. Miller (1955-2013)

Paul W. Miller, a leading scholar in labor economics, lost his long and heroic battle with cancer on Wednesday, November 27, 2013 in Perth, Australia. Paul was a prolific scholar who expanded and deepened the boundaries in labor economics, particularly in the fields of labor markets and the economics of immigration, of language, and of human capital. He published extensively on three continents and received numerous awards for his research.

Paul W. Miller was born on December 30, 1955 in Dunedoo, New South Wales, Australia. He earned his Bachelor's degree with Honors from Australia's University of New England and went on to receive his Master's degree (1978) and his PhD (1982) in Economics from the Australian National University in Canberra. Paul's academic career was based in Australian universities, although in the first decade after receiving his PhD he accepted several visiting appointments in Canada, the UK, and the US. For much of his career (1987-2010) he was at the University of Western Australia in Perth. During this period he demonstrated his keen administrative skills as Head of the Department of Economics (1994-2001) and Inaugural Head of the School of Economics and Commerce (2003-2005). He left university administration because his passion was academic research. In his last five years at UWA he was Australian Professorial Fellow of the Australian Research Council. In 2010 he became Professor of Economics at Curtin University in Perth, a position he held until his death.

Paul was best known for his research on the economics of immigration (the topic of his PhD dissertation), labor markets, the economics of language, and the economics of education. His forte was in developing new models or adapting pre-existing models to new circumstances, developing testable hypotheses and skillfully testing them. Paul had a deep respect for data, and was very concerned about the quality of the data he analyzed. His empirical work was thoughtful, and he was careful not to draw inferences and conclusions beyond what his model and data analysis could support. He believed in the importance of testing for the robustness of findings, sometimes by applying alternative statistical techniques to a given data set, sometimes using alternative data sets, often from different countries, for the same test, and sometimes both. He also believed in the importance of clear exposition, avoiding formalism unless it advanced the analysis. His interest was in using economics and econometrics to enhance our understanding of skill formation and its labor market consequences.

Paul's greatest impact was through his scholarly publications. His published work included more than 170 articles in refereed journals, 32 papers as chapters in books, and numerous shorter pieces and book reviews. He published ten books and monographs and at the time of his death was co-editing a major volume, the Elsevier *Handbook on the Economics of International Migration*. (The *Handbook* will be completed with Paul as co-editor as a memorial to his impact on research on the economics of immigration.) His papers were published in the leading general economic journals on

three continents (American Economic Review, Economic Journal, Economic Record), as well as the major journals in several fields, including labor economics, immigration, economics of education, and population economics. The impact of this research was both demonstrated and enhanced by the numerous reprinting of his papers, and his Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) Discussion Papers were downloaded often enough to place him in the top one percent of IZA DP authors.

Paul was highly effective as a sole author, but he also seemed to enjoy collaborative relationships. Among his refereed journal articles he had 31 different co-authors, some involving only one paper but with others there were multiple papers published over a span of many years. His co-authors included students (or former students), research assistants, colleagues, and others, myself included. He was an easy person to have as a co-author – original, smart and generous, he listened, responded and shared. He was gracious and modest, confident but not self-important.

I benefitted both professionally and personally from my collaborative relationship with Paul. I was invited to serve as an external reader of his ANU PhD dissertation on immigrant earnings in Australia and was immediately impressed by the quality of his analysis and his ability to extract insights from the limited data available for Australia at that time. We met shortly thereafter during his first visiting appointment in North America and began our research collaboration that spanned three decades, producing over 60 journal articles and chapters in books and several edited volumes. It was a pleasure to watch Paul mature as a scholar. Initially his shy nature discouraged him from giving papers at academic conferences, but as his confidence grew so too did his conference presentations, and they were always outstanding. Two aspects that never changed, however, were his willingness and ability to work hard on his research and his commitment to producing research of the highest quality.

Paul's impressive research contributions were acknowledged formally as well as informally. He received several "best paper" awards, was Elected Fellow, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, was inducted into the ANU Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame, and received the Honorary Fellow Award of the Economic Society of Australia. He was an IZA Research Fellow (since 2004). He is included in *Who's Who in Economics* based on the high frequency of citations to his research.

Paul W. Miller's death is a great loss to the economics profession. He will be missed.

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