

A Celebration of the Work of John Killeen

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This issue of the NICEC journal is devoted to a celebration of the work of John Killeen, who so sadly died in December 2003. John's contribution to the field of career guidance was considerable, as a Fellow of NICEC, as a teacher at the University of Hertfordshire, and in his work with the Policy Studies Institute. If he had been able to complete his own career, he would undoubtedly have made even more of an impact. This is particularly true at a time when both policy-makers and practitioners are paying increasing attention to the evidence base for their work.

The main article is an extract from a NICEC report prepared in summer 2003 for the Guidance Council. The extract is John's overview of the nature of guidance evaluation and how it should be done: it reflects his strong views on the subject, and the commitment to clarity and rigour that we will so sorely miss. It is John's last completed work. It is salutary to realise that no-one else in the UK could have written an article on this topic with such authority, based on such a wide range of experience and knowledge.

There follow an account of John's career, and a series of articles by people who worked with him. These include research collaborators (Jenny Kidd, Michael White), research students (Malcolm Hunt, Gudbjörg Vilhjálmsson), a research contractor (Gareth Dent) and NICEC colleagues (Ruth Hawthorn, Bill Law). A list of John's publications is added: this is used as the reference list for the other articles. Finally, with permission from John's family, we have included the moving eulogy delivered at his funeral by his son Joe.

When John died, many other people wrote to express what they felt about John and his work. Three representative ones will have to suffice here. Allister McGowan (Chief Executive of VT Careers Management Ltd. and a NICEC Associate) wrote:

'I will remember John as a rigorously stringent researcher with meticulous standards and attention to detail, all combined with warmth and a real understanding of the issues as they impacted upon the "sharp" (practitioner) end. As a profession we will miss him.'

Lynne Bezanson (Executive Director of the Canadian Career Development Foundation, and a NICEC Overseas Fellow) wrote:

'I have loved everything I have read by him.'

Professor Ed Herr (Pennsylvania State University, USA, and a NICEC Overseas Fellow) wrote:

'Although I did not know John personally – our relationship was primarily one of periodic correspondence about areas of mutual interest and my reading of his excellent scholarship – I had great respect for him and his work. Even in our correspondence, he seemed to be a very cordial, kind and interesting companion.... He is irreplaceable.'

We too think John is irreplaceable, as a researcher, writer, teacher and colleague. We hope that this collection demonstrates why.