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Obituary

Jack (John Alfred) Sinden



Jack Sinden, one of the longest serving academic agricultural economists and a pioneer of nonmarket valuation, died on 21 October 2015 in Armidale. Those who knew him will remember his dedication as a teacher, supervisor and an excellent colleague. Jack had an outstanding record in teaching, a first-class record in research and an exemplary record of service to the University and the community.

Jack was born in 1939 in Kent and grew up on a dairy farm. He obtained a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Forest Science from the University of Wales, a Master of Forestry from the University of Michigan, and a PhD in Forestry Economics from the University of Wales. Shortly after graduation, Jack was offered a position in Australia as a Silvicultural Officer with the Forest Research Institute in Canberra, now part of CSIRO. Jack endured a 6-week sea voyage to come to Australia in 1965. In his own words, he was one of the last 'legal boat people'.

In April 1966, Jack attended a forestry refresher school at the University of New England (UNE), at which John Dillon, then Professor of Farm Management at the Faculty of Agricultural Economics, delivered a lecture. According to Jack, this was a turning point for him. Jack was impressed with Dillon's presentation and decided to visit the rest of the Faculty, where he found the strong sense of purpose and direction very appealing. From then, Jack was determined to obtain a position at UNE. He succeeded when, in 1967, he was appointed as a Lecturer. Jack went on to become an Associate Professor. He remained at UNE for 48 years, retiring only in 2011, after which he became an Adjunct. Recognition of Jack's achievements came in

2012 when he was made a Distinguished Fellow of the Australian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society.

Jack commanded the respect of countless students, delivering over 6000 lectures to undergraduate students. His influence was profound, providing solid conceptual foundations as well as the inspiration to push the boundaries of theory and practice. He made substantial contributions to the development of curriculum in resource economics, having developed a highly rated first-year unit, and having published a widely prescribed text in the discipline.

Jack was generous with his time, mentoring students and supervising a large number of undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations. He formed long-term associations with many of his students and continued to publish with them. Jack was the Graduate Student Coordinator (Masters) from 1994 to 2010. He was well known for his personal touch with prospective students, and he was instrumental in attracting some of the best students who have been through UNE.

Jack spent two periods of study leave at Yale University where he established an important collaboration with fellow forest economist Professor Albert Worrell, which led to the publication of their influential book on *Unpriced Values* (Sinden and Worrell 1979). These visits to Yale were especially fruitful as it was there that Jack met his wife Marly in 1973.

Other influential work followed, including papers on estimating the demand for environmental quality, the disparities between Willingness to Pay and Willingness to Accept, the value of soil conservation, and the cost of weeds in Australia.

Jack's collaboration with Dodo Thampapillai, one of his early PhD students, resulted in the integration of many of these principles in their book *Introduction to Benefit-Cost Analysis* and more recently in their book *Environmental Economics*.

Jack's outputs include five books and nearly 90 papers in refereed journals. Jack was instrumental in bringing environmental issues to the attention of the economics profession in Australia. He had an ability to draw out the most important implications and recommendations from his research work and make them understandable to policy makers. Through his teaching, research and research supervision, Jack has influenced generations of graduates. A multi-awarded teacher and researcher, Jack is survived by his wife Marly, his children and grandchildren, and a menagerie of pets.

OSCAR CACHO, ROBYN HEAN, DODO THAMPAPILLAI

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