

**In memoriam
Michael John Way
(1962-2017)**



It is very difficult to write an obituary for a colleague and/or friend of the same age as one gets older, or for an older mentor, colleague and/or friend passed retirement age, who has left this mortal earth to be with his/her maker. When a younger colleague and friend, such as Mike, passes away, it becomes almost impossible to write a fitting obituary, because of the emotions one feels. We should all remember Mike as a quiet, friendly, compassionate person who loved nature, biological sustainability and biology in general. Perhaps reflecting on some of the many tributes that came in when the news of Mikes passing broke, will allow us to celebrate Mikes life, as family, colleagues and friends.

“I SIMPLY CAN NOT BELIVE THAT NEWS ABOUT MIKE. I'm truly shocked and shattered. Yesterday together Katya and me were

watching photos about kayaking with Mike in one of the game reserve - he looks so energetic, strong and happy on all of the pics. I can't believe it. I was hoping secretly that once in the not too far future we'll have chance to go back to SA together with Marcel and we all can go kayaking together with Mike..... We are honored and blessed to have known him.” (Bela Molnar, previous SASRI post-doc, now at Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

“I was so shocked - and still is - by your news about Mike. I knew him since 1985 and he had such a special place in my heart. We made a deal at this last EntSoc conference in July that in 10 years from now, at our last conference before our retirement, the two of us will be the last people leaving the dance floor as we were back in 1986... And we laughed...And now...” (Hannalene Du Plessis, North West University, Potchefstroom)

“Regis Goebel from CIRAD just told us of the death of Mike Way. We are very sad and share the pain of his family and his colleagues. Mike has shared many good times with us in our cooperation projects with SASRI and has contributed with his commitment and enthusiasm to the success of our 5 years program with SASRI.” (Didier RAMAY, Legta St Paul, Reunion Island)

“ It was a big shock to hear that Mike , who I had worked with on the problem of scarabaeid white grubs for a long time and who had been such a good friend , and a lot younger than me , has passed

away.” (Graham Petty, retired Entomologist, Pineapple Research Institute)

“Thank you for informing us about the untimely death of Mike Way on 10 November. He was a willing and conscientious reviewer of manuscripts for African Entomology, an aspect that was a tremendous help to me and which I cherished. He will certainly be a loss to the entomological community in South Africa.” (Barry Blair, Editor, African Entomology)

“Tragic. I knew him as guy who seemed to quietly get on with his job without fanfare. I always enjoyed chatting with him at congresses - he always seemed to have a smile and a good word about everybody and everything.” (Brian Barnes, Retired Entomologist, ARC-Infuitec)

“It's indeed a shock. I left a small note with Malcolm for Mike when I visited the insect collection upstairs during my visit. I have good memories of Mike whom I have met for the first time in 2011 in Mauritius (ISSCT workshop) and since then we have been communicating while implementing the EU-funded ACP project. Recently, he promptly sent me pics of the longhorn beetle for my poster. Always ready to respond to any query.” (Nalini Behary-Paray, Entomologist, MSIRI)

“Thank you for letting me know this shocking news. I am very sad as Mike was like a brother to me, you know that.” (Regis Goebel. CIRAD, France)

Mike was born in Durban, and obtained his matric from Westville Boys High School in 1981. He went on to obtain his BSc degree at the then University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg in 1984. In 1985 he joined a CSIRO research program based at the University of Cape Town, on the biological control of Australian weeds, as their senior technician. He remained there until 1988, when he left to study full time for an Honours Degree in Entomology at Rhodes University, obtained in 1989. From 1990 till 1991 he worked as a trainee mushroom grower, but his fascination and love for insects led him to look for employment where he could advance his entomological career. In mid-1991 he joined the biological control section of the Entomology department of the South African Sugarcane Research Institute, where he worked as a technician in various roles before being promoted to assistant research officer, then research officer in 1993, working on the ecology of the different sugarcane pests in the South African sugarcane industry. He loved the training aspect of his work, sensitising commercial and especially small scale farmers, about the good bugs in the environment, just by collected them in his sweep net, and showing the farmers what they were. More recently he became involved in sugarcane biosecurity, and at the time of his passing led a project aimed at containing the spread of an indigenous cerambycid beetle found attacking sugarcane in a small section of the industry, to the greater sugarcane areas in South Africa.

In addition to Entomology being Mikes profession and also hobby, he loved his pets, always going to the beach with them and his friends (and sometimes with his friends pets without them), indigenous gardening, photography, outdoor activities such as surfing, snorkeling, the sea, canoeing and hiking. He completed the Comrades Marathon in 1983, and summited Mount Kilimanjaro a few years ago. He enjoyed running, and captained the then SASEX JH Isaacs relay team from 1990 to 1993. In recent years he really immersed himself further into art, making ornaments out of stained glass, and producing many beautiful drawings of birds, insects, dogs, cats, friends and nature in general. He was a great supporter of charities, and in his natural way would always get his “hands dirty” and become fully involved in all charity work through his church, especially with young and disadvantaged children, and also quietly in the work environment, with different staff members.

Mike is survived by his wife Shirley, his mother, a twin brother and three sisters and their children whom he dearly loved. Our condolences and love go out to them at this sad time. Perhaps Mikes departing message to Shirley sums up his feelings and his search for peace, which I am sure he has found now with his maker:

Love you Shirls. Loved my close family and relatives too, including Bongi and Stephen as part of the family.

Here I rest under the Acacia nurtured to adulthood.

Have no regrets. Contributed where I could do so.

Time to go. Enough time has been spent on how to do this job. Ultimately I was born timid, and maybe went out cowardly...It is your prerogative to be the judge about that. Had many fancy medical diagnoses from experts, however too late to cure.

Let each Individual seek his destiny with more courage than I can muster right now.

In humility I suggest to humankind, "Hug one another physically and mentally every single day" a hug a day keeps the bugs at bay.

I do believe God will forgive this simple soul.

As the pastor said at the end of Mikes Funeral service "Death is not the end...it is a new beginning for believers in Gods promises". With this assurance Mike, Rest In Peace...

Des Conlong