

Professor Warwick E Murray
Distinguished New Zealand Geographer Award and Medal 2019

Nominated and cited by Professor John Overton, Wellington Branch.

Citation

Professor Warwick Murray is a geographer widely recognised and esteemed throughout the world as a scholar, teacher, colleague and ‘geography personality’. Since arriving in New Zealand in 2001 and becoming a New Zealand citizen, he has been prominent nationally and internationally in a variety of fields in teaching, research and service. He is one of the most prolific and well-known New Zealand geographers in terms of research output; he is one of this country’s most innovative, popular and awarded university teachers; and he is a highly active geographer serving on an impressive array of professional organisations.

Warwick Murray completed his PhD in geography at the University of Birmingham in 1996. His topic - “Neo-liberalism, Restructuring and Non-traditional Fruit Exports in Chile: Implications of Export Orientation for Small Scale Farmers” – set the course for his subsequent programme of research and scholarly work. This very close engagement with rural change and development in Latin America has been a constant feature of his work, although his first major academic appointment was as a Lecturer in Geography at the University of the South Pacific (1997-2000) and this helped shape the second main field of his research – in Oceania. Following a brief spell at Brunel University in London, Warwick took up an appointment in Human Geography and Development Studies at Victoria University of Wellington in 2001 and here his wide range of activities and achievements have been recognised with awards and rapid promotion to Professor in 2010.

His contributions and service to Geography in New Zealand cover a very wide range and this letter can only summarise some of the main features and achievements. Warwick’s research has been characterised by strongly grounded research activity, international collaboration and prolific output. Latin America, and Chile in particular, has been an enduring focus. Since arriving in Wellington, Warwick established VUW’s Victoria Institute for Links with Latin America (VILLA), and this body has overseen not only research activity and symposia but also important policy linkages with New Zealand and Latin American government bodies, and was critical in the successful joint bid for a MBIE-funded Centre of Research Excellence for Latin America. He has continued to conduct field research in Latin America since his doctoral research and broadened his interests beyond the fruit sector to more general theoretical work on rural transformations and globalisation. His Pacific-oriented research has further complemented and widened the body of his work to the point where he is now recognised as an international expert on rural geography and globalization, as invitations for him to contribute to ‘state-of-the-art’ collections and journal special issues (for example Daniels et al.’s *Human Geography*, Simon Springer’s *Handbook of Neoliberalism* or Potter and Desai’s *Companion to Development Studies*). His *Geographies of Globalization* (in two editions and even an Arabic translation) has become a classic text (in the top five of Routledge’s best geography sellers in 2015). Overall, he has published some 72 papers in peer-refereed journals and an additional 46 chapters in books, to go with his four books (two authored, two edited) and four special issue collections as well as two accepted books in press. The quality

of his research has been recognised consistently at the very highest level on three consecutive occasions by national research ranking exercises.

As well as publishing directly, Warwick has been very active as a journal editor. Of particular note has been his extended service as editor-in chief of *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* (2002-2010, 2019-). Under his stewardship, this journal – one we should regard with pride as New Zealand’s own renowned development geography journal – became ISI-listed and is now consistently ranked by impact factor in the top ten of the area studies category. He also served as editor for Global South submissions for the very highly regarded *Journal of Rural Studies* in 2012-14.

Alongside this publishing activity, Warwick has also been a highly successful recipient of external funding grants. He has secured funding for research projects from MFAT in New Zealand and FONDECYT in Chile and, most significantly, been a leading figure in three major Marsden-funded projects since 2011. The most recent such project, on ethical value chains, for which he was Principal Investigator, resulted in numerous publications, two fully-funded PhD completions (one of which by Kelle Howson which Warwick supervised, has received a coveted Graduate Dean’s List award in 2019) and a book contract with Edward Elgar is in preparation.

Although this research activity has been significant and sustained, for many geography students, the name Warwick Murray is associated with something more visceral and exciting: his lectures. With music, personal anecdotes and deep first-hand knowledge of his subject, Warwick has been an extremely popular lecturer, teaching undergraduate papers in Human Geography, Development Studies and Globalization. His classes have consistently attracted very high enrolments and recognition has followed in the form of awards from his university, the New Zealand Geographical Society and Ako Aotearoa, the latter and national teaching excellence award in 2006. In 2005 Warwick co-designed with Associate Professor Sara Kinson, and co-coordinated the introduction of the first (and only) Development Studies undergraduate major in a New Zealand university. This has proved to be extremely successful in attracting new students to the wider Geography offering. At the postgraduate level, Warwick Murray has also taught into the Development Studies programme and undertaken significant supervision. Warwick has supervised more than forty honours and master’s thesis students together with six doctoral students to completion (a further three are in progress). I note in particular that, with this supervision, Warwick has been critical in supporting and guiding research by New Zealand postgraduate students working in Latin America. The result has been a body of work comprised of thesis work and resultant publications marking an engagement by New Zealand-based geographers working in a region, and in the Spanish language, that is unmatched in this country.

Outside of these main academic activities, Professor Murray has been extremely active in professional service. From being a willing visitor and speaker to secondary schools, to his leadership roles in Ako Aotearoa Academy of Tertiary Teaching Excellence (as a member of the executive) and the New Zealand Geographical Society (as Vice President 2018-), he has been a leading voice of Geography within and beyond the discipline. Internationally, he has also served as in bodies facilitating research collaborations with Latin America, most notably as President of the Council for Latin American Studies Asia and Oceania (CELAO) in 2016-18 and as Co-President of the Association of Iberian and Latin American Studies of Australasia (AILASA) in 2012-18. This service has been coupled with international recognition through his visiting

professor roles at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, Universidad Catolica (Chile) and the University of the South Pacific.

Finally, no mention of Professor Warwick Murray, Geographer, would be complete without mention of his public persona. His extra-curricula activities as a musician have helped him to reach a wider audience through media appearances and commentary. Beginning with a television appearance as the 'singing professor' in 2006, Warwick has been seen and heard on national radio and television, talking on topics as diverse as fair trade, aid, earthquakes in Latin America, and the future of Niue. In 2012 he was featured on four programmes on Radio NZ as the 'singing geographer', involving interviews on geographic subjects and original songs to illustrate the academic themes. Warwick Murray, then, is a New Zealand Geographer of distinctive personality, of impressive productivity, of originality and of very high and sustained international standing. He has not only promoted the subject actively and enthusiastically but, to a large degree, his work has personified what Geography as a subject is and should be: a field of critical research, of active learning, of social and political engagement, of global collaboration, of curiosity and, we must remember, of fun!