



The English Teachers
Association of Queensland Inc.

Providing professional support
and advocacy for English teachers

LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD 2017

Citation: Garry Collins

Garry's life has centred on his commitment to teaching, to English teaching and to the subject English. He was appointed to Gladstone SHS in 1969 and relocated to Ferny Grove in 1982 where he remained until he retired from Education Queensland in 2009. Garry was HOD English for over 30 years. ETAQ was fortunate enough then to become one of Garry's prime foci for a few years before he headed off into academia, teaching English method and grammar first at the Australian Catholic University and later at the University of Queensland.

Garry first joined ETAQ in the early 1970s and joined the management committee in the 1990's. He assumed the presidency of ETAQ after the 2005 Gold Coast national conference and brought to the committee his eye for detail and military precision.

He has supported the professional development of English teachers at all stages of their career by offering a workshop at virtually **every** ETAQ seminar or conference, local, state or national as well as his recent Grammar Days. Those not able to attend face to face PD have not been forgotten – Garry is and has been a prolific contributor to *Words'Worth* over many years and he also has been very active in mentoring and coaching the talent and contributions of beginning teachers as well as being very supportive of rural and regional members. Many of those on the committee over the years recognise that they have connected with ETAQ due to his personal encouragement. He is a 'gatherer' of people around common interests and causes. His knowledge of the English teaching network is enormous; more importantly, his personal interest in individuals' stories is sincere and infectious. He has also initiated numerous social gatherings to support, share and build a sense of community for this professional group.

During challenging times around the Australian Curriculum, NAPLAN, draft Senior Syllabuses and external assessment, Garry has remained the steady voice of progress. He has always made the time to contribute to the debate on these issues and is an articulate advocate for quality English teaching despite the clamouring criticism from the media.

Garry has a very particular passion for the mechanics of our language. He has long been an enthusiastic advocate for promoting how a thorough knowledge of functional grammar can empower students and has lived this commitment through his workshops, as well as contributing strongly to the organisation of numerous national conferences for ASFLA.

For the 2013 AATE/ALEA national conference in Brisbane, Garry assumed the key role of co-convener. He kept the ship sailing confidently as we pulled together an enormous team to create a wonderful conference which, due to Garry's careful stewardship of the budget, made a very sizeable profit. We can also thank Garry for the health and vigour of our relationship with our sister organisation, ALEA. What characterises Garry's approach is an absolute passion for making the community of our organisation a genuine community with shared commitment.

Garry has also played a major role in supporting the literary competition which ETAQ runs jointly with the Independent Education Union – he has been organiser, judge and strong supporter since the early 2000s.

Finally, Garry has played a very significant role in the national and international sphere. He took on the role of ETAQ delegate for AATE in 2005, ascending to the four-year role of AATE president, finishing at the end of 2016. His contributions have helped to lead the state and national associations through changing times for all educators. In an era in which there has been an unprecedented level of emotional interest by the community in student 'outcomes', Garry has helped to protect the integrity of what is most important in our work: how we can best support students' confidence with literacy, and to nurture their love of literature and learning. Garry is a very worthy recipient of life membership because of his commitment to ETAQ, to English and to English teaching.