

PROFESSOR JOHN KEITH PHILIP WATSON (1939–2024)- A TRIBUTE

It is with great sadness that we have to announce the passing of Professor Keith Watson on 24 November 2024. Keith was a pillar in International and Comparative Education, focusing on Education in Southeast Asia and other countries in the Asian region during his career. He greatly supported the *Journal of International and Comparative Education (JICE)* until his passing. Alongside Colin Brock, Richard Pring, and Michael Crossley, Keith generously worked with me to establish JICE from its inception at the University of Malaya. I first met Keith when he served as my external examiner for my doctoral viva. He was patient and generous when advising new scholars like me, and he was involved and supportive throughout the years.

Keith was born in Huddersfield, a proud Yorkshireman, a few months prior to the outbreak of World War II. He won scholarships to attend school at Workshop College and the University of Edinburgh, where he was an undergraduate in history with politics. He later obtained his Postgraduate Certificate in Education at the University of London Institute of Education in 1964 and his PhD from the University of Reading in 1973, with a thesis focusing on educational development in Southeast Asia (Thailand, Malaya and Singapore). A couple of years later, he was appointed Lecturer at the University of Reading before being promoted to Reader, subsequently as Professor, ultimately retiring as Professor Emeritus in 2001 following a stroke. Before joining academia, Keith had overseas placements (through the British Council) as a Teacher of English as a foreign language (TEFL) in Chittagong (now Bangladesh), Thailand, and Iran.

A prolific and influential writer, Keith has published over 120 journal articles and book chapters, and 13 books, including the noted *Comparative and International Research In Education: Globalisation, Context and Difference* with Michael Crossley (Routledge, 2003); *Doing Comparative Education Research* (Symposium Books, 2001), and *Education in the Third World* (Croom Helm, 1983). Keith also successfully supervised 18 PhD students and a number of MPhil students and was an external examiner for theses throughout the UK and overseas (Hong Kong, Malaysia and South Africa). He was the former Chair (1982-1984) and President (1996-1997) of the British Comparative and International Education Society and editor-in-chief of the *International Journal of Educational Development (IJED)* from 1990 to 2006. Keith was also Chair of the UK Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET) (1990-1999). Keith proudly cherished his work with Bill Ozanne for IJED. He loved how the UKFIET brought people together in person from all over the world to critically reflect on issues in education and development.

Keith Watson was a pioneering leader of his generation in International and Comparative Education. He loved his colleagues and students, and had long-lasting, deep relationships with many of them. A man of deep Christian faith, Keith had a great pastoral heart. He was always kind, compassionate, and generous with his time, wisdom, and expertise. He was a source of inspiration, and he will be greatly missed.

Lorraine Pe Symaco
Zhejiang University

