

DEDICATION

Bryan J. Found, PhD

August 10, 1962 - October 23, 2016

Charles Darwin once wrote “A man who dares to waste one hour of time has not discovered the value of life.” I do not know if Bryan knew this quote – in fact, he probably didn’t, not being much of a reader – but he lived his life as if he did. Bryan was a man of incomparable drive and passion, dedicating his time to improving the world around him. His unexpected passing has left a deep hole in many lives around the globe.

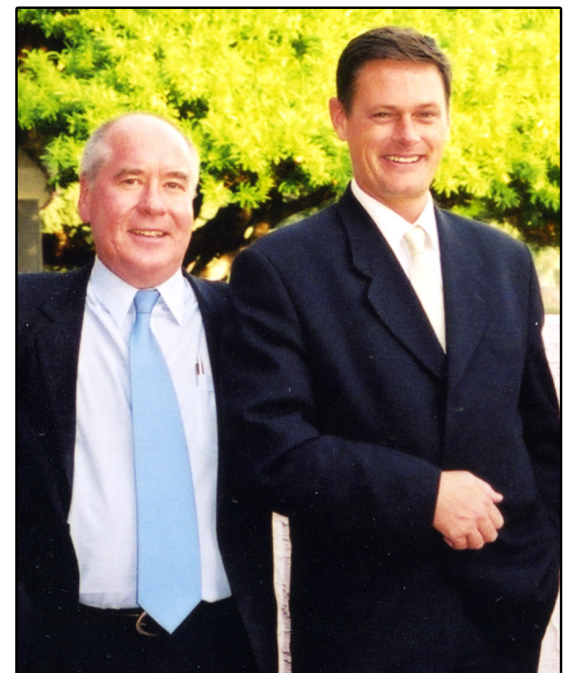
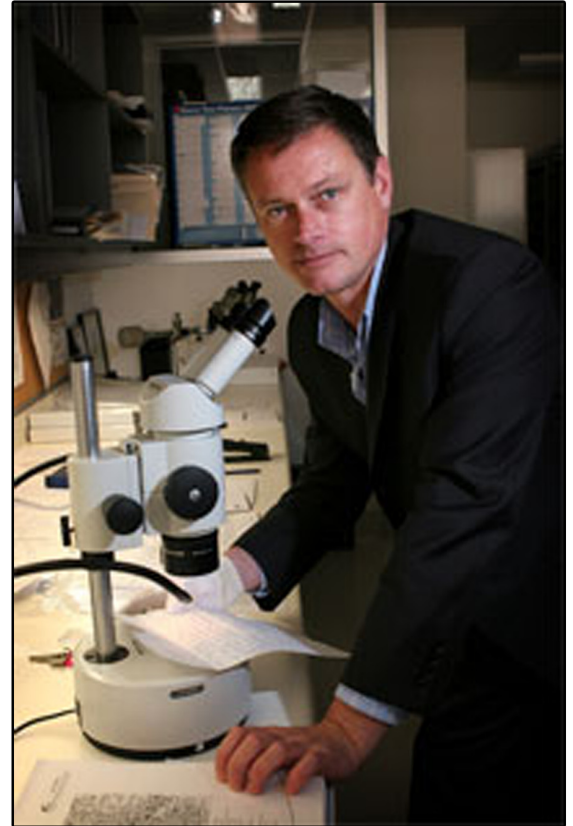
Bryan’s impact on the forensic science community, and the questioned document arena in particular, cannot be overstated. He fought tirelessly, and at times thanklessly, for change and improvement. His entry into the document examination world was somewhat accidental – working as a biologist introducing DNA profiling to Victoria, he was rapidly bored with all the chemistry and gels. But the document examination team had the only photocopier in the laboratory, and Bryan would visit them to photocopy his sheet music for his band. Inveterately curious, he began to ask to see cases and techniques, and within months had moved over into the Documents team. Frustrated with what he saw as a lack of scientific rigour and validity, he dedicated the next 20 years of his life to developing a scientific basis for handwriting and signature examination.

Change can be slow in forensics. But Bryan never backed down, and never shied away from pursuing it. He fought for the science, not because it was easy, but because it was the right thing to do. He was a dedicated Bayesian before it became popular, an empiricist before it was easy, and a strident critic with a lone voice. His astonishing insight and intelligence astounded all of us who were lucky enough to learn from him. He gave us all courage to use our voices to promote change, and to admit that we needed to improve. Bryan’s workshops are already legendary, his papers erudite, and his presentation style incomparable. The recognition his work was receiving in recent times, and the change he could see occurring, filled him with joy. He frequently said that this was the best time ever to be a forensic scientist, and that he was so excited to see what our world would become.

Beyond Bryan’s work, he surrounded himself with his many passions. A lifelong musician, he played many instruments effortlessly, and sung beautifully in his deep tenor voice in many bands throughout his life. He travelled the world, revelling in experiencing new cultures, places and sights. He built a collection of scientific antiques from every corner of the globe, and delighted in finding new curios on each of his trips away. His garden and art deco house was his happy place, his source of inspiration and calm, and his sanctuary from the world. It was also the place to gather his friends and family together for his unforgettable parties, for many bottles of fine red wine, laughter, love and the nightly spa in the garden under the stars. He gave his time, love and assistance frequently and generously, and wanted nothing more than to make the people around him happy. And so he did.

Bryan is survived by his parents Barry and Sylvia, his brother and family Stephen, Angela, Kathryn, Nicholas and Ben, his partner Kaye and brand new puppy Obi. We would like to thank the entire forensic community for their kind thoughts and condolences, and hope they will continue to celebrate Bryan’s life and work, as we will. Our world has lost a great man, an astonishing scientist, and a generous and loving soul. Grief is the price we pay for love, and we were all so fortunate and grateful to have loved, and been loved by, this great man.

Kaye Ballantyne, PhD
*Senior Research and Development Officer,
Office of the Chief Forensic Scientist at the Victoria Police
Forensic Services Department in Australia*



Bryan teamed up with Doug Rogers (retired) at the School of Human Biosciences at LaTrobe University in Melbourne Australia to conduct ongoing research in handwriting identification.



Bryan Found (right) with Professors Marvin L. Simner (Emeritus) and Rejan Plamadon from Canada at the 1999 International Graphonomics Society Biennial meeting in Singapore

I first met Bryan before I entered the field of FDE, when I was still an undergraduate student and attending the ANZFSS International Symposium on the Forensic Sciences in 2000. I have to say I was a bit intimidated by him at the time, but by the time I was newly qualified FDE at another ANZFSS Symposium in 2004 I was eager to discuss with Bryan the possibility of doing some research with him and Doug Rogers, as a Masters student. Eight years later I was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy for the years of work put in. Over those years I got to know Bryan a lot better as he became my mentor and friend.

I feel very fortunate to have been able to work with Bryan, a trailblazer in the field of forensic handwriting examination, and a generous person in so many ways: with his knowledge, experience, time and money (how many of my meals he paid for!). I feel he was a true leader who didn't have airs about him and was always willing to share his thoughts and advice. His belief in and encouragement of me meant so much, personally, and I'm sure I wouldn't have had the many opportunities that I have had in this field if it weren't for Bryan's guidance and influence.

Carolyne Bird, PhD
Adelaide, Australia
Corresponding author of the Modular Forensic Handwriting Method

Bryan Found was an extraordinary, legendary person. He played several instruments, sang, could draw, loved animals, had just entirely redone a mid-20th century modernist house that had previously fallen into disrepute, and he was magnanimous to anyone who wanted to learn from him while brushing off the criticisms of those who did not.

Bryan took questions and ideas seriously. Discussions with him were challenging and worthwhile. For me, what I will think about most is the enormous extent of the contributions to my professional growth as a document examiner that directly relate to Bryan's work and teaching. Every handwriting examination I do invokes the complexity theory, the modular approach, an understanding of motor control theory, and reliance on things I learned when taking the FEPL proficiency testing.

I suspect that many FDEs who learned from Bryan's presentations at the many conferences he presented world-wide would say the same. AFDE was fortunate to have Bryan as an International member, frequent presenter, and contributor to the Journal of Forensic Document Examination. Recently I prepared material for a mock Daubert hearing on the admissibility of handwriting examination. The work of Bryan and his team formed the central core of that presentation.

We will miss Bryan as a friend, and will also mourn the loss of ideas that he would have pursued. Each of us around the world who has a hand knit possum, made by Bryan's mum and tossed into the audience to celebrate a good question or answer will treasure that keepsake. Thankfully, he was so generous with his knowledge that others come behind him to continue his work, and supporting them will be our best tribute to Bryan.

Emily Will, MA, D-BFDE
USA