

Tribute to a great Aboriginal educator

Dr. Marika, an inspirational educator and friend, has died, aged 49, near her home in northeast Arnhem Land

Born into the Rirratjingu clan of the Yolngu people, she passed away while out hunting on the land that she loved.

My colleagues and I at the Faculty of Education, Monash University, pay respect to an inspirational educationalist whose work has given us great leadership for this past 20 years. Her work was right and true and we will continue to follow her example in the education of our future teachers.

At the national level, she was a director of Reconciliation Australia and of the Yothu Yindi Foundation, a member of the Council of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and a participant in the 2020 Summit. For those of us in Indigenous Education, she was the 'guiding light' the bicultural, bilingual approach at Yirrkala School, which has been an inspirational example in the true spirit of education of what the very best of bicultural education can achieve.

She was generous in her wisdom and it was my privilege to share ideas with her. I will miss her as a colleague and as a friend. Her courage and inspiration for my work in Indigenous Education, her willingness to have our student teachers at Yirrkala School, and her dreams of proper good education will always be in my memories.

I record here the conclusion to her Wentworth Lecture in 1998.

"Our job as educators is to convince the people who control mainstream education that we wish to be included. Until this happens, reconciliation is an empty word and an intellectual terra nullius."

The full document can be found at

<http://www.education.monash.edu.au/indigenous-ed/provocations.html>

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