Charles Pearce

Charles was born in 1940 in Wellington and was educated there. He obtained his BSc (a double major in Applied and Pure Mathematics and a further double major in Physics and Mathematical Physics) and in 1962 he gained a MSc with first class honours in Mathematics, all from Victoria University of Wellington. The Bachelor's degree, it must be asserted, was from the University of New Zealand, as the constituent colleges of UNZ, of which Victoria University College was one of four, had proliferated into four autonomous Universities by the time Charles completed his Masters degree. It was at this time I first became aware of Charles who was a prominent figure in all ways then, and as now 41 years later, both physically and intellectually. I was then studying 3rd year Applied and Pure Mathematics at Victoria University of Wellington, and he was my senior by a couple of years. Certainly I was the inconspicuous one.

Charles has throughout his long ongoing career worn his NZ origins with strength and pride. Being descended from the Maori people he could claim his NZ ancestry was longer than almost all his peers from NZ. He remains essentially a true New Zealander although he has not lived here since 1962. As a very frequent visitor to our shores he and we have seen his contacts here grow enormously-heightened by his high stature in probabilistic and statistical modelling. He is well-known to the mathematical community here as he is indeed throughout the world.

His early schooling was in Wellington and he was dux of Hutt Valley High School in 1957. He is descended from Alexander Gray, one of just five Scots who settled in New Zealand as part of the original and largely unsuccessful NZ Company settlement of 1826. The marriage in 1830 of his full Maori ancestor Hinerangi to Alexander is the first entry in the marriage register in Paihia in the Bay of Islands. His long history of NZ connections (some 22 generations, no less) has led to his having a life-long passion for Maoritanga. He claims with great pride his connection back to three waka (canoes) in the heke (migration): Aotea, Kurahaupo and Takatimu. His principal tribal connection is with the Ngati Ruanui, which is a tribe based in the southern Taranaki.

In 1963 Charles left New Zealand for doctoral study at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, under the supervision of the late Professor P. Moran. Thereafter followed short stints (1 to 3 years) as Lecturer in ANU; Queensland (visiting Professor); Rennes, France; and Sheffield (1966 –68). He was appointed to the University of Adelaide in 1968 and has remained there for the ensuing 25 years having been appointed Reader in 1982. He is a leading figure in their Department of Applied Mathematics there. While at ANU, he met and married Frances (née O'Connor), and they have brought up their family in Adelaide. Charles has published prolifically in the area of probabilistic and statistical modelling and analysis, with strong contributions being made in both theory and practice. The former are amazingly detailed papers of high abstract quality. His forthcoming book (with Dragomir) addresses the fine points of the Hermite-Hadamard inequality and is being published by Kluwer Academic Press. His applied interests include queuing theory, road traffic, telecommunications, and urban planning. With former student Bill Henderson (now deceased), who followed him from Sheffield to Adelaide, he helped establish the successful Tele-traffic Centre in the University of Adelaide.

A recent calculation showed that he had attracted research funding totalling over $A1.1 million in competitive research grants and contract research awards since 1986, which is when we started counting. Publications are numerous and include a book (with S.S. Dragomir), 23 book chapters, and well over 200 research articles. He is a sought after and frequent visitor to research centres around the world. Last year he visited Brazil, Toulouse in France, Hungary and Korea. Often these visits are as an invited speaker. He has to his record 19 successful PhD students (plus 10 in progress), and many other smaller project activities.

But it does not stop there. With the formation of the Division of Applied Mathematics of the Australian Mathematical society, Charles soon emerged as a key figure. The most enduring significant role has to be his stewardship as Chief Editor of their Applied Mathematics Journal, now called *The ANZIAM Journal of Applied Mathematics*, which is arguably the best Applied Mathematics Journal in the southern hemisphere. The formation of ANZIAM in 1993 (hatched during a meeting in Adelaide) must have warmed Charles's heart, as it encapsulated the union he espoused of joint activity in Applied Mathematics involving both Australia and New Zealand. He has been a strong worker for ANZIAM and it was fitting that this, along with his outstanding research work, was recognised by the award of the ANZIAM medal in 2001. This is a premier award for scholarly contributions, awarded every two years. It is significant that three of the four awardees are from Adelaide.

Student feedback is warm and generous: students write of his outstanding experience and breadth of knowledge, and of being an excellent mentor. He shows his consulting arena very strongly and those of us who attend the Mathematics-in-Industry Study Groups can see firsthand his talents in this area.

The sheer volume of quality activities with which Charles is involved seem insurmountable: I used to wonder if he ever slept, but I did once observe this at a Council meeting—however, he then floored me with a most accurate and penetrating summing-up question, proving that he indeed listens actively whilst *appearing to sleep*!!

Those of us on this side of "the ditch" wonder why Charles was never lured back permanently to his country of origin. But we need to keep trying. Meantime, it has been fitting that very recently Charles was elected as a *Fellow of the New Zealand Mathematical Society*, which sets into concrete the strong affinity and connection he has with New Zealand. I'm certain he would support the All Blacks even when they are playing the Wallabies!! Meanwhile the NZ mathematical community can take pride in the ongoing contributions of one of its distinguished famous sons. Well-done: Charles Pearce FNZMS.

Graeme Wake