**A perspective from the other side of the world**

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*The format of the following remarks is unusual because my presentation was based on a set of PowerPoint slides that had short statements and photographs. I have chosen to retain the style of the presentation in the text and include representative slides as figures. The number of figures has been reduced by eliminating text-only slides.*

I appreciate the opportunity to add some comments today to tell you about Dr. Mueller-Dombois. My perspective comes from having worked with him in Hawai`i for many years. I am using PowerPoint so that I can show you a few pictures of Dieter and the environment in which he has worked while he has been in Hawai`i.

I thought quite a bit about how to contribute to this celebration of Dieter's career. I knew that other people would present analytical summaries of his many accomplishments. I wanted to do something more personal. Our long professional association has given me ample opportunity to get to know him quite well as a person as well as a scholar.

I wasn't quite sure of an appropriate format. In the end, I decided that I would try to choose a few words or phrases that seemed to describe Dieter. As I did this, I suddenly became curious what Dieter's other Hawai`i colleagues had to say.

What I did was to go to Dieter's colleagues in the Botany Department at the University of Hawai`i at Manoa and asked them to provide me with a few words or phrases which they felt best describe Dieter. This was like a scientific survey; I sampled people's opinions to try to get an unbiased opinion.

Everyone was very willing to contribute statements, but for many this was an exercise that required some considerable thought. Figure 1 shows Dieter's faculty colleague, Will McClatchey, pondering the question.

In the end, I was surprised by the results.

Let me remind everyone that Dieter has an impressive record of research. Note for example that the textbook that he wrote with Professor Ellenberg, "Aims and Methods of Vegetation Ecology," has recently been reprinted. This means that there is a continuing demand for this book for over 30 years. That is an exceptional lifespan for an academic textbook. Such accomplishments can give a person a kind of "proper" or "reserved" demeanor. We describe such people as being "formal"

When I went to the faculty, I expected to hear that Dieter is very formal. Besides his publishing credits, he is a senior member of the community of botanists in Hawai`i. Being formal is not a bad characteristic. This just means that he would be more reserved than average.

If I expected to hear that Dieter is "formal," I was certainly wrong. The first person I talked to described Dieter as "very personable" –the opposite of formal. This general thought was repeated by nearly everyone. One colleague described Dieter as one of the few people who is genuinely interested in this person's research. Another faculty member said that Dieter is always asking about the person's family. Nobody thinks that Dieter is formal. He is the friend of everyone in the department, even the new faculty.

Many faculty members described how Dieter is involved in many projects. For example, he organizes lots of field trips and goes to great lengths to make sure that they are successful. Seeing him outdoors, working with people, is a trait that was often noted. Figure 2 shows Dieter in Samoa on the tree-top walkway during a field trip that involved students, professionals and faculty from all several Pacific island nations.

I believe that this characteristic of being deeply interested in other people is responsible for the faculty comment that he "pushes his young colleagues to do well." The individuals that get this attention are not just new faculty, but students and professional colleagues from all over the world. Figure 3 shows Dieter in a discussion with a Samoan researcher on one of the PABITRA field trips.

Dieter's career has centered on a number of large projects or themes. I can't remember a time when Dieter was without a major activity. As a result, all the faculty members noted that he is always active. One person described Dieter as "persistently active," a phrase that captures his unrelenting devotion to his work.

Dieter's projects have been significant. Some have focused on fundamental scientific questions, such as the transect study in Hawai`i Volcanoes National Park that tested theories of community organization. Other projects have tried to solve critical conservation questions, such as the 'Ohia Dieback Study which examined the causes of tree death and whether this was an issue in the long-term survival of the native forest. In all cases, Dieter not only worked hard on each project, but he made sure that everyone else knew about the project and, if possible, made a contribution to the effort. This characteristic produced the description "relentless crusader." The fact that Dieter has such a strong commitment to his projects also earned the faculty comment that he is "dedicated" to his work. If there is an objective measure of "dedication," then I'm sure Dieter ranks at the top of the scale.

The scope of Dieter's scientific studies has needed the broad involvement of many researchers. American universities are not very well structured to provide

for teamwork. As a result, getting collaboration requires considerable effort, something we sometime describe as “arm twisting.” One colleague noted that Dieter “engages others in his projects.” Other people said much the same thing, perhaps with slightly stronger words. His success at getting cooperation is shown, at least in part, by the impressive number of people who have been co-authors on his publications.

Together, these comments emphasize that Dieter has had large ideas, pursued them with considerable energy and convinced other researchers to join him in the search for understanding. But that is not enough. It is also vital that projects are completed. I can tell you from personal experience that Dieter pushes hard to make sure that projects are completed. For example, the Hawai`i project that was part of the International Biological Program (IBP) studies resulted in a synthesis volume. Figure 4 shows the cover of the synthesis volume, Island Ecosystems, produced as one of the research products of this study. This research synthesis would not have been completed if Dieter had not made sure that everyone finished their projects and submitted appropriate manuscripts. He gave up his weekends for many months to edit these contributions and see this project to a successful end.

Another descriptive term contributed by a faculty colleague is “generous.” I could give you many examples but will choose just one, in part because it is so timely. Dieter has been working very hard to make sure that students from across the Pacific will be able to attend the 47$^{th}$ Annual Symposium of the International Association of Vegetation Science. Figure 5 shows information from the symposium announcement. Dieter has done everything possible to get travel support, from writing proposals to private foundations to asking university administrators for funding. He has used his reputation and his time – in considerable quantity – to help other people so they can attend this meeting in Kona, Hawai`i.

Many people commented on Dieter’s level of activity. One said Dieter has “youthful enthusiasm,” while another expressed the same idea by saying that Dieter “doesn’t match his age.” You can see him in Figure 6 leading everyone on a recent field trip to Samoa. Notice that he is wearing white pants – and that they are clean. I don’t think that anyone has figured out how he goes through the same rain and mud as everyone else and is the only person to stay clean.

Dieter has always helped students. Figure 7 shows Dieter working with a Samoan student to learning how to use a GPS. I think this spirit was captured by the faculty comment that he is “deeply interested in other people.” The faculty member offering this comment was very insistent about this and singled Dieter out as having this characteristic.

A pair of faculty comments, “inspirational” and “visionary,” relate to many aspects of Dieter’s career. I believe that they were used to describe not only Dieter’s past

activities, but what he is currently doing. For example, it was his idea to build new teams of researchers based primarily on the skills of local researchers to support studies on Pacific islands. This has become the PABITRA network. The development of this network has motivated researchers in several island nations to assess, monitor and ultimately conserve their own environments. Dieter has been asked to describe this model for training and research in many international meetings.

Dieter has certainly been productive. For example, he has an immense number of publications. While asking my colleagues about Dieter, I was curious about how he might serve as a role model for young scientists. Several comments give a clue to his success. It was pointed out that Dieter is "focused without distraction," that he is "determined," and he has "single-minded curiosity." This type of behavior is all too rare in our world that is so full of distractions. We all need more focus, determination and curiosity.

One faculty member pointed out that Dieter "always asks the first question" in a seminar. It makes no difference what the topic of discussion. After the formal presentation, it is certain that Dieter will be the first person to raise a hand. And the questions he asks show that he was not only paying attention, but relating the topic to his own activities and interests. While this is a remarkable characteristic, it also identifies Dieter. At a recent seminar, a visitor ended his talk and prepared to answer questions. A hand shot up and the visitor said "You must be Dieter." He was right, of course.

Many graduate students have completed their degrees under Dieter's direction. One faculty member observed that Dieter has been a "major part of the Botany Department's graduate program." The theses and dissertations of Dieter's students fill an impressive amount of shelf space, as shown in Figure 8.

Dieter has spent most of his career working in the St John Plant Sciences Building at the University of Hawai`i at Manoa (Figure 9). That doesn't mean that he has stayed inside. Dieter is a field worker. An example of this is the book that he wrote with F. Raymond Fosberg, Vegetation of the Tropical Pacific Islands. The cover of this book is shown in Figure 10. There is something else that is special about this book. It has to do with dedication. As one faculty colleague said, Dieter "doesn't quit until it's done." This book, like so many of the other large projects, took years to research, synthesize and write.

I appreciate the opportunity to bring you these comments. I told you earlier that I was surprised by the observations made by the faculty. I think that my surprise came not realizing how many people have been touched by Dieter and the many ways that he has had such a positive influence.

The Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, Dr. Charles Hayes, asked me to convey his greetings (Figure 11). The entire faculty of the University of Hawai`i

at Manoa Botany Department also asked me to send their best wishes to this festive occasion (Figure 12).

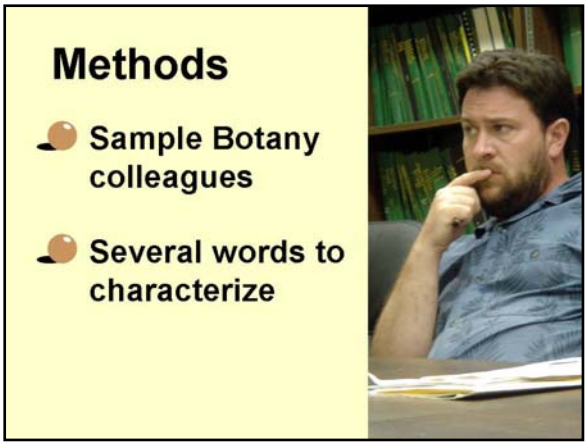


Figure 1. Dr. McClatchey pondering.

Figure 2. Dieter on canopy walk.


Figure 3. Dieter with a Samoan colleague.

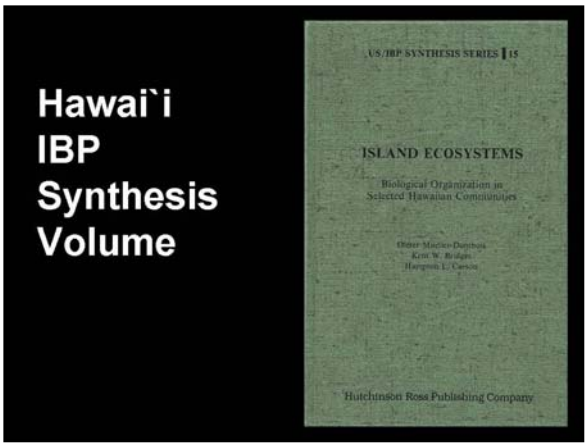


Figure 4. The IBP Synthesis volume.

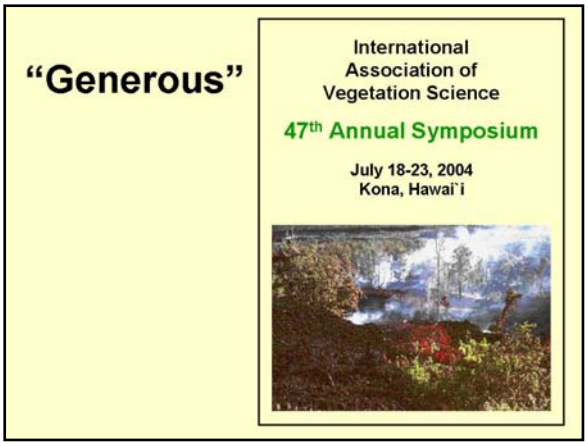


Figure 5. Notice of the IAVS meeting.

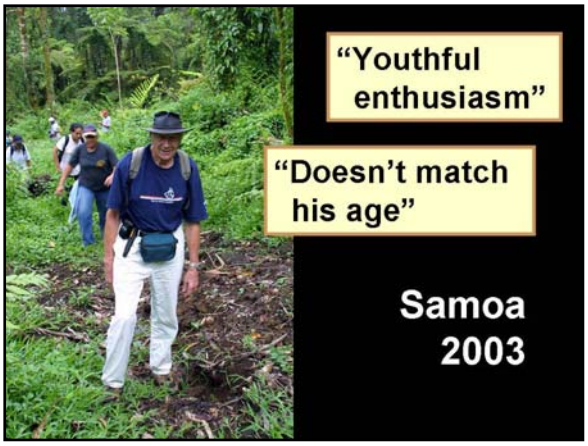


Figure 6. Dieter on a field trip in Samoa.


Figure 7. Dieter teaching about GPS.

Figure 8. Some theses and dissertations.


Figure 9. The Botany department at UH.

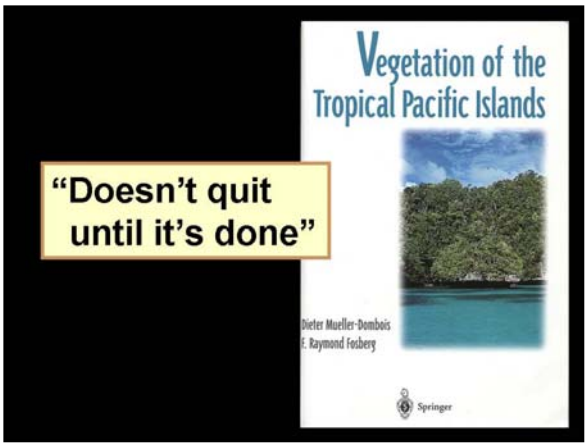


Figure 10. A recent book.

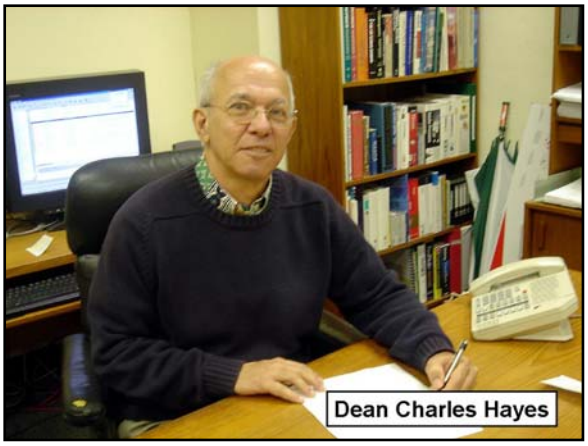


Figure 11. Dean of the College of Natural Science.

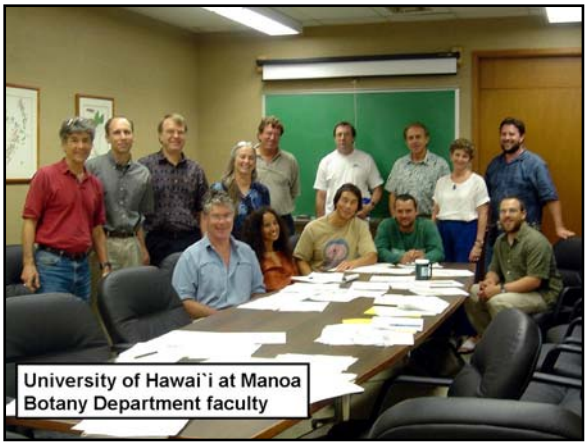


Figure 12. UH Manoa Botany faculty.