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Dr Jennifer Anne (Jenny) Chappill,
1959–2006

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DEDICATION
Dr Jennifer Anne (Jenny) Chappill
1959–2006



We dedicate this issue of *NUYTSIA* to the memory of our friend and colleague, Jennifer Anne Chappill. Jenny made significant contributions to both our knowledge of the Western Australian flora and to the local systematics community, and it is fitting that she be honoured in this way.

Jenny began her career at the University of Melbourne, initially studying Zoology before moving across to plant systematics via a study of one section of *Eucalyptus*, under the supervision of Dr (now Professor) Pauline Ladiges. She then completed a prestigious postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard University, before taking up a lectureship in the Botany Department at the University of Western Australia. Here she remained until her death in August 2006.

Jenny brought with her a passion for systematics matched by an intellectual rigour and fearlessness that saw her take on some difficult tasks with alacrity. Her papers testify to her strongly held belief that systematics should be a truly scientific endeavour (eg. Humphries and Chappill 1988), complete with explicit and testable hypotheses (Chappill 1995) and serious consideration of the theoretical and philosophical basis of the discipline (Humphries and Chappill 1988, Chappill 1989).

In her study of legume phylogeny, Jenny committed herself to a major undertaking well suited to her innate persistence and tenacity. In both her own work on *Jacksonia* and other legumes, and in collaboration with her students on such varied groups as Malvaceae, Stylidiaceae, Proteaceae, Ericaceae and bryophytes, Jenny made important and timely contributions to our knowledge of the local and wider Australian flora.

Her role as teacher was one that Jenny took seriously. As a new academic, she had a clear vision of how she wanted to develop the teaching of systematics at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, and she worked tirelessly to bring this to fruition. She resolutely maintained the position that plant systematics – as opposed to study of theory-free plant diversity and identification – retains a central place in the education of modern botanists and conservation biologists. Jenny was also unwavering in her view of morphology as a prime source of phylogenetic data, and ensured her students were highly skilled in the delimitation and analysis of morphological characters.

Jenny supervised most of our recent Western Australian graduates with higher degrees in plant systematics. As a result of her commitment to excellence, our community contains a group of highly trained systematists who are strongly grounded in systematic theory and taxonomic practice, and with significant skills in morphology and anatomy at a time when these skills are becoming scarce.

This may well prove to be her most significant long-term contribution to systematics, and it is my belief that the retention of her highly trained graduates in WA, as practising systematists, will be the most significant memorial we can offer to Jenny and her work.

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