

In Memory of Gill Conquest

Date : May 16, 2017

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Gill Conquest on May 5, 2017.



Gill was an exceptional student and an exceptional person. Her interests were broad-ranging, extending well beyond the academic through performances of traditional stories and pantomimes, to writing plays and science fiction, sailing and playing games, and to music and dancing, all alongside her passionate commitment to developing the interfaces of technology and citizenship to support cultural and ecological diversity. She brought a sense of wonder and fun to all of her activities, embracing new experiences and opportunities at every chance with good humour and enthusiasm.

Gill joined the anthropology department as a Masters student in Anthropology, Environment and Development in 2011. Her masters' dissertation examined the potential of new technologies to support environmental justice movements led by indigenous peoples. The success of this research led to her recruitment as a PhD student in 2013 to study the Extreme Citizen Science project ([ExCiteS](#)) supervised by Jerome Lewis and Haidy Geismar. Characteristically, her research project crossed many disciplinary and international boundaries, as she undertook fieldwork with groups of Indigenous peoples in the Congo Basin AND the computer scientists/anthropologists working with them to develop mobile applications to address pressing issues that they identified. Working in Congo Brazzaville, Central African Republic and DR Congo she examined how different ways for expressing environmental knowledge by disparate groups such as Pygmy hunter-gatherers, forest farmers, commercial loggers and international conservation NGOs could be organised so as to interact more equally to reduce discrimination and biases in representation. Her fieldwork, and the anthropological perspectives she was developing, were groundbreaking; interrogating the idea of a pluriverse and how facilitating and supporting it might translate in anthropological practice, and as digital technologies and tools. She contributed to the development of new ways for presenting these knowledges side by side so that more just and environmentally sound management decisions are made concerning the exploitation of forest people's land and resources.

Diagnosed with late stage cancer in 2016 Gill approached her illness with dignity, courage and positivity, bringing out the best in the community of friends and family that surrounded her until the end. We want to mark here the significant impact Gill has had on those staff and students lucky enough to have known her in the anthropology department. We will continue to honour her memory with a number of different activities over the upcoming months. In the meantime, our thoughts and condolences are with Gill's friends and family.

Gill received great support from both the Shine Cancer Support charity, who seek to provide help specifically to young adults diagnosed with cancer, as well as from Macmillan Cancer Support. She had planned to participate in future events to fundraise for them. If you wish to make a donation to either of these charities this can be done [here](#). The family have also requested that donations be given to these charities in lieu of flowers. Finally, family and friends are also planning events in memory of Gill. If you are interested in receiving news of those as they are worked out then please email uniteandconquest@gmail.com.