

Robert E. Johannes collection at PIMRIS (Pacific Islands Marine Resources Information System)

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Robert E. Johannes (1936–2002) devoted much of his working life to research in communities in the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia. His personal books and papers were donated to the University of the South Pacific (USP) after his death, and are now held in the PIMRIS collection, in the university's Lower Campus library. These books and copies of periodicals have already been processed by the PIMRIS library (with generous assistance from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community), and are available to the public via the library's catalogue.

However, Bob Johannes' extensive sub-collection of grey literature (maps, letters, field notes, unpublished articles, original articles and reports) remains unprocessed: it requires formal archiving and digitising. This sub-collection is stored temporarily in six, four-drawer filing cabinets, but has to be organised and processed according to correct archiving requirements. After that, full and unrestricted access can be provided to this important source of scientific heritage and traditional knowledge. The processing of the grey literature will start in 2009. Digitising the primary documents from this collection will expand its accessibility to the global fisheries and maritime anthropological community, among others, which we hope will encourage both respect for traditional Pacific resource knowledge and enhance the sustainability of marine resources in the region.

The unique nature of the Bob Johannes' archives was confirmed by Pacific Manuscripts Bureau

executive archivist, Mr Ewan Maidment, who visited PIMRIS in February 2008. The academic staff of USP's School of Marine Studies also acknowledges its value, although the uniqueness of the reprints and pre- and semi-published documents has to be assessed, since many of them contain Bob's personal notes and corrections. Processing the archives includes classifying and identifying the unique primary material.

However, lack of staff and funds at USP have held up organising and digitising, to create a digital repository that will be available on the USP library website. Unfortunately, we have not yet been able to identify a donor to cover both the expenses of the technical staff who will digitise the materials and a Scientific Adviser. Such financial support would also have to cover the cost of a one-week training course in archival techniques and procedures for the library staff involved in the project. (The course could be conducted by the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau's archivist.)

Pacific Islanders and many others have long been greatly influenced by Bob Johannes' published works and lectures. Perhaps just an equally important body of knowledge may lie hidden in his archives. Yet we will never know unless they are first investigated, accessed and documented. Searching for knowledge and respecting the legacy of a pioneer drive our application for urgently needed funds to undertake this final processing of Bob Johannes' papers.

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PIMRIS is a joint project of five international organisations concerned with fisheries and marine resource development in the Pacific Islands region. The project is executed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the University of the South Pacific (USP), the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), and the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). This bulletin is produced by SPC as part of its commitment to PIMRIS. The aim of PIMRIS is to improve the



availability of information on marine resources to users in the region, so as to support their rational development and management. PIMRIS activities include: the active collection, cataloguing and archiving of technical documents, especially ephemera ("grey literature"); evaluation, repackaging and dissemination of information; provision of literature searches, question-and-answer services and bibliographic support; and assistance with the development of in-country reference collections and databases on marine resources.