

GSD Long Service Recognition – Profiles

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 31 October 2013 10:08 - Last Updated Tuesday, 19 July 2016 12:24



On Friday, November 1st, 2013, Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Geoscience Division (GSD), would be celebrating 11 current and former staff members who have dedicated 20 years or more to the organisation. In the days leading up to the ceremony, GSD will publish interviews of the 11 individuals, which gives an unprecedented insight into the history, advancements in service delivery and progression of technology not only within GSD, but also throughout the Pacific region.

Staff Profiles

[Sekove Motuiwaca](#) 1980-present

[Russell Howorth](#)

1979-2013

[Mereseini Lala Bukarau](#)

1985-present

[Unaisi Bainiloga](#) 1987-present

[Salestino Niu Daurewa](#)

1987-present

[Laisa Baoa](#)

1987-present

[Enele Gaunavou](#)

1988-present

[Setareki Ratu](#)

1986-2011

[Robert Smith](#)

1989-present

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[Peni Musunamasi](#) 1989-present

[Litia Waradi](#) 1989-present

Salestino Niu Daurewa



1987-present

What position(s) have you held at GSD?

I have been working at GSD as an office assistant since joining in 1987.

What is the biggest change you've noticed over the years?

There were fewer buildings and more compounds when I began work at GSD. There was only the main reception building and the current DRP front building. Now we have more buildings, a smaller compound and less parking. Also, I notice that people are not as disciplined about punctuality as they used to be. For 26 years, I have begun promptly at 6 am opening all GSD offices, lights and turning on air con.

What do you like about working at GSD?

I have loved my job at GSD since the first day I started. I always commit to every major and minor office duty required of me. I am very proud that former and current Directors almost always ask me to pray for meals whenever there is a staff function.

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What is your favourite GSD memory?

My favourite memory is when I attended the GSD Commission annual meeting in Nadi in 2010 and I was asked to open the session with a prayer.

What other memories stand out in your mind?

One of my most terrifying moments at GSD was during the 1987 coup. Soldiers entered GSD in numbers, climbed over roofs and prepped their guns surveying the military barracks. No one was injured or directly threatened but the presence of soldiers with guns was enough to traumatise some staff.

Another was the shooting at the military barracks in the 2006 coup. This greatly terrified the GSD staff. Evacuation began immediately as the shooting started. Gauna (GSD Driver) spent the day transporting staffs away from danger to their respective homes. I am grateful to have survived the coups.

Peni Musunamasi



1989-present

What position(s) have you held at GSD?

I began working for GSD in 1989. I've travelled up the ranks at GSD. I started as an assistant electronic technician, all the way up to senior electronic technician. I then became acting electronic engineer, electronic engineer, and now I'm Team Leader for the Technical Workshop. We used to be two officers, but I now have five staff under me.

How has your work changed over the years?

The changes in technology have really transformed our work. We used to use a trisponder system to pinpoint our position out at sea. There was no GPS back then. You'd have to go up to the mountains, carrying heavy batteries and solar panels. Then when you were at sea, all of a sudden, your station might cut off. You would have to stop the survey, get off the boat and climb the mountain to see what had gone wrong. Now, we have a Marinestar navigation system we can take with us on the boat that corrects itself. Shipping and accessibility around the region has really changed as well. I went to PNG on a survey in 1990 with the trisponder system in nine big boxes. Now I can take a whole GPS system with me in my carryon.

What do you like about working at GSD?

I've worked under many different directors and different environments, but I am happy where I am today. I've learned a lot and have received a lot of training to learn technologies and keep up with the updates. It's been good because only through experience can we continue to upgrade our expertise and the services we provide to member countries.

What is your favourite GSD memory?

The best memories are the struggles I have gone through to be where I am today.

What advice would you give to new GSD staff?

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My advice to new staff members is 'patience is a virtue.' Good things don't come easily as you need to earn these by having patience and being a responsible Team Player.

Mereseini Lala Bukarau



1985-present

What position(s) have you held at GSD?

I was previously the librarian at Mineral Resources Department then started with GSD in 1985. I took over from the head of Publications and Library with the title "Documentalist" under the UN mineral prospecting project (that was the start of GSD) and to this day, I still am teased about that title. In 1987, the job was split, separating the Publications component from the Library component. Without hesitation, I chose Publications. In 1992, after a Technical Editor was recruited, I became an Assistant Editor. In 1996 I was coerced to take on the Publications Coordinator/Editor, taking care of Publications, including graphics as there was no graphic artist then.

What do you like about working at GSD?

I have nothing to compare it to, really. When I was younger, the opportunity to travel was a privilege, to see the Pacific, and learn Fiji's 'place' in it. After visiting places like Tarawa in the 90s, I made sure to eat all my vegetables and fruit with a new appreciation for all the blessings we have here. Mind you it is the Republic of Kiribati that impresses me the most, out of all the member nations, in their use of regional mechanisms to address their national interests. No other country comes close.

What is your favourite GSD memory?

Not so much my favourite but definitely an outstanding memory was when the Technical Editor left and I was told to do the job, "sink or swim," by Philipp Muller, with no raise in pay, mind you! I remember rehearsing for days and eventually working up the courage to make an appointment to ask for a fair wage! I eventually got it, but this was the defining incident of transition from worker bee to professional staff, where I understood I was on a career path and that no one else was going to speak up for me.

What do you see as GSD's greatest asset?

The data. All employees here have to understand how valuable the bank of information we keep here is to the Pacific island nations. When we all leave here, the data will still exist.

What would be your advice to any new staff at GSD?

Listen more and talk less. Remember the island nations in whose name and for whom SPC does work and that there will be times that they will need shepherding and that organisations like ours exist because of the so-called lack of capacity in these nations. Sometimes we can complain and wish that they had their act together more; however, if this were the case then our services would NOT be required by them.

Sekove Motuiwaca

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