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Ron Johnston

Justin Fisher and Charles Pattie

This issue of *Political Studies Review* features an extended review article by Ron Johnston on electoral reform. The paper reveals much about Ron – his encyclopaedic knowledge of elections and election systems, and his ability to draw on many academic disciplines: in this case, geography, political science and history. He was a pioneering interdisciplinary scholar.

Ron sadly passed away in May 2020. He was a giant not only in his home discipline of geography, but also in political science. His intellectual range was vast and made important and fundamental contributions in many areas. In political science alone, he demonstrated the electoral importance of candidate spending when the focus of many was on the national campaign; demonstrated with admirable clarity the electoral biases in constituency boundaries, and injected much needed empirical analysis into debates about electoral reform – the subject of this paper. As a human geographer, Ron made major contributions not only through his work on electoral geography but also in political geography more widely and on the social geography of cities. He was also one of the foremost historians of academic geography – another outlet for his extraordinary intellectual breadth. In 1999 he was awarded the Prix Vautrin Lud, the geographers' Nobel. His work was widely used and admired not just by academics, but by policy-makers and legislators around the world.

Despite his magnificent academic achievements, Ron was always keen to promote and boost the work of others. He was a regular attendee of academic conferences – not just to present his own work, but to listen to that of others and to make helpful contributions. And all those who met him found him to be warm, friendly and always ready to engage in humorous conversation. Ron loved to crack a joke and he brightened many a conference with his witticisms. He was also as happy talking about his other passions such as bell-ringing (on which he had written several books) and his beloved Swindon Town.

In addition to all this brilliant work, Ron was intensely collegial. At every University at which he worked, he played a full role. And, he helped and mentored countless colleagues in the profession – we are both extremely grateful recipients of his wisdom, encouragement and tremendously useful advice. We – and many others – cannot thank him enough. Ron's legacy, beyond his outstanding academic achievements, are countless colleagues who have gone on to achieve a great deal across a range of disciplines, in part because of Ron's encouragement. Few of us will achieve anything like as much as Ron. But every single one of us has reason to be grateful that he helped us along the way.