

Brief Speech at the second Annual Dinner of the Jan Pentland Foundation, 19 May 2011

Dr David Morawetz

(Clinical and counselling psychologist, and former partner of Jan)

I'd like to start by saying to those of you from Financial Counselling Australia (formerly AFCCRA) and elsewhere who managed to get the funding for the financial counselling sector continued at the same level for the next four years — Congratulations! Jan would have been so proud of you. What a fantastic effort!

I had an economics professor once who handed out a reading list for his course that had on it about 100 books and articles that we were supposed to read that semester. About half of them had an asterisk next to them to indicate that they were "Optional".

A classmate of mine asked the professor: "How many of the optional ones do we have to read?"

The professor said:

"When I was growing up, my father said to me:

'Son, in this house, everything that is optional is compulsory.'

In one important respect, that was how Jan lived her life. When it came to helping the disadvantaged, for Jan, everything that was optional was compulsory.

Jan grew up very disadvantaged. So she knew in her bones what it feels like to be disadvantaged, and what it feels like to be disrespected because you are disadvantaged.

So wherever Jan was, whatever she was doing, if she saw a possibility that she might be able to make life better for someone who was disadvantaged, or for the disadvantaged as a group, she felt compelled to do something about it. Doing nothing was simply not an option. What others might have seen as optional, Jan saw as compulsory.

This was particularly so with regard to mentoring. Let me give you just one embarrassing example.

Just two years and three months ago, Jan and I were visiting Tanzania and

Uganda. In one of the magnificent game parks in Tanzania, we had a superb Tanzanian African driver-guide by the name of Richard.

Richard was extremely knowledgeable about the animals, where we were likely to find them, and what they were likely to be doing. He had great patience; we once sat for more than half an hour watching fascinated as a lioness played with her cubs. Richard had interesting things to say about Tanzanian society and politics. And in addition to all of that, he was a very special human being.

Richard was with us for a couple of days, and when we parted, Jan and I asked him for his card so we could give his email address to any friends who might be planning to visit Tanzania. Richard needed the work, and we were very happy to recommend him.

A couple of months later, back in Melbourne, we did indeed have a friend who was going to Tanzania. I was in charge of Richard's card — but I couldn't find it. I searched everywhere, everywhere -- but I just couldn't find it.

When I finally told Jan very sheepishly that I couldn't find Richard's card, she gave me one of her looks. Jan didn't give me that look too often, but she gave it to me then. It was a look that said, with or without accompanying words:

"Oh! I am so DISAPPOINTED in YOU!"

I later found Richard's card, and all was well — but this small example illustrates how, no matter where Jan was and no matter what she was doing, she never missed an opportunity to mentor people, to help people take the next step along their path.

So Jan would be delighted that her mentoring continues with the Jan Pentland Scholarship and the Jan Pentland Prize, even after Jan herself is no longer with us.

I am sure that Jan would be delighted with the choice of Sandra Blake for the Jan Pentland Scholarship, especially because of the voluntary work Sandra has already done with refugees, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and rural and remote residents, empowering them to help themselves. And Jan would be delighted with the selection of Kat Lane for the Jan Pentland Prize for her magnificent, user-friendly Credit Law Tool-Kit.

Just before I finish:

Jan had a special handwritten book of quotes — sayings which she collected during the last 25 years of her life. I'd like to share a short one with you. It is by Robert Ward, and it's called "I Wish for You". I am sure Jan would wish all of these things for all of you here this evening:

"I wish you the courage to be warm when the world would wish that you be cool.

I wish you success sufficient to your needs — and failure to temper that success.

I wish you joy in all your days — and sadness that you may better measure joy.

I wish you gladness — to overbalance grief.

I wish you humour and a twinkle in your eye.

I wish you glory — and the strength to bear its burdens.

I wish you peace in the world in which you live, and in the smallest corner of your heart where truth is kept.

I wish you faith, to help define your living and your life.

More I cannot wish you — except perhaps love, to make all the rest worthwhile."

Thank you.

Dr David Morawetz