To start I would like to recognize the contributions that Emeritus Professor Michael John Renny Gaffikin made to the Accounting Education in Australia and to the wider community across the globe. Professor Gaffikin was the Chairperson of the National Education and Membership Advisory Committee of CPA Australia (1995-2000); Chairperson of the Universities Committee, CPA Australia NSW Division (1994-2007); Vice President Education of the Accounting Association of Australia and New Zealand (1992-1997); Trustee of the Academy of Accounting Historians (1995-2000) and its Vice President (International and Conferences 2004 and 2005), Vice President Research of the Public Interest Sector of the American Accounting Association (1999-2001); member of the Task Force for Review of Accreditation of University Accounting programs (1994-1997).

Michael infused accounting education with a critical perspective both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, making critical thinking a key element in the education of accountants. He successfully supervised 41 PhD candidates and through this he established a community of scholars that are scattered worldwide. Michael published over 100 refereed journal articles, numerous books and book chapters. From 1988, until his retirement in 2006, Michael contributed as Head of School and Associate Dean (Research) at the University of Wollongong.

On an international note, I can do no better than relate my experiences travelling to a conference with Professor Gaffikin to a conference in Bali. Aside from this very senior professor taking an interest in, and encouraging, many of the young Indonesian and Malaysian scholars presenting, many senior academics and policy makers were in attendance. They gathered around Michael Gaffikin like groupies around a rock star. Michael had supervised a large number of PhD candidates, many of whom were from Asia. This opportunity for education with Michael as their supervisor had made their careers, and given the opportunity to explore qualitative research that they would not have dreamed of before meeting Michael.

These formerly young PhD candidates are now professors, teachers and government officials. It was as if Michael Gaffikin had run a one-man foreign aid and outreach program for decades. And, being Michael, he was disarmingly modest about this achievement, while taking sheepish delight in the success of his protégées. Michael Gaffikin, from an Australian national perspective, improved Australia’s status and forged friendly relations with now-powerful leaders throughout Asia. This one man did so much to benignly extend Australia’s influence and build bridges of friendship that transcended race and gender. And what did they call him? It was a play on Michael’s surname. They called him The King.

Ciorstan Smark, PhD
University of Wollongong