Douglas John Boland

Born Inverell, NSW, 7 May 1947; died Sydney 31 May 2001

Doug Boland had a distinguished and unusual professional career in forestry research. His was a career of many parts – the polished forester, the accomplished botanist, the writer, the social scientist, the cross-cultural networker and the internationally respected forest genetic resource specialist. He was a generous man who respected his co-workers and drew pride from his family.

Doug was born in the NSW country town of Inverell, the son of John and Vida Boland and brother of Greg and Mary-Lynne. The family moved to Nambucca Heads in 1957 and Doug attended Macksville High School. He gained a Commonwealth Forestry Scholarship in 1965 and this encouraged his tertiary studies at the University of New England, following which he completed his BSc (Forestry) at the Australian Forestry School and the Australian National University in 1968.

Upon graduation, Doug was offered a job in what was known as the Seed Section of the then Forest Research Institute in Canberra; this group has now become the CSIRO Australian Tree Seed Centre. He was proud to be a professional forester and was a member of the Institute of Foresters of Australia for over 30 years.

His botanical training began with the completion of a Master's degree in Botany from the Australian National University on the taxonomy of *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*. He was curator of CSIRO's herbarium collection of eucalypts, and wrote and researched widely, describing ten new taxa of *Eucalyptus*. His botanical interests led to his later studies of species native to Africa and Asia. His interest in floral biology was a thread through his scientific career – one of his last projects was a study of the flowering and seed production of red cedar.

As a writer, he was prolific. He was senior editor and co-author of some major books - *Forest Trees of Australia*, *Eucalyptus Seed* and *Eucalyptus Leaf Oils* have become standard texts in their field. *Forest Trees of Australia* was described by eminent botanist and authority on Australian flora Dr Willis as 'An excellent and important work … so well conceived that I can suggest no way of improving it.'

His thoughtful and original writing led to the award of the Institute of Foresters of Australia's Hedges Prize in 1983 for his paper *Selection of Australian trees other than eucalypts for trials as fuelwood species in developing countries*. Much of the early work conducted jointly by CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and overseas partners flowed from this paper and resulted in the identification of several useful Australian tree species. For example, *Acacia crassicarpa* is now widely planted in tropical countries, with some 50 000 ha of commercial plantations in Indonesia alone. This species' current popularity among farmers in east Africa is a direct consequence of early work that Doug led.

In 1984, Doug travelled to Brazil, Spain and South Africa on a Churchill Fellowship to examine the commercial use of Australian eucalypts. His findings from this trip helped the Australian Tree Seed Centre formulate seed collecting strategies to best meet the needs of Australian industry.

Doug's success as a leader of multi-cultural, multi-country research projects was internationally recognized and led to his appointment to the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) in Nairobi for four years from 1991 to 1994. This in turn led to his participation in the extensive international research network in plant genetic resources. He developed the Germplasm Resource Centre at ICRAF, and for this and other contributions he was awarded an ICRAF Certificate of Merit for Research Achievement.

Following his work with poor farmers in Africa, Doug brought a refreshing level of social science thinking to conventional studies of forest genetic resources. He designed and conducted rapid rural appraisal surveys to examine priorities for forest genetic resources use and conservation in 30 village communities in Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.

In the latter part of his career, Doug was a self-described forest genetic resources specialist. This formed a logical link with his early work at the Australian Tree Seed Centre where he led expeditions to collect tree seed in Irian Jaya, Papua New Guinea and the mountains and deserts of Australia. This practical experience was put to good use in Africa, where he travelled to many countries to coordinate collections of indigenous fruit trees such as the bush mango, and in the Pacific. To the CSIRO Australian Tree Seed Centre, he introduced the concept of tree domestication – a process through which a species is brought from the wild into cultivation and productive use - a process that most importantly involves ordinary people such as farmers as well as scientists.

His great sense of fairness made him a champion of equity in the sharing of genetic resources; he developed Material Transfer Agreements to cover the ownership and intellectual property issues involved in international exchange of tree seeds that are now used by CSIRO and other agencies. He cared greatly for his colleagues and acted as a mentor to those in the formative years of their careers. He was relaxed with and respectful of other cultures and enjoyed many friendships with co-workers in Asia, Africa and the Pacific.

Doug is survived by his wife Carol and children Mark, Lara and Chantelle. He drew strength, confidence and creativity from the family he loved. He balanced the demands of work and family - a challenge that is rarely confronted with such obvious success in today's busy world.

Doug Boland will be remembered as a warm and generous man, and a consummate and widely-respected professional in all of these many parts. His creativity and his provocative and original thinking contributed greatly to the people with whom he worked. He has left a proud legacy to the forestry profession - in the immediate future through important projects with Australian and overseas partners; well-trained, skilled and motivated colleagues; high professional standards; expanded scientific knowledge and an enhanced acceptance of different disciplines, countries and cultures. As a profession, we were privileged to have known him, and he will be greatly missed.

Stephen Midgley

Canberra