

## ASSH FELLOW CITATION: COLIN TATZ

One of the happiest weeks of my life, was spent in the company of Colin Tatz. Following the 1999 ASSH conference in Queenstown, Colin and I sat together in Dunedin and polished the final draft of our book *One-Eyed: A View of Australian Sport*. There is no one better with whom to exchange ideas, and there was much excitement and pleasure as we crafted the text. Thus, when Richard Cashman asked me to present an ASSH fellowship, I was only too glad to accept. The award goes, of course, to my co-author, who also happened to be my PhD supervisor, and who remains a mentor, confidante, comrade, and great friend, Colin Tatz.

Professor Tatz, Officer of the Order of Australia, and holder of an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Natal University, is currently an Adjunct Professor at Macquarie University, and Director of the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of New South Wales.

Colin has played a major role in, and has been a powerful influence on, sport history in Australia. His roles and influence have covered administration, undergraduate teaching, post-graduate supervision, community service, and critical scholarship. The institutional foundations of Australian sport history, were laid in the mid-1980s; Colin was a key player. Between 1985 and 1987 he served as the first president of ASSH. Following his presidency, Colin remained on the executive until the mid-1990s.

As Professor of Politics at Macquarie University, Colin gave the fledgling ASSH intellectual credibility in the face scholarly snobbery. Peers could not easily dismiss his scholarly articles on sport in mainstream journals such as *Social Alternatives*, *Current Affairs Bulletin*, and *The Australian Quarterly*. Colin also gave sports studies vital public visibility in the early 1980s; between 1980 and 1983 he wrote nineteen feature articles on sport for the *Australian*.

Colin introduced sport studies into mainstream academe at Macquarie University; in 1984 he began teaching what quickly became a very popular second year course titled "Race, Politics, and Sport". Graduate students were attracted to Colin who has a deserved reputation as a serious and dedicated teacher. And Colin captained a good ship: Tom Armstrong's PhD on Australian government sport policy still remains the seminal text on the subject; under Colin's guidance Tom helped debunk numerous myths about state-sponsored sport in Australia.

As mentioned earlier, Colin supervised my PhD. He was the very best of the best. It is, of course, easy for the worldly, accomplished professor to seduce the starry-eyed student. But after fifteen years of working together I can swear that he is a master craftsman and scholar. As well as throwing 110 percent effort into everything, Colin's genius is his ability to add fresh insights and clarity to old problems.

It is very difficult to separate Colin's community work from his scholarship. Regular public lectures, radio interviews, and opinion pieces in Australian broadsheets give a hint to Colin's real vocation: Colin is an activist educator; his political leanings are those of a radical liberal—liberal in the noble senses of Jean Jacques Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, Morris Ginsberg and John Rawls, *not* the version appropriated by Australian arch-conservatives like little Johnny Howard. Colin has worked tirelessly in the promotion of social justice, and the elimination of discrimination in all its forms and guises. The exemplar of Colin's community service and scholarship is his Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame, a work put together with his son, Paul (as an aside, Paul designed the ASSH logo). As well as touring Australia to critical acclaim, the Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame resides in two books, *Black Diamonds* and *Black Gold*.

After nearly twenty years of researching in race and politics, Colin added sport to what became his hallmark trilogy. Colin's "Race, Politics and Sport" leads the very first edition of *Sporting Traditions*. That article—still earning plaudits nearly 20 years on—was a revision of his inaugural professorial lecture given at Macquarie.

Without doubt Colin's *magnum opus* is *Obstacle Race: Aborigines in Sport* published by the University of New South Wales Press. *Obstacle Race* won the Australian Human Rights Award for non-fiction in 1995. The first three chapters of *Obstacle Race* are titled "The Legacy", "Questions", and "Inside History, Outside History"; they are Colin Tatz at his absolute best. In 43 pages, he exposes the fallacies, myths, untruths, inconsistencies and hypocrisy propagated by Australia's racist alliance of miners, pastoralists, big business, conservative politicians, newspaper editors, and radio talk-back philosopher kings. He rebukes and castigates them all.

Colin has written the histories of two golf clubs, *Royal Sydney* and *Monash*. While they stem from his attachment to the game, these two histories demonstrate one of Colin's great talents; his ability to turn a sow's ear into a silk purse. *Royal Sydney* is the template for turning mundane, ordinary, and uninspiring history, into a work of genuine scholarly and public interest.

Colin's principal explanatory paradigm is context. Nothing is more fundamental to history than context. Context provides the essential background for understanding the past; it is certainly the essence of understanding sport. No one has grasped this better than Colin; his every work is a shining example. As he elegantly puts it in his *Monash* history, the Monash Country Club "is a significant slice of Australian history—of prejudice and anti-prejudice; of meanness and generosity; of cultural, psychological, social and physical hurdles to be overcome, before being able to confront another of life's difficult obstacles—golf."

Colin Tatz's contribution to sport history has been immense. But it is remarkable for another reason; aside from a few brief spells, sport has never been Colin's primary area of teaching or research. During his involvement in sport history he continued his research into Aboriginal politics; he also expanded his interests into genocide. Recent publications in these two areas include:

- two volumes of *Genocide Perspectives*,
- *Aboriginal Suicide is Different*, and
- *With Intent to Destroy: Reflecting on Genocide*.

Colin is a particularly generous person in a host of ways; he is especially generous in acknowledging the contributions of others. And he will be the first to acknowledge that his successes are dual successes shared with Sandra. Colin and Sandra Tatz are a gold-medal team.

Colin Tatz has made longstanding and diverse contributions to ASSH; this fellowship recognises his work.

Please join with me in congratulating Colin Tatz on this ASSH fellowship.

Douglas Booth  
University of Waikato