

The Sydney PEN Award is presented annually to an individual who has worked especially hard to promote the centre's values and the PEN Charter. The winner is nominated and voted by Sydney PEN's management committee, and made possible by the generosity of Sydney PEN member Jane Morgan with the support of Mr Charles Wolf at The Pen Shop, Sydney.

In previous years the Sydney PEN Award has recognized Chip Rolley, Nicholas Jose and Rosie Scott. In 2009 we are pleased and proud to present the Award to Dr Denise Leith. Denise has studied, written and taught in international relations. As an Honorary Associate of Macquarie University, she has worked in the areas of Middle Eastern Politics, Australian Foreign Policy and Australian Politics and International Relations. She is author of *The Politics of Power: Freeport in Suharto's Indonesia* (University of Hawaii Press, 2003) and *Bearing Witness: The Lives of War Correspondents and Photojournalists*, and is currently working on two new books: her first novel, *Salt Water*, and a non-fiction work on Rwanda, *A Season to Live*.

Denise helped to establish the Sydney PEN Award in 2006, so it seems fitting that it now exists to recognize how, as her peer Rosie Scott says, "she fulfils the criteria of outstanding support and commitment to the aims, values and ideals of PEN in every way". Denise spent five and a half years on Sydney PEN's management committee, in that time taking on the important responsibility for being its "memory" and particularly supporting the Writers In Detention Committee. Here's what Rosie had to share in reflecting on Denise's achievements for PEN:

She is a tireless, creative and passionate worker, generous, public-spirited and hard working. Her trademark wit, intellect and down to earth comments enlivened committee meetings for me - always honest and astute...She is the kind of person who never worries about getting credit - and whose ego never gets in the way of her work, another rare attribute.

Her support for the Writers in Detention Committee was an essential aspect of its success - she was effective, committed and always there when you needed her. Her presence on the all-night vigil outside the Immigration Department in support of Sarath Amarasinghe with Tom Keneally and I meant that we were all still laughing at 4 in the morning even after a long, cold and sleepless night.

Rosie also highlights two of Denise's most significant legacies. Joining Chip Rolley to represent Sydney PEN at the PEN International World Congress in Bled in June 2005, Denise initiated a resolution condemning attacks on journalists with impunity, which was passed by the Assembly. Jane Morgan points out that it was in the research for her thesis and *Bearing Witness* where Denise discovered much evidence of the human rights violations carried out by the Indonesian military, which led to her formulating the resolution. Despite opposition, she was able to get this issue tabled and to use her expertise to successfully lobby its approval. Secondly, her efforts in nominating PEN for the Australian Human Rights Commission awards resulted in the 2004 Human Rights Community Award being awarded to PEN Australia.

In the words of Jane Morgan, Denise possesses an "innate passion for the truth in all things...She's one of the most courageous people I know."

Thank you to Rosie Scott, Jane Morgan and Mara Moustafine for their insights into Denise's contribution to PEN; and congratulations on behalf of Sydney PEN to Dr Denise Leith.