

It is given to few men to make an impact on their fellows as memorable as that made by Duncan MacMurray MacCallum. Never, in the popular view, an eminent man, never a prolific writer, nor even a widely acclaimed scholar, he possessed in abundance those gifts of mind and heart that make a man memorable among those who knew him for the good that he stood for and the good that he did.

MacCallum made of scholarship much more than a profession; the standards of scholarship were also the ethical standards by which he lived his life. Those who do not understand this will always miss the essential MacCallum; historical scholarship, to him, was not just another learned profession: it was much more. In it he found those standards of truth and justice, honesty and equity, integrity and charity that a good man might strive to make his own.

MacCallum was a member of the Department of History in the University of Sydney for 22 years. Throughout that time he bore the principal responsibility for teaching undergraduate courses in Australian history. In 1949, when he became a Lecturer in History, our knowledge of Australian history was decidedly thin. MacCallum decided to teach close to the sources through which he was framing a new and distinctive course. He had to find his way carefully among the broad generalizations of earlier historians of Australia, the multitude of untapped sources awaiting scholarly research, and the needs of students who studied with him. Often enough, the students knew no Australian history at all, or had not studied it since their early days in secondary school. MacCallum's courses were always at the frontiers of knowledge, sometimes too arduously so for students accustomed to the better known histories of Western Europe and the United States of America.

Believing in the standards of scholarship as he did, both as professional principle and as moral imperative, MacCallum was an exacting teacher. Fortunately, he had great personal modesty, a lively sense of humour and real kindness of heart. His standards were rigorous but he was generous, even benign, to those who tried to meet them, even if their efforts fell short of his expectations.

Meticulous and imaginative in scholarship, MacCallum, if he had enjoyed good health, might have become a widely known historian, with the influence in the profession that his character and intellect would have commanded. Unfortunately, he was perpetually in ill-health, often grievously ill. His courage, however, never weakened. To the end, he was, in the highest sense of the word, invincible. Had he lived, he had planned to go overseas again, to continue his researches into early Australian history. The researches that he had been able to complete in London in 1968 would have borne rich fruit, had he been able in 1971 or 1972 to discover the additional sources in early Australian history that, he suspected, did exist. He would have used them with a scholar's knowledge and disciplined imagination.

What survives in published form of MacCallum's work is small in quantity but sufficient to reveal his range of research interests and his distinctive methods. As a scholar, he planned to make his original contributions in two fields. One was the early history of the settlement in New South Wales—why it was founded and how it developed under the first five governors. The other was military history, especially

the history of the colonial defences of Australia at the middle of last century ; this subject required research into colonial politics and society, into British imperial history and into British military and naval history. MacCallum's contributions were typically cautious in the use of evidence, but bold in the questions that they raised and the possibilities that they opened for others as well as for himself. In his modest way, MacCallum was gratified when scholars overseas began to write to him about his publications. He was particularly pleased with the recognition accorded his work by certain distinguished historians in Canada and Britain, whose own contributions he had long admired.

Whenever he wrote about British imperial history, MacCallum revealed himself as a good and liberal Empire man. He was appalled when people spoke as if the bonds of Empire were to be measured as so many items in some imperial balance sheet of profit and loss. He once praised over-kindly two sentences from a colleague's work that seemed to him to get to the heart of imperial relations as part of our culture today, just as it had been of Australian culture a century ago :

The double attachment to mother country and to the new homeland could be very strong. It was not a conflict of ties but a combination of them.

MacCallum rejected heady, assertive nationalism, just as strongly as he rejected self-glorifying imperialism and abhorred cultural cringing. He was impatient, also, of political nostrums, regarding them with an only slightly mitigated form of the contempt that he felt for dishonesty, corruption, jobbery or evasiveness.

MacCallum was not an easy colleague. High-minded, rigorous in his own devotion to duty and exacting in scholarship, he set the standards for himself that he thought ought to be common to the whole University. It was a great thing to win his approbation, but his approbation and immediate popular approval were sometimes to be found at the end of roads running in opposite directions.

MacCallum was no great admirer of some tendencies in Australian universities in their more recent years. To him it was infinitely more important that two or three students, or even only one student, should go out of a class knowing what history was and what scholars understood by research, than that a high proportion of students should pass their courses in the minimum time and so become acceptable statistics in a sort of educational accounting.

MacCallum was a memorable man, sustained by warm friendships and by faith in the principles he found common to scholarship and to the problems of everyday living. He honestly, kindly, unswervingly and against great personal odds, stood for the principles on which learning, culture and rational human conduct are based.

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