



KEITH CAMPBELL FAHA

1938–2024



Keith Kennedy Campbell FAHA, born in Wellington, New Zealand on 19 December 1938, was the second of four children of Prof. Ian Drummond Campbell and Emily 'Eslie' Helen, nee Kennedy.

Campbell spent his childhood in Karori and attended Wellington College.

In 1954 he met Julianne Joan McKenzie, and they married on 30 January 1960 in Wellington. Daughter Helen and son Andrew were born in Wellington in 1961 and 1963 respectively. Daughter Kirsty was born in Sydney in 1967.

Campbell studied at Victoria University in Wellington, completing a Master of Arts in Philosophy in November 1960, writing on 'The Nature of Metaphysics and Zeno's Paradoxes of Motion'. Campbell was awarded a Commonwealth scholarship that took him to Oxford, where he completed a BPhil at Balliol College in 1963. His thesis was on 'Family Resemblance Predicates'. In the same year, he accepted a position as a lecturer at the University of Melbourne and moved to Hawthorne.

Three years later he was appointed to a position at Sydney University. One of his early and most important works, *Body and Mind*, was used as a textbook for students for many years. In it, he wrote:

Philosophy need neither compete with scientific theory from some allegedly superior vantage point, nor abdicate in favour of some allegedly all-competent and all-conquering science. For all intellectual endeavour, all

growth of knowledge, involves both an element of research and an element of reflection.

Campbell remained at Sydney University for much of his long and distinguished career, a voice of reason and a figure of stability. In 1973, as a result of growing political differences and differences over governance and the curriculum, Campbell successfully argued that the University form two philosophy departments: the Department of Traditional and Modern Philosophy and the Department of General Philosophy. In 1976, three of the original members of the Department of General Philosophy moved to the Department of Traditional and Modern Philosophy; followed by four more in 1985. The division was dissolved at the turn of the millennium, 1 January 2000.



A photograph of Keith Campbell as a young man.

Campbell was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 1977, and, in 1990, he was awarded a PhD from Sydney University for his study of properties, published later that year as *Abstract Particulars*. Campbell served as Challis Professor from 1991 until 2002, when he was named Emeritus Professor of Philosophy in the recombined Department of Philosophy, School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry.

For much of this time the family lived in Balmain East, where the Campbell and his wife, Julie, were both actively engaged in many community activities such as the historical Balmain Association. The Campbells were keen international travellers, including time spent in France, a sabbatical year in England in 1971, and a posting to the University of Maryland in the United States 1990–1993, where Campbell chaired the Department of Philosophy before returning to Sydney to take up the Challis Chair.

Campbell, along with David Armstrong, was a proponent of ‘ontologically serious’ metaphysics. Early in the 1970s, Armstrong visited American philosopher D. C. Williams, who had retired from Harvard to Fallbrook, California. Campbell visited Williams later in the 1970s. Together they brought Williams and his ‘trope’ theory of properties to the attention of Australian philosophers, particularly in Sydney. When Williams died, his widow made an endowment in Williams’ Honor to the

University of Maryland Department of Philosophy, which Campbell was chairing at the time. The acclaimed Princeton philosopher, David Lewis imbibed metaphysics from Williams, whose influence on Lewis's metaphysics to this day goes largely unrecognized. Lewis's longstanding affinity for Australian, ontologically serious metaphysics runs directly through Campbell.

Campbell coedited (with John Bacon and Lloyd Reinhardt) a Festschrift for Armstrong, *Ontology, Causality, and Mind: Essays in Honour of D. M. Armstrong* (Cambridge University Press, 1993). His other publications include:

Body and Mind (*Problems in Philosophy* series, Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co., 1970)

Metaphysics: An introduction (*Dickenson Series in Philosophy*, Dickenson Pub. Co., 1976)

A Stoic Philosophy of Life (University Press of America, 1986)

Abstract Particulars (Blackwell Publishers, 1990).

As well as his many achievements in philosophy, Campbell was a keen collector of rare books. After his retirement in 1996 the Campbells were able to spend more time on their rural property in the Capertee Valley, near Mudgee, where they raised Angora goats. Campbell took the opportunity and set up an online rare book store, Capertee Classic Books, which he dealt all around the world from his study.

From 2002 to 2014 the Campbells lived in the Blue Mountains, first in Faulconbridge, then in Lawson. In 2014 they moved to Yass, where they were again actively engaged in the community: keen members of the Rotary club, University of the Third Age, and the National Trust Property Cooma Cottage. The Campbells also presented a poetry program on local community radio, Yass FM. They moved to Linton Village in February 2024, and, for a few weeks, Campbell lived in Horton House residential aged care, where he passed away peacefully on 12 October 2024.

Campbell was pre-deceased by son Andrew, who died in a traffic accident in 1997. Campbell is survived by his wife Julie, daughters Helen and Kirsty, and daughter-in-law Deborah. He took great joy in his grandchildren Amelia and Cait, Jeremy, Rho and Miriam, and great-grandchildren Henry, Ady, Kenzie, Drew, Artemis, and Ursula. Campbell is also survived by his brother Russell, sister Rachel, and his nieces, Catherine, Caroline, Camille, Fiona, Emily, nephew Alex, and their families.

Compiled by **Helen Campbell** with assistance from Professor **John Heil FAHA**.