

Charles Bridges Webb Award Winner 2017

Felicity Goodyear - Smith

I am an accidental academic. I had no plan to embark on a career in academic medicine. After many years in full-time practice I enrolled in a single postgraduate course on the philosophy of general practice. Before I knew it, I found myself doing a masters and discovered the joy of research, which fitted so well with my love of writing. For a number of years I combined clinical work with a series of part-time, short-term research contracts in a wide range of areas. In 2010 I was awarded a chair in general practice and primary care, and in a topsy-turvy fashion, I subsequently enrolled in and completed my doctorate. I am now head of the Department of General Practice & Primary Health Care, University of Auckland and a fully-fledged academic.

Tena koe, tena koe, tena koutou katoa

I feel honoured and humbled to be chosen for this award, and I'm very proud to join the prestigious company of my Australian colleagues who are the previous recipients. I am really disappointed that I cannot be with you to receive this in person. I am currently in South Africa for three weeks assisting in research capacity-building in three universities in their fledgling family medicine programmes. My thanks to my colleague and friend Katharine Wallis who is accepting this on my behalf.

I never met Charles Bridges Webb but I understand that he was an early champion for academic primary care, and a powerful advocate for primary care research. This I indeed applaud. He led the way so that we could follow.

Academic medicine was never a career I anticipated. After many years in full-time practice I enrolled in a single postgraduate course on the philosophy of general practice. Before I knew it, I found myself doing a masters and discovered the joy of research, which combined so well with my love of writing. For a number of years I combined clinical work with a series of part-time, short-term research contracts in a wide range of topics. Then in 2010 I was awarded a chair in general practice and primary care, and in a topsy-turvy fashion, I subsequently enrolled in and completed my doctorate. I am delighted in the growing development of the multi and inter-disciplinary nature of primary care research, and I founded the Journal of Primary Health Care as a vehicle to help publish this expanding body of knowledge.

As well as being the current Head of our Department, I am Chair of both the North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPRCG) International Committee, and the WONCA Working Party on Research. These dual roles involve the support and promotion of primary care research, including capacity-building in resource poor countries.

We are very blessed in our careers. My clinical and academic work has enriched my life in so many ways, especially in my many relationships with patients, colleagues and others. It constantly challenges me and gives me intellectual stimulation. It also affords me the opportunity for travel, another of my life's pleasures. Conferences, colleagues and collaborations, as well as clinical roles, have enabled me to visit and experience a huge range of countries, and engage with people from a diversity of cultures and backgrounds.

Enjoy your evening and your conference, and have a glass of wine for me.

Ngā mihi

Felicity