

## David Roger Given (1943 – 2005)

David Given was born in Nelson on 8 November 1943, and grew up there and in Hamilton, Australia. His father was a very able entomologist, geologist and violin player, and David grew up imbibing his parents' love of nature, music, photography and sport. When the family returned to Nelson, David went to Nelson College and in 1962 the University of Canterbury, where he earned a first-class honours degree in botany, and his PhD. His research was on *Celmisia*, a genus he was revisiting with Japanese colleagues at the time of his death. He also became an authority on New Zealand ferns, and in 1975 *Grammitis givenii* (now *Notogrammitis givenii*) was named by pteridologist Dr Barbara Parris in honour of his work in this field.



### *Notogrammitis givenii*

*Notogrammitis* (Greek *notos* 'southern'; *gramma* 'letter' or *gramme* 'line', an allusion to the lines of sori on the underside of the fronds) is a genus of twelve species, eleven of them in New Zealand. *Notogrammitis givenii* is a strap fern with creeping rhizomes, narrowly elliptic or spatula-shaped fronds with blunt tips, and sori in 1–10 pairs in the upper half of the fronds. Found throughout the damper mountain regions of the South Island, but extending to the coast in Chatham and the subantarctic islands, and scattered populations in North Island ranges, it grows on mostly south-facing rocks within forest, subalpine scrub or alpine tussock grassland.

From 1965 he was employed at the botany division of DSIR, working on both native and introduced plants, rare plants, geothermal vegetation and alpine plants. In 1973–74 a Canadian National Research Council post-doctoral fellowship took him and his family to Ottawa, to research threatened arctic-alpine plants around Lake Superior. He spent the following summer season on subantarctic Campbell Island. As herbarium keeper at DSIR 1974–87, he was an instigator of the New Zealand National Herbarium Network and the revolutionary computerising of plant specimen labels.

His work in Canada stimulated his interest in New Zealand's threatened plants and plant conservation, leading to the publication in 1981 of his first book, *Rare and Endangered Plants of New Zealand*. Two further books on threatened plants followed in 1981 and 1989. *Going Native: making use of New Zealand plants*, co-edited with Ian Spellerberg, was published in 2004 and reprinted in 2009. Given was also the author of over 200 scientific papers.

Leaving DSIR in 1991, he began part-time lecturing at Lincoln University, and ecological consultancy and ecotourism work, which took him to over fifty countries. During the 1990s he was involved in around sixteen international conservation organisations, and served on and chaired a number of committees and specialist groups. At the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Bangkok in 2004 he was presented with the Sir Peter Scott Award in recognition of his leadership, dedication and work for the conservation of plant species worldwide.

He was botanical services curator for the Christchurch City Council for two and a half years, and in 2005 was awarded the New Zealand Ecological Society's Te Tohu Taiao Award for ecological excellence. Diagnosed with terminal cancer two years earlier, but going into remission, he helped establish and continued to play an important role in the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network; on 14 August 2005 he was conferred distinguished life membership.

David Given died in Christchurch on 27 November 2005, leaving his wife Karina, and three children. His faith, passion and enthusiasm for improving our world were inspirational.