A tribute to Professor Roger Moltzen, 2014 Te Manu Kotuku award recipient.

Tracy Riley – Massey University, New Zealand

It is my great pleasure to acknowledge the service and contributions of Prof Roger Moltzen as the 2014 recipient of the Te Manu Kotuku Award. In 2012, the Board of giftEDnz: The Professional Association for Gifted Education introduced a national award, the Te Manu Kotuku Award, given in recognition of the recipient's outstanding service and contribution to the education and development of the gifted and talented children and young people of Aotearoa New Zealand. Roger is the second recipient of the award, which was also granted to Associate Jill Bevan-Brown in 2012. They both provide a legacy of leadership and service to education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In Maori oratory, the most telling compliment is to liken someone to Kotuku. It symbolizes everything rare and beautiful. The feathers of Kotuku were highly prized by Maori and were used to adorn the heads of chiefs both in this life and after. The Board of giftEDnz chose to use this manu, Kotuku, in the naming of this award to signify the uniqueness of the person and the value attributed to the recipient for their contribution to gifted and talented education in Aotearoa and beyond.

This is a fitting tribute to Roger who has committed his career to education, as a former teacher and principal turned academic. Roger is Professor and Dean of Education at the University of Waikato. His career focus as an academic has been primarily gifted and talented children and young people, and in order to understand how talent develops across the lifespan, Roger has in recent years investigated the lives of eminent adults.

Many of our APEX readers will know Roger best for his contributions to gifted and talented education nationally:

- As a University teacher, Roger has touched many of your lives. He has been recognized for his teaching excellence as the 2005 recipient of the Prime Minister’s Award for Excellence in Tertiary Teaching and is a member of the Ako Aotearoa Academy of Tertiary Teaching Excellence.
- As a writer and researcher, some of you would have worked with Roger in his capacity as your supervisor for your masters or doctoral student thesis. Others have worked with Roger in his capacity as editor of the only textbook in our specialist field, Gifted and Talented: New Zealand Perspectives, or as the former co-editor of APEX: The New Zealand Journal of Gifted Education. Some of you have worked with Roger – as researchers or the researched! – in the Ministry of Education-funded investigations of the former Talent Development Initiatives.
- As a leader in professional learning and support, Roger has successfully led contracts for the provision of gifted and talented advisory support to schools over the last 15 years, as the University of Waikato has procured many of Government funded initiatives – from advisors to the current Te Toi Topu consortium providing professional learning and
development across the North Island and, in fact, New Zealand, through its facilitation of Gifted and Talented Online.

- As an advocate, Roger served on former advisory groups and, perhaps, most importantly, he chaired the 2001 Working Party on Gifted Education. That group recommended a range of initiatives in the field, including a change to the National Administration Guidelines which now require all schools in New Zealand to identify and provide for their gifted and talented students. Roger is also one of the writers of the Ministry of Education’s handbook, Meeting the Needs of Gifted and Talented Students in New Zealand Schools, which was first published in 2000 and revised for a second online edition in 2012.

I have only shared with you Roger’s contributions within gifted and talented education in New Zealand, but they extend beyond our shores. For example,

- Roger has served as a New Zealand delegate on the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children and has presented papers and workshops on many occasions at this and other international conferences.
- He is an author in the prestigious International Handbook of Giftedness and Talent in which he writes about New Zealand provisions, and in edited texts such as Teaching and Learning in Diverse and Inclusive Classrooms: Key Issues for New Teachers, Roger often contributes the sole chapter on giftedness.

Roger also contributes to the field of special and inclusive education, as well as his many leadership roles at the University of Waikato.

Roger is a visionary leader, with a charismatic personality. He is a warm and kind spirited gentleman, who always has a smile and a lovely laugh. Roger cares. I know this because not only was it my honour to present the Te Manu Kotuku award to Roger last year, but has long been my honour to be a colleague, mentee and friend of Professor Roger Moltzen.