In Memoriam: A Tribute to Rob Britt

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In Memoriam: A Tribute to Rob Britt

Upon receiving the news of Rob’s untimely passing through Eastlib, I was struck by a mixture of disbelief and sorrow. It was truly incomprehensible that someone I had known for over a decade could depart from us so suddenly. Rob’s enduring legacy as an individual characterized by exceptional kindness, unwavering support, remarkable patience, and selfless helpfulness will continue to resonate with all those fortunate enough to have crossed paths with him.

My first encounter with Rob traces back to the CEAL meeting in Chicago in 2009. Throughout various programs, he tirelessly offered his technical support, and his presence remained a constant. Whether standing behind or seated near the podium, he was always ready to resolve any potential technical glitches. I couldn’t help but feel curious about the tall gentleman who exhibited such unwavering dedication to fulfilling these responsibilities. Later, I learned that he hailed from the University of Washington and held the position of Chair of the Library Technology Committee.

In 2012, Rob sent out an invitation on Eastlib calling for new members to join the Library Technology Committee. Little did I know that this marked the beginning of a decade-long collaboration with him. One of my first projects for the committee was creating a video presentation for the 2013 CEAL reception, along with fellow committee members Xiang Li and Yao Chen. Rob’s magnanimity shone through as he provided resources and creative freedom for us to shape the project. He patiently accommodated my inexperienced requests regarding the video presentation at the reception. Looking back, I deeply appreciate the generosity he extended to me during those early years of my career when he had already established himself as a senpai in the field for decades.

Rob and I grew even closer in our professional cooperation when I assumed the role of the Future Chair Designate of the Library Technology Committee in 2014. He graciously shared his expertise and meticulously documented protocols, ensuring a smooth transition of leadership. I recall spending hours in his office during the 2016 CEAL meeting in Seattle, where he patiently walked me through best practices for managing the CEAL website, preparing election ballots, and other tasks. My admiration for him deepened due to his dedication to addressing technology-related matters and his extensive documentation efforts for CEAL over the years.

Rob's unwavering support persisted when I took over as Chair of the Library Technology Committee in 2017. He offered invaluable guidance during the CEAL website redesign and adeptly resolved issues I ran across during my first term, all while demonstrating his expert knowledge and incredible patience.

The realization that Rob is no longer with us remains a painful truth to bear. His absence has left an irreplaceable void. My heart grieves, and my condolences extend to his family and
dear ones. May Rob’s soul find eternal peace, and may his memory perpetually serve as a wellspring of inspiration for all of us.

Submitted by Tang Li