

Moana Jackson

Honorary Geographer Award 2019

Nominated and cited by Dr Rebecca Kiddle and Dr Amanda Thomas, Wellington Branch.

Citation

Moana Jackson is a constitutional lawyer, legal scholar, and a highly regarded public figure throughout Māoridom and Indigenous communities around the world. Matua Moana engages in numerous and vitally important debates regarding decolonisation, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, sovereignty issues and Indigenous rights. Although a law graduate (Victoria University 1969) explicit ties to geography were made through his Treaty work connections with Dame Professor Evelyn Stokes (geographer at the University of Waikato, 1964 – 2005), and Angeline Greensill (Māori geographer at the University of Waikato, 1999 – 2011).

Internationally, Moana Jackson has served as chair of the Indigenous Caucus of the United Nations Working Group on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and is a member of the UN Committee on Indigenous Rights. He has also sat as a judge on the International People's Tribunal hearing indigenous claims in Hawaii, Mexico and Canada. Matua Moana's focus on intellectual property rights for Indigenous flora and fauna and the rights of Māori over taonga means that he is a passionate advocate for environmental justice.

Throughout his work, he draws links across space about experiences of colonialization and colonialism, but also identifies and analyses the dimension that are specific to this context. In particular, he has conducted detailed research on the racism of the justice system in Aotearoa New Zealand and the way people are disciplined and dehumanised with it. Through Matike Mai, and along with colleagues, Matua Moana has also analysed political systems and what a system that embraces and upholds tino rangatiratanga would look like. There is an explicit refusal to simply transport theory from Europe and instead he insists on political forms that are from this land.

His intellectual contributions to geography here, while not always explicitly geographical, are significant and worthy of recognition. Moana's korero is always centred in and cognisant of place, respecting mana whenua wherever he speaks. He is profoundly generous with his time and knowledge to people from all walks of life.