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SCIENCE AND WOMEN. I'M SO OVER THIS CONVERSATION

On the 8th June, the 72 year old British Biochemist and Nobel winner Tim Hunt got into big trouble. Hunt gave a speech at the World Conference of Science Journalists in South Korea where he revealed that he is in favour of gender-segregated laboratories. This, in itself, was an odd thing to reveal, but Hunt strove to clarify his opinion of 'girls' in labs with this statement: "Let me tell you about my trouble with girls... three things happen when they are in the lab. You fall in love with them, they fall in love with you and when you criticise them, they cry."

Why would a man say such obviously chauvinistic comments to a room full of journalists? God only knows, but straight away his comments were tweeted with devastating results. The twitter mobs descended, his comments went viral and scientific institutions moved quickly to distance themselves from Hunt. He resigned from his honorary position at University College London, has been removed from other distinguished scientific research bodies in Europe and his career has ultimately been ruined.

Yes, there is a general consensus that his comments were idiotic and sexist, but surprisingly some have come out in defence of Hunt, saying that he has and still is contributing a great deal to scientific research.

So why the big deal? I'll tell you why. I very vividly remember my first day in Year 7 science. I remember the feeling of being in a 'real' lab for the first time and how exciting this new world felt. For our first task, the teacher asked us all to draw a picture of a typical scientist. Easy! So we all got to work. The room was then asked to describe what they had drawn, and the results still sit with me to this very day. There was nearly 100% consensus in our drawings. We drew a picture of a man in a white lab coat. The details about the man varied only slightly, but the most important thing was that nearly all of us drew a man. Only one girl in a large class drew a woman. And I went to an all girl's school! My science teacher really took us to task for that. Why didn't we all consider that a scientist could be a woman? What else did we assume were male-dominated professions? What did

that say about our own belief systems about what women and we could do? That challenge has really stuck with me after all these years. It is the assumption that science is dominated by men and that women simply don't belong.

Fast forward 15 years and I am now working as a research assistant in the School of Geosciences at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. I'm very proud of my new job and working in a team that is dealing with cutting edge climate change mitigation technologies. I am sitting in a room with my team discussing some work and it doesn't occur to me that I am the only woman in the room. Big deal hey! There is a knock on the door and a man pops his head in and introduces himself as a new lecturer in the building. He politely goes around and shakes everyone's hand, asking them what their field of study is. When he gets to me he asks me this ... 'are you the admin assistant?'

I have oodles of stories like this throughout my scientific career. Interactions like this happened regularly in both the UK and Australia and sadly, constantly showed me that there is a deep rooted

misogyny within the older echelons of the scientific establishment. So yes, this is why Tim Hunt needed to be sacked. I've rarely had an interaction like this with anyone under 40, and I want a mass detoxification of these sexist dinosaurs out of our educational institutions. I definitely felt that I wasted a lot of energy in constantly proving myself to this age group (they all had the management positions) and I know this has hindered my career development. This age demographic still struggles with the idea that women are the intellectual, social and spiritual equals of men. Time to get rid of them so can actually just do our jobs without the added hassle.

I'll leave you with the pertinent words of Drew Gilpin Faust, the 28th President of Harvard University: "I'm not the woman President of Harvard, I'm the President of Harvard."

Yasmin Bushby is from Melbourne and from a Turkish/Australian family. She is a Geologist/Carbon Manager who has worked internationally and has now made the move over to TV Presenting. Web site: www.yasminbushby.com

Gold Coast mourn for track legend

Ron Clarke, one of the original inductees into Sport Australia Hall Of Fame and former mayor of the Gold Coast, has died aged 78.

The Olympic medallist gained prominence on the athletics track in the 1950s and 1960s and officially set 17 world records in various long distances during his illustrious career. He appeared in Olympics scene first time in Melbourne 1956 at age of 19 as a torch bearer, then won bronze at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics in the 10,000 metres. At the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, he collapsed and almost lost his life after suffering severe altitude sickness.

1960 1500 metres Olympic champion Herb Elliott paid tribute to Clarke, "Ron was a great man. His contribution to athletics was enormous. He was also a wonderful contributor to public health through lifestyle programs and gymnasiums and the communities in which he lived" he said.

Ron Clarke was the Gold Coast Mayor for two terms between 2004 and 2012, but was un-

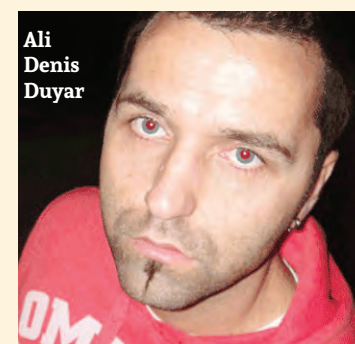


successful in the 2012 Queensland state election as an independent candidate in Broadwater.

In 1956, Ron was involved in one of the greatest acts of sportsmanship ever witnessed on an athletic's track. Just prior to the Games in the 1956 Australian Mile Championship, race favorite John Landy stopped mid-race to help fallen rival Clarke to his

feet. Landy started the chase halfway through the third lap and 55m from the lead, but still won the race by nine metres to claim the title. A statue across Melbourne's Olympic Boulevard is a permanent reminder of that unforgettable moment of Australian sport.

He was survived by his wife Helen and two sons, Marcus and Nicolas.



Duyar's murderer charged

A MAN has faced court after being charged with murdering a father of three in Melbourne's southeast. Ömer Cicekdag, 25, is charged with fatally shooting Ali Denis Duyar, 34, during a meeting with two other men at a Keysborough home on June 10.

He appeared briefly at Melbourne Magistrates Court in June 19 for a short filing hearing.

The court heard DNA testing would need to be carried out before a brief of evidence was served on Mr Cicekdag's lawyers. Mr Cicekdag was remanded in custody to reappear in court in October.

A police manhunt was launched after Mr Duyar was found lying in a gutter outside the Keysborough home where he was shot. After being shot once in the living room just after 5.30pm police believe he staggered outside and collapsed where he was found by a passing motorist. ■ **Herald Sun**