

Civic Honours

Citation - Naotake Fukuoka

It is with great pleasure that Whangarei District Council awards a Civic Honour to Naotake Fukuoka in recognition of his considerable contribution to the advancement of orchestral and youth music in Whangarei.

Naotake moved to New Zealand from his native Japan in 1991 with his wife Atsuko and their five children, eventually deciding to settle in Whangarei for its climate, geographical location and friendly people. He arrived with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry and Agricultural Civil Engineering, work experience as a civil engineer, and a great love of the outdoors, nature, sustainable living, and perhaps most significantly, for music.

Naotake's contribution to Whangarei's music community began soon after his settlement here when he and Atsuko joined Northland Sinfonia. Since then, he has taken on the roles of player, conductor and musical director for the Sinfonia, and become an integral component of the group's popularity and success.

Their children joined Whangarei Youth Music (WYM) in 1995. In 2000 Naotake began giving percussion lessons to WYM members and in 2001 became conductor of its Youth Orchestra section.

Naotake has been a member of the WYM and Northland Sinfonia committees for many years, and has participated in numerous concerts, both as a player and conductor. His groups have performed extensively throughout Northland, and at music events and competitions around the country and the world. They have succeeded in winning a number of prestigious national and international awards, and in bringing appreciation of orchestral music to a wide audience.

He has organised summer camps for Youth Orchestra members, culminating in concerts for parents and the public on the last day of these camps. With Atsuko, he has organised fundraising concerts for WYM when group members are travelling overseas to perform, never taking any of the proceeds to fund travelling with them himself.

Naotake enjoys giving his time and talents to bring orchestral music to people, and people to orchestral music. He selects orchestral pieces with great care, treasures and appreciates every player and their skills, and will often spend time rearranging a piece of music to make it more suitable for a group or to give performers the opportunity to participate or shine.

He is ever patient with the children he teaches and mentors. He encourages them to continue performing with the aim of bringing awareness and interest in classical music to the public, and to represent Whangarei through the creation of musical entertainment of the highest quality. Many of these performers have gone on to further music study or to join professional orchestras in later years.

Naotake supports his own children in their musical performances and development, as well as Atsuko in her extensive work with young Whangarei musicians.

Over the last two decades, he has become an outstanding example of good citizenship and contribution in his second and adopted home of Whangarei.

For this, we honour him.

Civic Honours

Citation - Peter John Coates

Whangarei District Council takes great pleasure in awarding a Civic Honour to Peter John Coates in recognition of his extensive service to the Whangarei Heads' community, musical entertainment, education, conservation, forestry and environmental issues.

Born and raised in Hamilton, Peter arrived in Whangarei District as a young teacher in the late 1960s. He was appointed to Whangarei Heads School in 1978 where he held the roles of teaching principal, chief lawn mower and courtyard sweeper until his retirement in 1995.

Peter has become both an icon and champion of the Whangarei Heads area, beginning during his time at the school and continuing through to the present day. He was instrumental in building the school swimming pool, in the enormous task of leveling the playing field, and in instigating a campaign to reduce sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emissions from the oil refinery which resulted in a sizeable reduction in respiratory complaints amongst the school students.

The campaigning continued during his tenure as President of the Whangarei Heads Citizens and Ratepayers Association when he provided a strong voice against a coal-fired power station, fish farming in Whangarei Harbour, and in the continuation of his crusade to reduce emissions from the oil refinery. In this position, Peter was also involved in the development and operation of Weedbusters with the aim of protecting the Heads area from the destructive influence of invasive plants.

Peter has been a long-standing member of the Farm Forestry Association in the Mid North District since 1976, holding the roles of Treasurer, Secretary and President. He was elected North Island Farm Forester of the Year in 2004, and continues to give help and advice to emerging farm foresters. Through his involvement with the Farm Forestry Association he was invited to be an inaugural Trustee of the Northland Rural Support Trust, and to be a judge of the Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

Peter has been an active member and Chairman of the Papakarahi Landcare Group, and a cornerstone member of the Whangarei Heads Landcare Forum. Through the Forum he has initiated and participated in many activities, most notably the establishment of a tree nursery and re-vegetation projects, weed control on public and private land, and setting a trap line across one half of the Nook Peninsula which he still manages. This year will also see his 60th evening sitting in a cold, dark paddock listening for kiwi calls as part of the national annual kiwi census.

Peter is an accomplished singer and musician. He has been a principal member of the Whangarei Heads Music Makers, The Manaia Singers and the Whangarei Theatre Company, previously known as WOADS. He is well regarded by the members of these organisations for his readiness to assist wherever and whenever help is needed.

In support of the historical and spiritual welfare of the Whangarei Heads community, Peter has been heavily involved in returning the historic Whangarei Heads church into community ownership by providing a valuable and effective link between Council and the community in his role as a church trustee.

Trust is the operative word where Peter's contribution to his various communities is concerned. He has come to be relied upon for his unfailing 'can do' attitude, and for the provision of advocacy, advice or any other form of assistance when the need arises.

Through his tireless efforts over many years, and without any thought of reward or recognition, Peter Coates has enriched Whangarei and made it a much better place for its people and natural environment. He is a shining example of community spirit and service in action.

For this, we honour him.

Her Worship the Mayor
Thursday 13 August 2015

Civic Honours

Citation - Atsuko Fukuoka

It is with great pleasure that Whangarei District Council awards a Civic Honour to Atsuko Fukuoka in recognition of her outstanding dedication to the growth of orchestral music in Whangarei and the nurturing of young musical talent.

Atsuko moved to New Zealand from her home country of Japan in 1991 with her husband, Naotake, and their five children. With Naotake, she chose Whangarei as the place in which she wished to raise her family and further her interests in piano, orchestral music, conservation and animals.

She had been introduced to these interests at a young age, and chose to develop them at Shinshuu University in Nagano. In the years to come, the duties of work and raising children would take priority over them, however not long after settling in Whangarei she began to revive her love of music by studying and obtaining her Trinity College of London Licentiate and Fellowship qualifications and becoming a member of the Institute of Registered Music Teachers (IRMT).

With Naotake she joined Northland Sinfonia in 1991, performing with them as a double-bassist and pianist for the last two decades, and as a piano soloist, accompanist and chamber musician.

In 2007, Atsuko became conductor for the Whangarei Youth Music (WYM) advanced string ensemble, Briosso Corde, which has won several gold awards at the Rhapsody Rotorua Youth Music Festival. She has held concerts at the Old Library and Forum North with other local musicians, and since 2009 has been a regional Northland District organiser for the National Secondary School Chamber Music Competition. The groups she has coached for this competition over the last ten years have never failed to receive awards, one being nominated for a national award this year.

Atsuko encourages and supports Briosso Corde in its performances outside of WYM, including concerts in Kerikeri and Whangarei, and for Christmas concerts at local retirement homes. She also organized the two 2014 WYM concerts which were well received by Whangarei's music and wider communities.

She supports and accompanies several contestants each year in the annual Northland Performing Arts Competition, has held accompaniment seminars for local pianists, supports and accompanies renowned visiting musicians, and billets many national and international musicians who visit Whangarei for musical events.

Atsuko is an active member of IRMT and WYM, and past member of the Whangarei Music Society. She teaches piano to pupils ranging from beginners to advanced, and devotes many hours to rehearsing with each group she tutors, expecting high levels of commitment from them, and receiving high performance levels in return. Atsuko also willingly transports children to and from practices and rehearsals, often feeding them as well.

She supports her own children in their musical performances and development, as well as husband, Naotake, in his extensive work with young Whangarei musicians. For twenty years she has given selflessly of her time and talents to Whangarei's children, musicians and musical audiences.

For this, we honour her.

Her Worship the Mayor
Thursday 13 August 2015

Civic Honours

Citation - Margaret Helen Hibbert

Whangarei District Council takes great pleasure in awarding a Civic Honour to Margaret Helen Hibbert. This award recognizes her considerable contribution to the welfare of Whangarei's aged, infirm and disabled residents, and to those who care for them.

Born in the English town of St Helens, Margaret first learned the importance of helping others as a child during the Second World War. Since then, her working and personal lives have revolved around caring for others.

After training as a nurse and having her children, Margaret settled in Billinge and began organising bus trips and activities during the school holidays to help solo parents stay in the workplace. She instigated and planned weekly entertainment for the village women at the local church hall, where she held raffles and fundraised to pay for the holiday programmes. She was also a member of the Down's Syndrome Foundation Committee for the Liverpool and District Archdiocese.

On coming to New Zealand in 1982 with husband Keith and family of five children, Margaret retained her interest in community support through her work at the Kamo Home. On being made redundant, she threw her energies into addressing the need for adult day care for Kamo Home Day Care clients who were now without this facility. She envisaged a facility that would provide caregivers with necessary time out, and offer those they cared for a stimulating, therapeutic and enjoyable place to visit where their nursing and social requirements would be met.

Thus, the concept of Forget Me Not Community Adult Day Centre was born. Margaret formed a support team comprising other community-minded and hard working volunteers; and coaxed, coerced and begged many others to help get the Centre up and running.

Considerable funding was needed, and with the ever-reliable support of Keith and her family, Margaret held fundraisers such as sausage sizzles, garage sales and selling bricks to reach her goal. She always made the activities fun, and the money began to roll in.

The Centre was finally opened on 14 February, 1994, and now caters for over 9200 client visits per year. After temporary locations at the Falls Estate and Tikipunga Soccer Club, the Centre was finally established permanently on land donated by the Falls Estate, and with an interest-free loan from Whangarei District Council which was paid back after three years.

The Centre provides quality care for clients and gives their caregivers a well-earned break. Four Forget Me Not vans collect up to 40 clients a day from their homes and drop them back at the end of the day, and they are provided with a cooked lunch, diversion therapy, holistic exercise and social activities.

Margaret always greeted the clients and their caregivers with a smile, and went out of her way to make them feel special, even during the very challenging time when she was dealing with her own husband's terminal illness. She has now retired, but still continues to help with the Centre and with other worthy causes whenever she can.

She is currently working to provide bed linen, clothing, toys, furniture and other necessities of life for Northlanders in need, and loves seeing people's faces when they open their box of goodies sourced from as far away as Auckland. After Tropical cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu, she initiated a whirlwind collection of goods for its people, to make the departure of a boat leaving for the islands in three days' time.

In 1998, Northland MP, Frank Grover, described Margaret in a newspaper article as, "an extraordinary woman who gives so much of herself to those less fortunate". We agree, and thank her for the enduring and much valued legacy she has created for her adopted home of Whangarei.

For this, we honour her.

Her Worship the Mayor
Thursday 13 August 2015

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