

 **Whangarei**
District Council

CIVIC HONOURS 2022

celebrating outstanding locals

Brian Corney

When Hukerenui eight-year-old Brian Corney joined the Mid Northern Scout Group as a Cub in 1977, he began the first day of 45 years in the movement, throughout which he would influence and inspire thousands of young people.

Moving through the tiers he became a Scout in 1979 and was a Venturer Scout by 1984. Turning 16 in 1985 he applied to join the Army and was one of only 150 candidates accepted out of 10,000 that year.

For him it was an easy transition – fieldwork was a bit like camping, and the orderliness and fraternity of scouts suited him in the new environment.

Becoming an electronics technician, he went on to setting up trades' workshops for the NZ Army in Bosnia and found time to marry Monique with whom he raised three children - Hayley, now 31, Aaron, 29 and Jason 21. By 1995 he had left the army and returned to Whangārei to begin the next 20 years of his working life as a service manager at McKay's in Whangārei.

When his son joined the Kamo Scout Group's Keas (for children aged 5-8 years) the call went out for new Scout leaders and Brian joined up with the full support of his new employer.

Dubbed "Nikau" he found the joy of witnessing the "lightbulb moments" where youngsters suddenly realised they had mastered a skill. This was enough to keep him going, year in, year out. His greatest reward came from seeing them gain a sense of achievement, friendship and self-worth while developing life-long friendships across the country, just as he had.

In 2012 and 2013 he took the opportunity (with the blessing of McKay) to take up a full-time role with Scouts Aotearoa as the Regional Development Manager. His proudest achievement during that period was re-establishing the "Youth Sector Discussion Group" and assisting the move within Scouting towards Youth-Led programmes – young people delivering and setting the directions of today's programmes. This has been especially valuable as times and families and

the workplace have changed over the years, challenging the hours people are able to volunteer to the movement. Becoming more Youth-Led has enabled the system to flex to ensure adults (parents), working with senior scouts can keep the movement going.

Those who nominated Brian spoke of his ability to mentor and encourage groups and individuals, youngsters and adults:

"He is a great mentor who encouraged our group to achieve our Queen Scout Awards through lots of hours and dedication."

"From camping, cooking, bush skills, water skills the list goes on, youth have gained valuable skills and will become good citizens of the future. Brian has not only supported youth through his time in scouting, he also plays a large role in developing the leadership of the leaders."

"He is a methodical and patient teacher who always encourages us to do our best. Brian is one of the people who has fostered a passion for scouting in me and because of this I see myself being involved in the scouts for many years to come."

"First-hand, I have seen how he is willing to go the extra mile to help those that need support and makes a difference in the community and all scouts. He helps them develop into better people and citizens who understand the importance of giving back to the community."

For this we honour him.

Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai



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Felicity Christian

Felicity was born and raised in Christchurch where her early working life included engineering and landscape drafting. Following a move to Auckland, she gained her Bachelor of Architecture (Honours) from the University of Auckland.

Felicity and her partner moved north to Whangārei, settling at Pataua South where they raised three girls who are now vibrant young women.

From her earliest years in Whangārei, Felicity has been a keen supporter of community groups, particularly those fostering the musical talents of young people. Often her role has included establishing groups. Starting with her children's new Kindergarten she hasn't stopped. In 2002 Felicity was one of several who established the Manaia Kindergarten Committee, serving as the Chairperson from 2003-2005, and as a board member on the Northland Kindergarten Association from 2004-2006.

A novice violinist and pianist since her young days, Felicity joined Whangarei Youth Music (WYM) to regain her skills and then Northland Sinfonia as a playing member in 2004, participating in performances for her own enjoyment and that of the wider community. She has also been a member of the Sinfonia's committee since 2019.

In 2007 Felicity was invited to be a conductor for Whangarei Youth Music. She soon became part of the WYM committee, serving more than 10 years, five of those as president.

During her time as president her relationship with Whangarei District Council was pivotal in securing a new home for WYM in the historic old library building on Rust Avenue. Not only did this provide a long-term home for WYM, it has also helped to ensure this notable building, a significant part of Whangārei's civic history, continues to be used and cared for.

As Conductor of Junior Strings, Felicity has led this group of young musicians, providing guidance and encouragement and made music a fun experience for them. It is a credit to her that she continues to give her energies to this role. It should also be noted that Felicity worked with others from 2013 to 2016 to establish Sistema Toi Akorangi Whangarei.

Felicity also has passion for architecture, her chosen professional field. One of her most prominent built

community contributions was Whangārei's Camera Obscura. Initiated by friend and photographer Diane Stoppard, Felicity and Trish Clarke worked with her to design this award-winning steel sculpture on the shore of the Hātea River overlooking Te Matau a Pohe. The trio took the concept to the community, Council and local businesses, securing land, funding and support. Felicity did some paid work in this role also. The Camera Obscura has gone on to receive international recognition with an Architecture Master Prize Honourable Mention.

Felicity's interest in historic buildings also prompted her to lead a submission to Council against the demolition of the Almond Court buildings above Laurie Hall Park and holds a keen interest in the future of the Old Library.

Felicity's passion for growing young people extends into the architectural realm, through her work with the New Zealand Registered Architects Board for the past 10 years. She has served as the board's National Assessor Training Officer/Event Organizer and is an assessor for New Architect Registration and one of three National Convenors. At a practical, professional level, she has offered holiday work experience to graduate architecture students and supporting young architects coming into Whangārei. She is also an establishment committee member of the Coalition of Northland Creative Professionals Incorporated.

Felicity's contribution to the community has been comprehensive, creative, and consistent, providing others with the benefit of skills and talents she holds, sharing her life experience for the benefit of others. She cares.

For this we honour her.

Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai



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Fred Tito

Raised by his grandmother in Tangiterōria, of Te Parawhau, Te Uri Roroī, Ngāti Whātua and Ngā Puhī descent and with close connections to the marae of Porotī, Tītoki and Tangiterōria, Fred Tito's leadership qualities were recognised by kaumātua from an early age.

Fred was raised within the language of his elders and schooled in rituals, karakia, history and stories of Te Parawhau and has gone on to serve his hapū, marae and community in his capacity as a rangatira and tohunga.

This has included work with countless organisations and groups, advising on the appropriate tikanga for different projects, putting people in touch with each other, carrying out ceremonial duties at many dawn blessings, naming ceremonies, on the marae, at meetings and openings.

Fred's own hapū and community, government departments, councils, schools, volunteer groups, businesses and many more have benefited from his gentle guidance as a kaumātua, a rangatira, a board member, adviser, and most importantly, a friend. His work has included carrying out whakawātea and whakanoa, (rituals of clearing and cleansing) at places where tragic events have happened, helping to bring peace and safety into the situation, as well as comforting those affected.

Fred carries the sacred traditions of his people and is very careful about how these traditions are presented and cared for. Fred is an active participant in the lives of his extended whānau, retelling history and encouraging others to learn, debate, and pass on their stories.

Universally, Fred is admired for his ability to unite the people he meets and to provide a path for them to gather together and enjoy fellowship. In recent years this included his involvement in the founding and development of the Maara Kai o Wai-a-Ariki Onerahirahi, the Onerahi Food Forest. Among those huddled around the fire at a community pizza night, Fred initiated a Matariki event that in turn sparked plans for the food forest. As a result, an unused piece of public land beside the Onerahi Airport has become a fully-fledged community garden full of seasonal vegetables and fruit.

The food forest has drawn together a community of diverse people just enjoying participating in a project that makes a

purposeful use of a place that was wasteland in the past. The produce from the food forest feeds many who need it, and the environment provides a place of whanaungatanga. Fred often speaks about nurturing mother earth, so she can nurture us in return; the food forest provides this taonga and has attracted visitors from throughout New Zealand and overseas, keen to understand the philosophy behind it and the way it works in practice.

Puanga-Matariki is the most important time of year for Fred, who has led regular gatherings of descendants of the Māori chiefs, Kawiti, Pōmare and Tirarau who signed the treaty in May 1840, some-time after it was signed by others. He takes part in gatherings of Ngāti Hine, Te Parawhau and Ngāti Manu every year to commemorate the event and discuss matters from the past, the present and plan into the future.

A master communicator, he has long been involved in Ngāti Hine radio presenting, interviewing and teaching. He provides mihi in te reo Māori, sign language and English. He is a champion of Māori well-being, including justice-based living and he has been a long-term supporter of and guide for community ventures including 155 Whare Āwhina, Whakaora Kai Taitokerau/Food Rescue, Te Ruruhau o ngā Ringaringa Tuwhera/Open Arms and Friends of Matakohe-Limestone Island.

Without exception, those who speak of Fred talk about his commitment to his culture, people and his hapū. Fred quietly fulfils roles and responsibilities handed to him by his kaumātua, with no fanfare and trumpets. He supports and faithfully carries forward the teaching of his elders, to benefit countless others. Fred is a true rangatira who brings people together.

For this we honour him.

Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai



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Stephen Westgate

Arriving in Whangārei with a Cambridge Science degree in 1964, Stephen Leonard Westgate embarked on a life of service to the community spanning more than 50 years. Since his arrival, he has never wished to live anywhere other than in Whangārei.

Starting as a Chemist, he advanced to hold the role of Technical Manager at the Whangarei Glass Works (Pilkington Glass) until it closed in 1991. He then became a self-employed resource management consultant, advising clients about the provisions of the Resource Management Act 1991.

A pragmatist, Steve always saw the need to advocate for conservation while recognising the needs of modern society. Appointed to the Northland Conservation Board from 1993 to 1998, he helped develop pest-free eradication programmes for the Bay of Islands and prepared a draft Management Plan for the Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve.

From 1999 to 2003 he chaired the Northland Branch of Forest and Bird, producing a series of articles titled "Towards a Pest Free Northland". What was visionary then is now a national goal. In 2005, Steve was co-opted onto the Northland Regional Transport Committee to represent environmental interests.

He was a founding trustee of the Bream Head Conservation Trust in 2002, a group of dedicated volunteers whose project gained credibility and sponsorship over the 10 years of his service.

Steve made his resource management expertise available to many other trusts over the years, including the Friends of Matakohē-Limestone Island Society and the Northland District Masonic Trust.

As a Northland Chamber of Commerce Inc. board member Steve had a special interest in natural gas being delivered to Northland in association with Refining NZ's petroleum pipeline to Auckland. His meticulous data, planning, scientific analysis and personal advocacy for the resulting gas pipeline brought many benefits to the industrial and residential communities.

After serving with Round Table (a young men's community service organisation that flourished in the 60s and '70s), he joined the Whangarei South Rotary Club in 1985 holding

multiple community service roles and becoming a go-to person for community advocacy especially in his Onerahi neighbourhood. Steve is tremendously appreciative of the development opportunities that Round Table provided wherein he first gained experience as secretary, treasurer and chairman of a community organisation.

Steve has also had a long-standing interest in road safety and roading matters. Appointed a trustee of the Northland Road Safety Trust from the year after it was established in 1995, he continued as a trustee for a further 20 years supporting the formal Road Safety Community Programme delivery.

In 2002 Steve became a district councillor for the NZ Automobile Association (NZAA) Northland District Council, relinquishing his role as Northland's National Councillor on the NZAA's governing body only this year after six years in the role. Many NZAA submissions to various road controlling and planning authorities bear the hallmarks of his professionalism, analytical skills, science background and passion for private motoring and common sense. As environmental representative on the Northland Regional Transport Committee he chaired the Stock Effluent Disposal Committee in 2008, developing a series of stock effluent disposal sites throughout Northland.

Appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1987 he has tirelessly and professionally served in that voluntary role for more than 35 years and was recently recognised by the Northland Justice of Peace Association for his contribution.

Last but not least, Steve is a family man. He and wife Margaret have two children, Stephen living in the UK and Suzanne living with her husband and two children in Sydney. Steve's role as father and grandfather give him great pleasure from the achievements and interests of his family. His contribution to our community is broad and diverse.

For this we honour him.

Her Worship the Mayor Sheryl Mai

