

Our PHF recipient was born to an English working- class family and grew up in Wellington with three siblings. He has a strong sense of fairness and sticking up for the underdog which got him into quite a few scraps when he was younger when he saw others being unfairly treated.

Those scraps led to a number of pairs of glasses being broken much to his mother's dismay.

That sense of loyalty to his colleagues and friends is still very evident today and he has imparted the same ideals in his children.

With family finances being tight, there was not a lot of money for expensive pastimes, so he took up tramping which was relatively inexpensive and spent many weekends with friends in the Orongorongo Valley, trains and buses got him to Wainuiomata, but from there he would walk down Coast Road often in the dark, and then tramp up over 'the guts buster' track and off to Hut no 25 for the weekend. Hut 25 was built by him and his 2 mates, each carrying a sheet of corrugated iron all the way along the track together with various pieces of 4by2.

Our recipient trained to be a teacher and started his career at Taita Intermediate and then quickly moved to working with emotionally maladjusted children who were bused in from outlying schools.

He then taught in Wainuiomata, Kelson, and a country school in Thames.

He then moved to the UK where he taught for 3 ½ years working in a school in a depressed area which included about 50% ethnic minorities.

On returning to NZ he joined Taita Central as their Principal where he worked tirelessly until he retired. He became very much involved with NZEI (NZ educational institute) and spent a number of years mediating as an advocate between staff and their schools.

In 1991 He was awarded Associate of New Zealand Educational Institute in recognition of the considerable stature as a teacher in the widest sense and as a member of the Institute.

He was later awarded Life membership of the Hutt Valley Branch of NZEI in 2015.

He married in 1974 and they bought their first house eight months later. At this stage, they gave a home to a rescue Great Dane and subsequently both became involved in his wife's interest in showing and breeding great Danes. This involved many Friday night trips driving up country and sleeping in the back of an old Ford station wagon with 2 Great Danes and then off to the dog shows the next day. Being the 70's with carless days and closed petrol stations they travelled with extra petrol cans to make sure they could get home again.

Our recipient still carried on tramping. On one occasion he and a friend along with the old great Dane. Great Danes were originally bred for boar hunting in Europe, and unfortunately for Mike that's exactly what our old dog did, taking off up a ridge and bailing up a sow and its piglets!

Mike called him back and that should have been that, except the dog managed to sneak off in pursuit of it again.

After looking for the dog all day and sleeping on the track with only a tent fly for cover (in winter!) he made his way back to the car wondering how he was going to tell his wife he had lost her dog. Relief on getting back to the car there was dog waiting for him. The old dog had the sense to go back to the car!

With their first child just a year old they decided to travel overseas.

Not knowing for doing things by halves, you can be sure it was not just a 2-week holiday.

First, they went to the UK where they purchased a campervan and travelled around England, Wales, and Scotland. Then they spent a year travelling around Europe and the Eastern Bloc.

Travel was to become his passion and on returning to New Zealand it did not stop there. Every Christmas holidays were spent backpacking in a different country but now with 2 children in tow.

Every year was spent meticulously planning the next trip, travel was mainly by local transport and staying at lower end accommodation.

This led to some interesting times.

Such as in Malaysia where the hotel they stayed at was the one also used by the local prostitutes to ply their trade. His wife on the floor above watched as they propositioned her husband below!

Later his adult children were involved in travel to Kenya to explore African wildlife parks and later trekking to Base camp Everest and climbing Kilimanjaro with his son.

Covid shortened his trip to Ethiopia last year, however he is still planning for the next one! Whenever that will happen.

If you haven't already guessed our deserving recipient, is Mike Fackney.

Mike joined Rotary on 13 July 2009 and has been an active member in the running of the club especially assisting with the club's and guest speaker's technology when called upon.

Many of you may not realise just how much work Mike puts in behind the scenes. He works tirelessly when called upon. Our club would not be running so smoothly without his hard work and expertise.