



THE WINTEC JOURNEY



Wintec
WAIKATO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Te Kuratini o Waikato



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Students gather round in the foyer of The Atrium, Wintec House, 2014



Student deep in concentration, Hamilton Technical College, 1960s



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Wintec feature writing and journalism class of 2014







Chair & Chief Executive Welcome

This year marks a special occasion for Wintec. It's been 90 years since the first classes were taught in our heritage building, Wintec House, which was then Hamilton Technical College.

Since then, the nature of our country's workforce has evolved. For example, back in the 1920s, primary industries such as forestry and farming employed many people. Forty five years later, the manufacturing industry dominated the employment market. In 2014, the workforce of earlier years is almost unrecognisable. We now need more specialised skills, knowledge and qualifications to build successful economies, not only in New Zealand, but around the world.

The perception of vocational and professional training has evolved along with our environment. There is an increasing appreciation of its importance to our social and economic well-being. Technical, vocational and professional education and training is being extended to a wide range of degree and postgraduate programmes. These programmes prepare learners for careers in industries such as engineering, industrial design, trades, science, technology, agriculture, sport, health and social services, education, business and manufacturing, tourism, hospitality, events, English language, media and the creative industries.

Maintaining relevance still remains critical for the success of all of our programmes. We work closely with employers, industry and community organisations, listening to their advice and responding to their needs.

On an international scale, our global connections have grown substantially over the years. We have developed expertise in export education. Our local and global alliances

enable us to deliver internationally-relevant, quality education services wherever they're needed in the world. Internationalisation is now an integral part of our identity as an institution, influencing the way we operate and enabling us to set up global connections for our students, staff and employers.

We place significant focus on Māori and Pasifika achievement. About 80% of our Māori students now study at level 4 and above. While this is an excellent result, among the best in the sector, we intend to improve it further yet.

Over the past 90 years, many thousands of work-ready graduates have entered the community with industry-relevant skills acquired in innovative ways that reflect 'real-world' requirements. Many of these graduates have gone on to become respected leaders and employers, locally and globally.

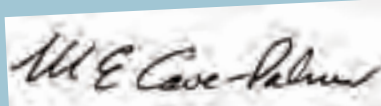
This is a year to celebrate. It is a time to acknowledge where we've come from, what we've achieved, and where we're going. Wintec's journey so far has been a transformation. From small beginnings we've grown into a successful, trusted world-class organisation.

Our success has been the result of decades of hard work by our staff and strong support from our stakeholders. We sincerely thank the Waikato community, our staff, our Employer Partnership Groups, our partners, our investors, our alumni, our suppliers and the many other businesses and organisations with whom we work closely. Your expertise, insight, guidance and support are vital to our success and are greatly appreciated.

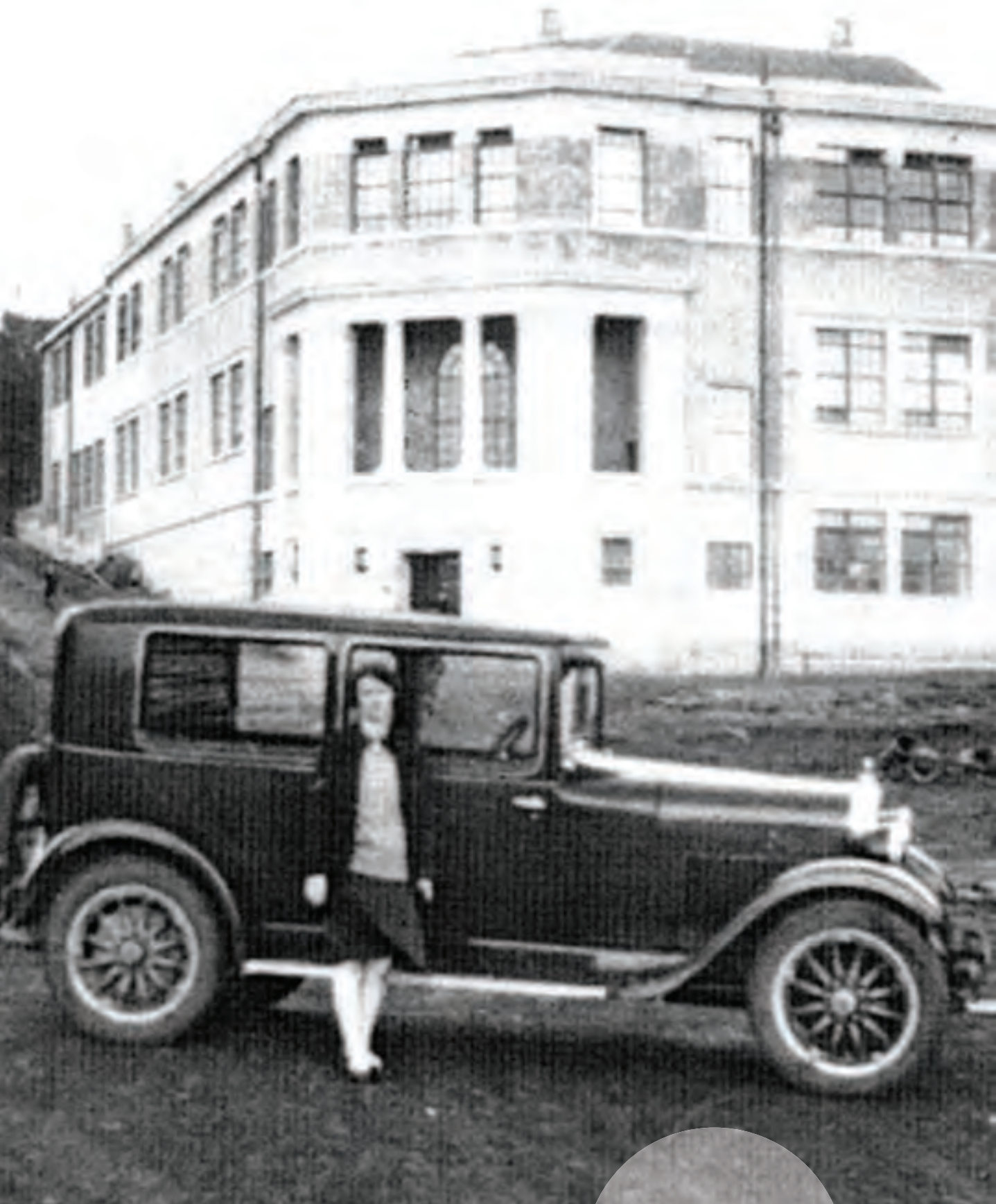
We are proud to lead Wintec with your help. We look forward to continuing to work together to take Wintec into its tenth decade and beyond. ●



Mark Flowers
Wintec Chief Executive

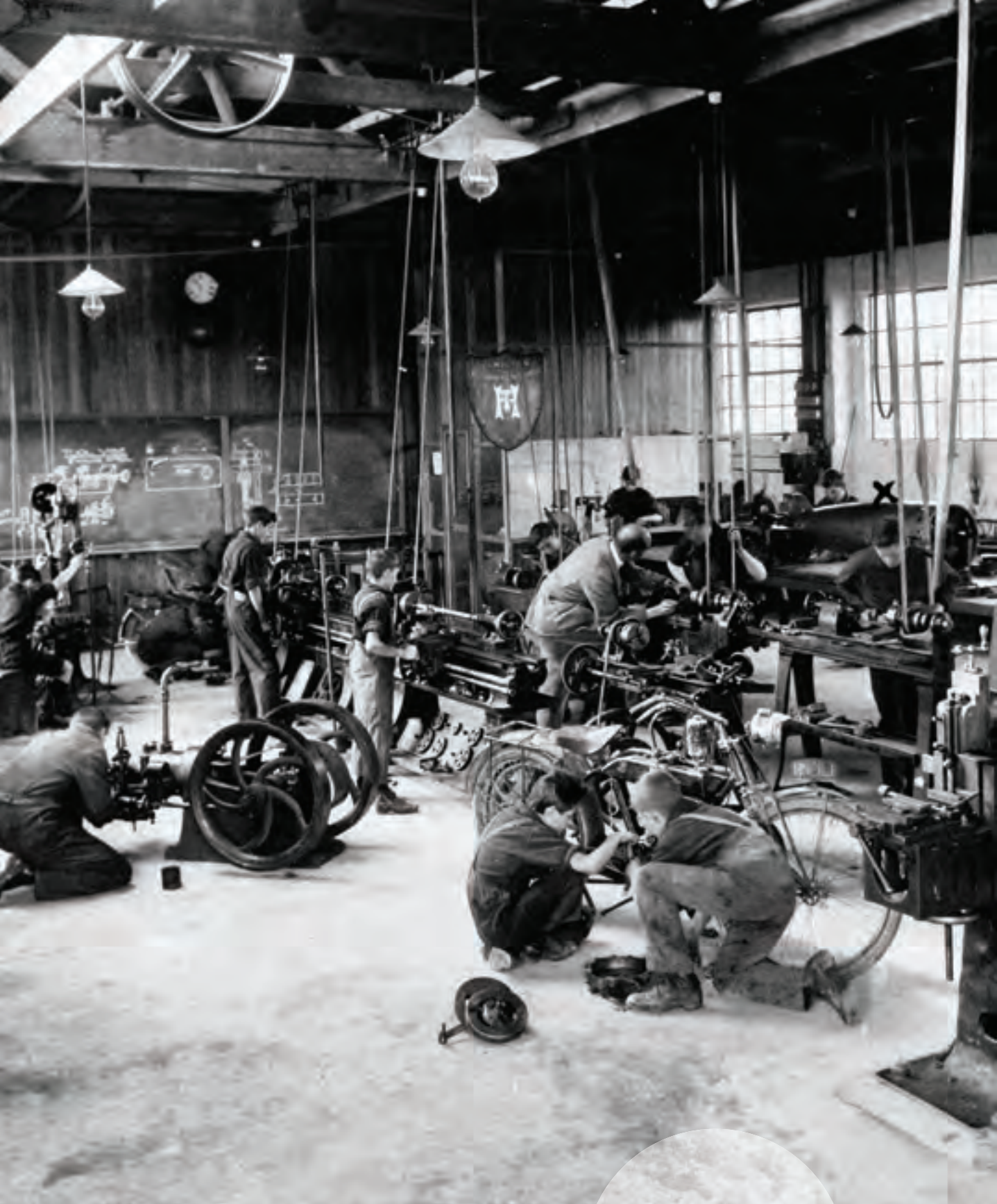


Mary Cave-Palmer
Wintec Chair



Wintec House, pre-Anglesea Hill removal, 1930s





Trades class, Wintec House, Hamilton Technical College, 1924
- Photograph courtesy of Hamilton City Libraries

Our History

Technical and vocational training has been an integral part of Hamilton and the Waikato since the 1920s.

In 1924 the Hamilton Technical College was established with its own board and governors and was based in Wintec House, on the corner of Anglesea and Ward streets in central Hamilton. This heritage building was completed and opened in 1924.

The technical college evolved out of the Hamilton Manual Training Centre, also known as the Hamilton Technical Day School, which mainly conducted practical classes for a small number of day pupils and around 1000 primary school pupils.

From 1924, the renamed Hamilton Technical College flourished as a combined secondary, night and trade training school. Its first principal was Whampoa Fraser, a noted educationalist of his time.

Over the next four decades the changing needs of industry and employers led to the Waikato Technical Institute opening on the same site in 1968. The establishment of technical institutes to train people with skills to better meet the needs of employers saw a number of regional colleges turn into tertiary technical institutes across New Zealand.

The Hamilton Technical College (which later became Fraser High School) and the Waikato Technical Institute co-existed on the site for two years, covering both secondary and tertiary technical training.

On 12 February 1968 the institute held its first classes with 30 full-time tutors, several part-time tutors, and a total staff of 40. This was the institute's first venture into technical education solely at a tertiary level. In its first month of operation, it enrolled just over 2000 students.

In 1970, the city site was to transform wholly into a tertiary education provider as the Waikato Technical Institute, in line with government policy of the day. The secondary provision, in part, was picked up through the establishment of Fraser High School – named after the first technical college principal, Whampoa Fraser.

A few name changes came into play over the years, including in 1987 when the institute was renamed The Waikato Polytechnic, then in 2001 the Waikato Institute of Technology, and in 2003 Wintec.

Over the past 90 years, what hasn't changed is our commitment to providing technical and vocational training and driving the education and development of a skilled workforce. Today we are a modern institute of technology that regionally, nationally and internationally works with employers, industry and communities to understand and respond to the skills which are required in today's workforce. ●

Did you know?

- We have 20,000 students (full and part-time)
- We employ 950 staff
- We offer 10 degree programmes, 35 diplomas and 12 postgraduate qualifications
- We have six campuses (in Hamilton and the greater Waikato region)
- 25% of our students are Māori and Pasifika
- We have 1,000 international students from 52 countries ●





Our People

Hundreds of thousands of people have been connected with us in many different ways since our doors opened in 1924.

Over the past 90 years, our organisation has been made up of numerous talented and unique people.

Today, we have 950 staff, 20,000 students and countless connections with people regionally, nationally and internationally.


We're rich in diversity. Our students come from 52 countries. Many have gone on to do amazing things and become experts in their fields and leaders within their communities.

Our tutors have backgrounds in the industries that they teach. Many are often practising professionals in their given field of expertise, teaching and working simultaneously.

We've built a great network of friends and supporters through our connection with industry and the community.

Employers are our close partners and allies. We work together to ensure our students get taught the relevant skills they need to succeed in today's workforce.

The following pages, written by our talented journalism students, tell the story of some of our people. They provide a taste of the rich characters who have given life to Wintec throughout our journey. ●



*“It’s been overwhelming.
Since the hit, everything’s
just taken off.”*

Dave Baxter

Founder of band, Avalanche City and Wintec music graduate

All you need is Love, Love, Love

By Brooke Bath

Dave Baxter, founder of Avalanche City, writer of TV2 theme song Love, Love, Love and Apra Silver Scroll winner, is late.

He has suggested we meet for our interview in an Auckland café. Would 10.30 be too early, he wondered in an email?

Not for me. But when I arrive at Astro Café in the suburb of Kingsland, he's not there. Do I take the risk and order our coffees now?

Long after his time studying music at Wintec, Dave has a number of awards under his belt, the most distinguished being the Australasian Performing Rights Association Silver Scroll award, listing him next to previous Kiwi winners such as The Naked and Famous, Dave Dobbyn, Neil Finn and Scribe.

Obviously, I wasn't ready to get this guy's coffee order wrong.

When he arrives, he's casually dressed in a zip jacket and jeans, with a trademark beard. My trick of having my notebook open on the table with a pen running through my fingers works. He recognises me as the reporter, comes over, shakes my hand and sits down to join me.

He doesn't order coffee. He doesn't even like coffee. He orders tea.

A passion for music was evident in Dave from the get-go. He learnt to play the ukulele and guitar at just 10 years old. At 17, and with the convincing of his mother, Dave left high school and threw himself into studying music at Wintec.

"There was all round access to the recording and producing rooms so I would always be in there." He was also a member of hardcore band One Must Fall.

After graduating in 2004 with a Bachelor of Media Arts in Commercial Music from Wintec, he moved to Auckland. Then in 2011 he put the skills learned at Wintec to good use, recording and producing his debut album *Our New Life Above Ground*. The same year, his music career took flight when his single Love, Love, Love was used in an advertisement for TV2, becoming the station's theme song for around a year.

Overnight success followed.

"It's been overwhelming. Since the hit, everything's just taken off."

TV2 was searching for a lively and positive song for its station's promotional advertisement when Dave's song caught the ears of the producers at the last minute.

"It was actually a funny thing," he laughs. "They narrowed it down to something like four songs. Then at the last minute my song snuck in there."

Love, Love, Love debuted at number one for three weeks and sat comfortably in the New Zealand music charts for 19 weeks.

When Dave originally released his album online, he made it available for free download.

"It was something I had made myself and I wanted people to listen and not be put off by having to pay for it."


With more than 11,000 downloads of the album, Dave decided to re-release and market it, leading to both local and international tours.

Since then, he has performed many times around the country and across the ditch. The demand for Avalanche City's style of folksy and up-beat music also led him to perform in the UK and the United States. His growing popularity in the States brought the opportunity to tour alongside American indie pop band FUN.

Now with more experience in the music and performing industry, as well as money, Dave continues to record and produce all of the music in his Auckland home.

Avalanche City's second major album is expected to drop some time this year.

"No, I can't tell you much about the album – but it's something I'm passionate about creating. For me, I guess it's more of a passion for wanting to create music than anything else." ●

A woman with dark hair, smiling, stands in a modern office. She is wearing a grey long-sleeved dress and holding a bright green laptop. The office has large windows, glass partitions, and many people working at desks in the background. The ceiling is high with exposed ductwork and modern lighting.

“Technology that allows people to work together wherever they are at whatever time - that’s the exciting stuff.”

A helping hand

By Audrey Ellis

Kristi Bernards makes her priorities in life clear. Jandals litter her front door. A guitar lies within arm's reach by the sofa. Children and relatives travel through rooms like they are gliding along the Metro. There's a constant ebb and flow of cars moving in and out of the driveway. Kristi gives you the distinct impression that life is fun and to be shared. It is that belief that makes her something of an expert in her field at Wintec.

Kristi is one of very few people in the world with the job title of technology concierge. Young and old face the challenge of discovering and understanding the multitudes of new technology being made available; Kristi ushers the bewildered to experts in the field.

"I connect people with technology or with people that can help them with technology. We've got lots of technology at Wintec and there's about 30 people in the ITS department so it's hard to know which one to talk to. I'm really that contact person who can direct people to who they need. I'll say, 'You need to talk to Mike in our team. He's the man!'"

The beauty of Kristi's role is that technology has brought her together with people just as much as she has linked people with technology. She has met people from all walks of life, including within the Wintec community itself.

"In the nursing department we've got the nanas, in the media arts department we've got the tortured artists and in the sports science department we've got one of our Commonwealth coaches, Debbie Strange. So I get to meet all these amazing people of all different ages doing awesome stuff in their fields. They're saying things like, 'I'm so dumb. I don't know how to use this,' and I'm thinking, 'Wow, you're amazing! Anyone can learn this stuff!'"

Her beginnings in technology were like those of many other parents: they started with her four-year old child explaining the basics. Kristi became excited to learn the craft. Of course these things are never so simple. "I got married when I was 16 and I had three kids by the time I was 20. When my youngest was two years old I really wanted to go back to school. Because I had kids I never knew what was going to happen in my life."

Not being one to let challenges overcome her, Kristi pursued numerous qualifications through the years including a National Certificate in Business and a Bachelor of Information Technology at Wintec. She says that it wouldn't have been possible without the support of her family, who also share a great deal of history at Wintec.

"My nana went years ago before she was even 16 when it was the Waikato Technical Institute. My dad, Rik Bernards, has been teaching at Wintec for as long as I can remember. My mum and sister studied there and my children have studied there. There are a few of us!"

Her connection with people nourishes her love for technology that allows interconnectivity in the workplace. Though Kristi's definition of workplace is certainly a lot more flexible than the traditional office.

"Technology that allows people to work together wherever they are at whatever time – that's the exciting stuff," she says.

"I just like helping people or just making things easier for them. I love being in IT and I love the things technology can do for people. I like educating people and empowering them." ●

“I think you’d be in a human prison if you didn’t love your job.”



The man who lives to work

By Don Rowe

Working is the only hobby Gordon Chesterman has ever had.

"I've always, always loved to work."

This ethic is evident in every aspect of the life of Hamilton's son and deputy mayor, a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit who has served on more committees than most people could conceive exist.

A fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Directors, Gordon was born in the Campbell Johnstone maternity wing of Waikato Hospital during the height of the Second World War in the 1940s. Should the head of state have been recorded on Gordon's birth certificate, it would read 'King George VI'.

"After the Second World War, there weren't the excesses of today," says Gordon.

"It was a very happy childhood. We used to live right behind Whitiara School so our activities were all neighbourhood based."

Gordon's need for activity was equalled by his skill as a sportsman and he represented Waikato in soccer and softball teams for nearly a decade. He even made time for pugilism in the St George Scout Troop, winning a youth heavyweight title.

Several months before leaving high school, Gordon resolved to become an aircraft engineer and so met with the manager of the National Aircraft Corporation on Collingwood Street.

"At the end of the conversation, he wasn't sure that it would suit me, and I definitely was sure that it wouldn't work for me."

As young Gordon returned along Collingwood Street, he made an impulsive choice that would signal the beginning of a long and successful media career.

"I was walking back along Collingwood St," says Gordon, "And there was the Waikato Times in front of me.

"Now don't ask me why, but I went up the stairs and asked to see the editor. We had a conversation, he offered me a job as a cadet journalist, and I started the next week.

"It was more of a fluke than a chosen career path."

This fluke would signal the beginning of a sweeping career that would see Gordon cross the globe time and again driven by an insatiable wanderlust and the pursuit of the news.

"I loved it since day one," says Gordon.

This love for the grind is a recurring theme in the story of Gordon Chesterman.

"I think you'd be in a human prison if you didn't love your job."

It's a simple, almost Zen, idea but there is nothing theoretical about Gordon's approach.

"When I used to own my company, I had a badge that I would wear at the start of every week," says Gordon. "It said, 'Thank God it's Monday!'"

After decades in the news journalism industry, Gordon settled in Hamilton with his wife Rita and opened his own public relations firm.

This business would go on to become the largest public relations firm in Hamilton and provide the connection that would dictate 13 years of Gordon's life and revolutionise the Waikato Institute of Technology.

"I was co-opted in to the Wintec council for my marketing and public relations experience," says Gordon. "I didn't realise that there was such a big challenge to undertake."

After 18 months, Gordon was nominated to stand for chair of Wintec.

"I'm told I won by one vote."

Forming an alliance with the new chief executive Mark Flowers, Gordon set out to overhaul the struggling institute.

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“Wintec was considered an underperforming institute and was under the supervision of the Government,” says Gordon. “It took three or four years to get to the point where Wintec was turned around and today it’s regarded as one of the top three or four performing polytechnics in the country.”

Beginning with just \$600,000 budgeted for the refurbishment of an old classroom, the transformation would eventually involve spending over \$100 million as Gordon and Mark became more ambitious, tackling projects such as the construction of the Gallagher Hub.

“It was a great place to work together; we were all there for the students. I would have liked to continue the job for another 12 years but my wife reminded me that you can stay too long.”

Although he stood down from the board in 2012, his name continues to be relevant at Wintec despite his departure from the position of Chair through the Gordon Chesterman Scholarship.

First awarded in 2013, the Gordon Chesterman Scholarship was established in recognition of his “significant contribution and valued work”.

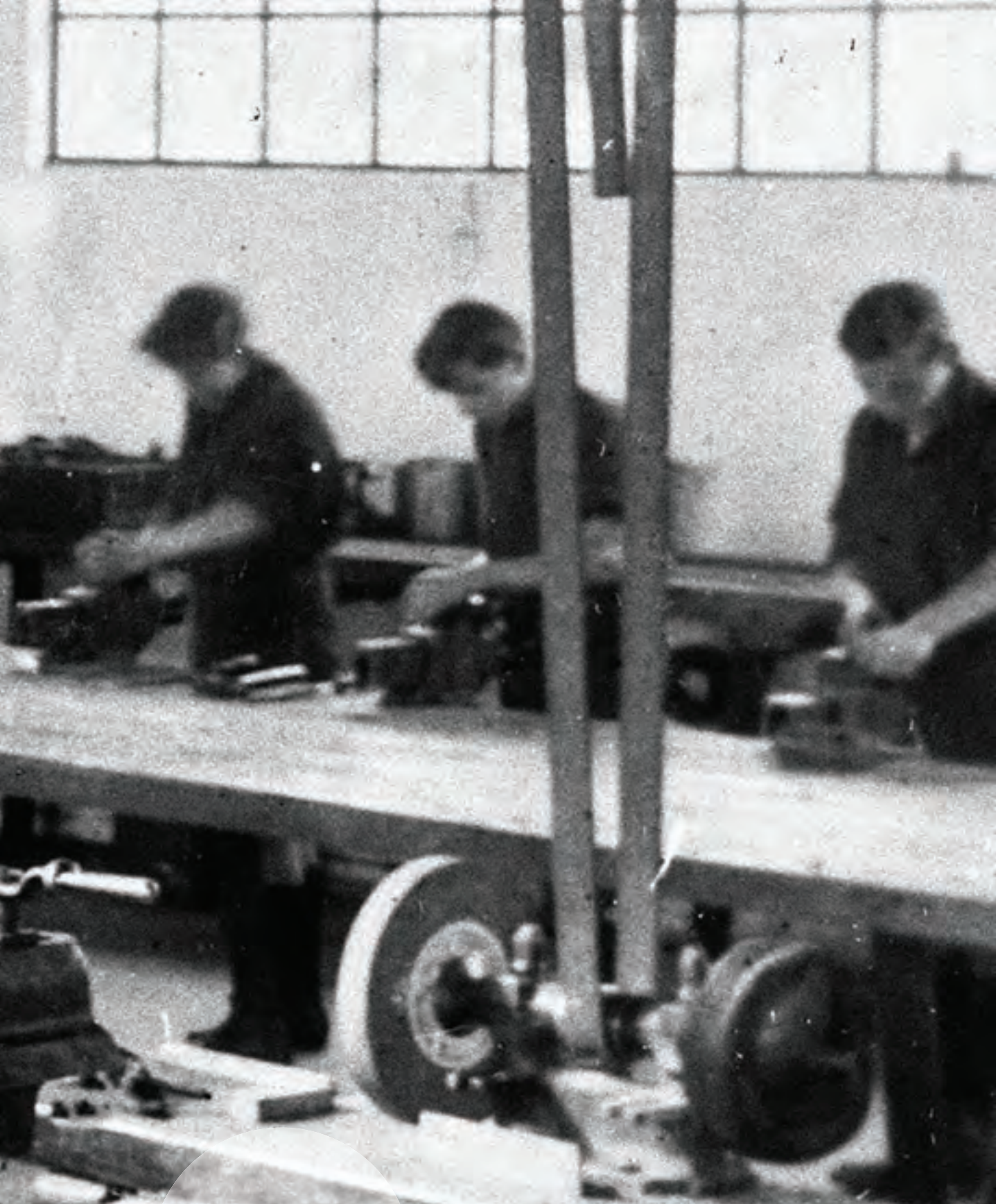
“The scholarship is fantastic,” says Gordon, “It’s really just about giving back.”

Gordon was also presented with a Wintec honorary fellowship in 2013 for his commitment to advocacy for Wintec’s School of Media Arts and services to public relations in New Zealand.

It seems foolish to try to reduce a lifetime of passionate endeavour to a few clichéd words but the life of Gordon Chesterman really has been a labour of love fuelled by a love of labour.

As Gordon himself says, “If you love your job then you’ll never have to work a day in your life.” ●







“I think any public healthcare service is exciting to be involved in.”

Jill Clendon

*Nursing policy advisor/researcher, New Zealand Nurses' Organisation;
Adjunct professor, Victoria University and Wintec nursing graduate*

The nurses' champion

By Kathryn Mercer

Jill Clendon was the only woman competing in the Formula 3 New Zealand National Road Racing Motorcycle Championship in 2008. She came off during a qualification round, injuring a knee. She got off lightly compared with two fellow competitors, who were killed in a collision. "It was a horrible weekend," she recalls.

Track cleared, racing resumed. "Down the back straight of Pukekohe coming to the hairpin I went over what I think was blood on the track and I just thought, these guys were both about my age, both had kids my kids' ages, and I thought, I've done this, I don't need to do it any more."

She finished the race ranked 10th in New Zealand, and walked away.

Motorcycling started as an economic commuting option, but after saying, "why not" to a race meet, she discovered "the best fun ever."

"That period [was] often the most rewarding but also the most emotionally challenging period of my life."

Jill realised she could foot it in the cut-throat, racing environment, but putting herself first in her racing no longer fitted comfortably with her values, priorities and direction.

Today, Jill pushes herself hard away from the racetrack, waging an evidence-based fight for the New Zealand Nurses Organisation, with added clout coming from her hard-won academic titles of Doctor and Adjunct Professor. She argues for wider recognition of nurses' training and skills - nurses are "not just doctor's handmaidens."

In 2014, Jill spoke at Wintec's nursing graduation. Dr Patricia McClunie-Trust, principal academic staff member at Wintec's nursing school, pointed the masters students to her example of "perseverance and determination."

Slim and standing tall in her academic gown with crimson hood, gold tassels swinging from her Tudor bonnet, Jill proceeded to the podium, humbled to be asked to speak. The adventurous spirit that she showed in her motorcycle racing was still there: in February, she had tumbled down an 11.5 metre tomo while laying out an orienteering course. In her speech, she reflected on the resilience developed as a nurse that got her through the traumatic experience.

She encouraged the students to publish their research, making it available to other professionals, such as herself, to benefit the community.

Jill's independent streak revealed itself early in life when, at 17, she swapped Auckland for Finland as an exchange student. Family expected her to become a lawyer. Jill's Finnish friends expected her to go to university. She returned determined to prove she could get a degree.

Jill graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and speaking five languages, she wanted to become a spy in Russia. She smiles ruefully: there weren't too many vacancies in that line of work. Instead, Jill's love of extreme sports won out.

After helicoptering with American ski patrols "scraping up people off the snow for a number of years," it took working in a summer school camp ward for Jill to realise that nursing was a good fit. She saw that nursing was about walking beside people, supporting them to manage their experiences in a way that works for them.

Jill studied nursing at Wintec, and since then has continued to collect a long list of qualifications.

After several more years working in America, Jill returned to New Zealand to work at Starship Children's Health, then as a public health nurse running clinics in schools where she dealt with everything from bullying, to school sores, to hunger.

Jill was invited to teach nursing at Massey University, and completed her PhD in nursing the same year she gave up motorcycle racing. She then went teaching at the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology but missed the research, so after two years became the nursing policy advisor/researcher at the New Zealand Nurses Organisation from their tiny Nelson office.

At 44, with a dash of grey in her short, straight hair, Jill has not slowed down. When not outdoors orienteering, mountain biking, tramping with family or teaching skiing, she may be found at a community-led healthcare service working with the urban poor. Or using her skills as a researcher and writer, her track record of peer-reviewed publications continuing to grow as she seeks better ways of doing things.

Jill may not be a spy in Russia, but every day draws on the cultural awareness and research skills she developed in her BA and further education. It may not have the adrenalin rush of a motorcycle race, but she thinks "any public healthcare service is exciting to be involved in." Life is full. ●



“It is a journey for life. We are constantly reviewing our process, trying to improve it and take any waste that we find in that process out altogether.”

Change for the better

By Jocelyn Doll

It had reached the point where John Cook, managing director of Stainless Design, felt he couldn't employ any more people; he thought his design and manufacturing business had grown as much as it could under his governance. Around the same time, John was recruited to participate in a business development pilot project.

The focus was to build better relationships with Japanese businesses by learning and implementing a practice called Kaizen. Subsidised by the New Zealand Trade Enterprise, the project gave 10 businesses the opportunity to learn Kaizen principles and travel to Japan to see them at work and carry out further study. John was impressed with what he saw, and realised Stainless Design wasn't living up to its potential. When he returned, he and the rest of his team sat down with pizza and beer and started the Kaizen journey.

Nine years later, Stainless Design has hired a new CEO and John is stepping back into a governance role. Through Kaizen, Stainless Design is no longer dependent on him, and he feels it is time he gave back to the community.

John, who this year received an honorary fellowship from Wintec, described Kaizen as "incremental change for the better". For example, there are whiteboards in the office that display daily and weekly goals, brainstormed by the employees, that will make the day-to-day process even smoother: things as small as reprogramming someone's name in the photocopier.

"It is a journey for life," John explained. "We are constantly reviewing our process, trying to improve it and take any waste that we find in that process out altogether."

To start with, Stainless Design worked only with stainless steel, and the majority of their business was manufacturing parts for dairy machines. In the late 90s, the company diversified. John said they brought new machines onto the floor and started incorporating other metals in their production. Today the company makes everything from parts for blueberry sorting and packing machines, to component parts for farm machinery.

The workshop is spotless. Clearly labelled tool boards separate the workspaces. There is no clutter. The floor looks clean enough to eat off. Each employee has his

or her workspace and it doesn't seem to interfere with anyone else's. Pausing only momentarily to greet the boss, everyone goes about his or her work quickly and efficiently.

Inside the packing and shipping building is the on-site school as well as the inventory room.

"Is there a class going on today?" John asked, ducking his head into an office at the top of the stairs.

"Yes the engineers are doing a session about the software upgrade.

"See, I don't even know everything that is going on. That is how you know you are successful, when you aren't needed any more."

The basic idea of Kaizen is to make the company more like a racing pit crew team. They have to be highly organised and the tools have to be at hand. They have to be ready to do their job. They need to have a standard operating procedure so that each team member knows what the other is doing, and before the race even begins, the pit crew has to be properly trained.

In the initial stages of implementation nine years ago, the first thing they did, as a team, was to relocate the machines to create better flow within the workshop. The new floor plan was developed with input from the workers. John said they were encouraged to share their daily frustrations, such as searching for something because it didn't have a place where it could always be found, in order for the changes to be what was best for everyone.

The people at Stainless Design reduced and reorganised. Everything had a place that was clearly labelled. Cleaning supplies were easily accessible. Anything that did not add value to the work area was removed. Even spaces away from the workshop were redesigned: the top drawer in each engineer's workspace has a foam insert with cut-outs for specific tools. Each pen, ruler and stapler has a specific place. When they open the drawer they know exactly what is missing, and they are less likely to put useless tools back in the drawer.

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Implementing Kaizen enabled continued growth. The company hired more and more people despite John's feeling that the company had become as large as he could handle.

John emphasised the idea that Kaizen is a process. "We never strive for perfection today. We don't have enough knowledge to arrive at perfection with the first cut." He said it took three years to create the culture, and it is a continuing journey to this day.

It is because of Kaizen that John was able to dedicate his time to partnerships with Wintec and business growth projects such as Soda Inc. and the Waikato Regional Economic Development Strategy Governance Group.

"In the past I would have been so engrossed and so involved in the daily activities of Stainless Design that I could never have participated in any of those projects," he said.

On March 27, 2014, John received an honorary fellowship from Wintec for business excellence and involvement in the Wintec Mechanical Engineering Employer Participatory Group, as well as his other contributions to the community.

"A lot of the young people who work at Stainless Design have come through Wintec in some training or another," John said.

Earlier this year, John's replacement took over. He now has more time to himself and is able to give back to the community by sharing and encouraging other companies to incorporate Kaizen.

"If all of New Zealand, including the public sector, engaged in Kaizen we would be a far better nation," he said. ●







“It’s just common sense.
If you want to save money,
if you want to be economical,
it’s a lot better to position the
house just facing the sun.
It’s so basic, so simple.”

Xavier Meade de la Cueva

Eco-designer and long-time Wintec graphic design tutor

A better life

By Rich Garratt

Being part of Wintec since around the time of disco's decline last century, Xavier Meade de la Cueva has influenced generations of students.

He has taught at Wintec for more than 30 years. Never a full-time Wintec staff member, yet a favourite tutor of many, Xavier's perspectives on life and maintaining vitality permeate his teaching.

And it's not just talk.

Architect by trade and by qualification, the majority of more than 30 Xavier-designed homes are in Raglan, with a couple in the Coromandel. You can see his work for yourself at www.xaviermeade.net.

Students who had done his eco design course and were interviewed as background for this profile spoke warmly of his teaching. Their responses suggested he had had a "green" influence on their worldviews and lifestyle choices.

Xavier is delighted to be given that feedback.

"Yeah, that's exactly my intention!

"I find that there are some studies to get a job and most people come here to study to get a job. Or there are studies for life, for living better, for having a better life, and I think that eco design kind of tries to fill that gap.

"I want them to be aware of the meals they eat. I want them to be aware of the products they buy in the supermarket. I want them to go to the local market instead of the supermarket. I want to change their everyday life."

When asked what he thinks is the reason for his students' acceptance and perhaps adoption of the concepts he shares, Xavier says: "It's just common sense.

"I find it really incredible that education in New Zealand doesn't make people aware of the sun's path, you know, like the difference in winter and in summer, and people who rent a house or buy a house, they don't even know if it is facing south or is facing north. If you want to save money, if you want to be economical, it's a lot better to position the house just facing the sun.

"It's so basic, so simple, and I give them such basic, simple things.

"We do an exercise called food miles. You end up seeing that you're eating oil because of all the transport that goes on around us. I just try to make my students aware of wellness."

It was after meeting his wife, Carolyn, and moving to Aotearoa that Xavier really embraced the eco concepts himself.

He says he came from Mexico to New Zealand "just to try it, and to see what would happen".

After applying for work at advertising agencies and being turned down because he knew too much, someone at one of the agencies said to Xavier: "You should be teaching."

He thought of teachers he'd admired and realised it would be a good move.

Someone suggested he talk with a photography tutor at Wintec, Brian Perry. Brian looked at Xavier's curriculum vitae and offered him a job on the spot, asking if he wanted to start the following Monday as a graphic design class tutor.

Xavier said yes, got taken to meet the head of school, and signed the forms the same day. He was in, and generations of Wintec design students have experienced the benefit. ●



“I did whatever I could to get a job. I was pretty driven, passionate and didn't care about the pay as I just wanted to get into a good kitchen.”

Master chef gives back

By Brad Roberts

Josh Emett's career has taken him around the world and made him a household name in New Zealand.

The man who worked as a chef for Gordon Ramsay and started his own restaurants in New Zealand and Australia, along with starring as a judge on MasterChef, got his grounding in food as a youngster on a Waikato farm.

Josh has always loved cooking. "Being brought up on a farm you have it embedded in you at a young age.

"I've always cooked and always baked, massive amounts of baking. I baked when I was growing up, more because I wanted to eat it than anything else. I have a sweet tooth."

Living the farm life and going shooting from a young age meant he also learned a lot about different meats, and explored a range of cooking styles.

The next step was formal training before going out to achieve his goals. Wintec gave him the stepping stone.

"I went to Wintec because I had left school. I wanted to do some formal training to start my career.

"Wintec was good at introductions to the industry and they know chefs, and where to get jobs and where to go for advice."

In the years since, Josh has become one of New Zealand's top chefs. He has also developed an eagle eye. During our lunchtime interview at his Ostro restaurant in Auckland, he keeps close watch over proceedings. Josh says his number one priority is safety. At one stage he sees knives laid out in plain view of customers and tells the chef to put them away. All around us, the busy restaurant with a view of the Waitemata harbour runs smoothly and efficiently.

Over the years, Josh has developed a classic cooking style. "Classic flavours. French and European flavours. I love working with duck, fish, and shellfish and always with a twist."

Inspiration for his menus comes from everywhere.

"My inspiration comes from home, work, staff, you name it. It comes from eating in restaurants and supermarkets. I get it from looking at colours and shapes. Looking out there, you see things that spark your imagination."

He also draws on a wealth of experience, including in London. He went overseas after getting his Wintec qualification. It was, he says, a real eye opener.

"I did whatever I could to get a job. I was pretty driven, passionate and didn't care about the pay as I just wanted to get into a good kitchen."

It was a challenging time, but his career was already advancing when he met Michelin Star chef Gordon Ramsay. He worked under Ramsay's guidance as a chef for 12 years. "I had quite a good relationship with him - good fun, amazing work, great opportunities. He gave me a great platform to perform and to put myself out there. I took it."

While still living in London, Josh was offered a role as judge on the MasterChef television series back in Auckland. He saw this as an opportunity to give back his time to others after he had received so much help when he was younger. Josh says he always wanted to come back to New Zealand and MasterChef was his chance for another challenge.

Josh says his early life on a Waikato farm still influences the way he cooks and the produce he uses. Having his passion for food and a basic qualification helped him achieve his goals.

When employing chefs for his kitchens Josh says: "A base qualification is necessary [but] I am also looking for old fashioned characteristics. You can teach people how to cook, but you can't always change people's personalities. They either want to be there or they don't."

His final word is one of encouragement. "Always give yourself a pat on the back when you have achieved what you had set out to achieve." ●



“

*I love writing, I love reading,
and I love working and talking
and interviewing – so I guess I
knew I was either going to be an
English teacher like my parents
or a journalist.”*

‘I can’t think of another life’

By Lauren Barnard

For Carly Flynn, journalism is all about the people. This remarkable woman’s voice has echoed around the world. An accomplished journalist, presenter, and producer, she has worked with the NZ Herald, Prime, several radio stations, and TV3, among many others.

She has covered everything from earthquakes and fires to everyday happenings and fashion shows; she runs telethons and radio shows as easily as a household rampant with young children.

And wherever she goes, it’s about people. “My favourite thing about [my job] is that I get to speak to people.

“I like to talk with anybody that’s gracious in sharing what they’ve learned, and their passions, in order to inspire others.

“In a recent story, we had two wonderful women share the most crippling stories of insomnia,” she says.

“They had nothing to gain from speaking to me and giving up their time and their day and their life, and crying on television and telling us that they were suicidal, but they were just gracious enough to share their story in order to help others.

“It’s been sort of therapeutic for them to realise that they’re not alone, and that their issues are not endemic just to them.”

Her first television gig saw her reporting, presenting and producing for Prime TV in the Waikato, where she fell in love with Dave Flynn, a talented cameraman. “It’s quite a cliché, but there are many ‘media couples’ that are formed within the industry – because we do, by the nature of the job, have to spend a lot of time together. So you become close.

“We’re quite harsh on each other – probably harder on each other than I am on any other camera-person and he on any other journalist. I think we like to push each other.”

Their children, Tilly, 3, and Jude, 2, have grown up with Carly’s passion for news and the people making it. “I’m a news junkie,” she says. “Even with my daughter at 3, it’s acceptable for me to change the channel from Dora to the news at six o’clock.”

She is “a mum first and foremost”, but her work was her first love, and Carly is faithful. “I’ve never thought about not doing my career, even when I had my children. I inevitably come back to journalism.

“It’s been difficult, as a new mum, to keep a job in the media. Because I probably could have had the babies and become [solely] a mum, and I absolutely do put that first ... but for a very long time I was and am a journalist, and that’s what I’ve always wanted to be since I was 15 years old.”

Carly is well aware of the impact that her work can have. She recalls covering the 2009 earthquake and resultant tsunami that devastated Samoa.

Her crew patched their feed to 16 different news agencies around the world; they were the first on the scene, the only link from the broken country to the outside world. “We were the first point of information, in some cases, for people to find out if their relatives were alive.

“We had one man who’d lost 10 family members, and only knew that his aunty was alive because she appeared on Sunrise with me that morning.”

However, Carly is quietly humble about her pivotal role in reporting the disaster. “It was phenomenal – it was a real adrenal buzz – but it was also a real privilege to be able to deliver some much-needed news to a community.

“You never like to ask, and you never presume that someone is going to talk to you about their tragic experience. But ... in some ways I like to think that talking about it helps them as well.”

...continued

She considers her audience almost as closely as her subjects, recalling with fondness the hand-written response letters from Nightline's viewers, during her early days in TV.

"That's one of my favourite moments from the Nightline times. You know, grandmas still write those letters, because they're not necessarily on Facebook or Twitter or whatever, so it's always a real pleasure."

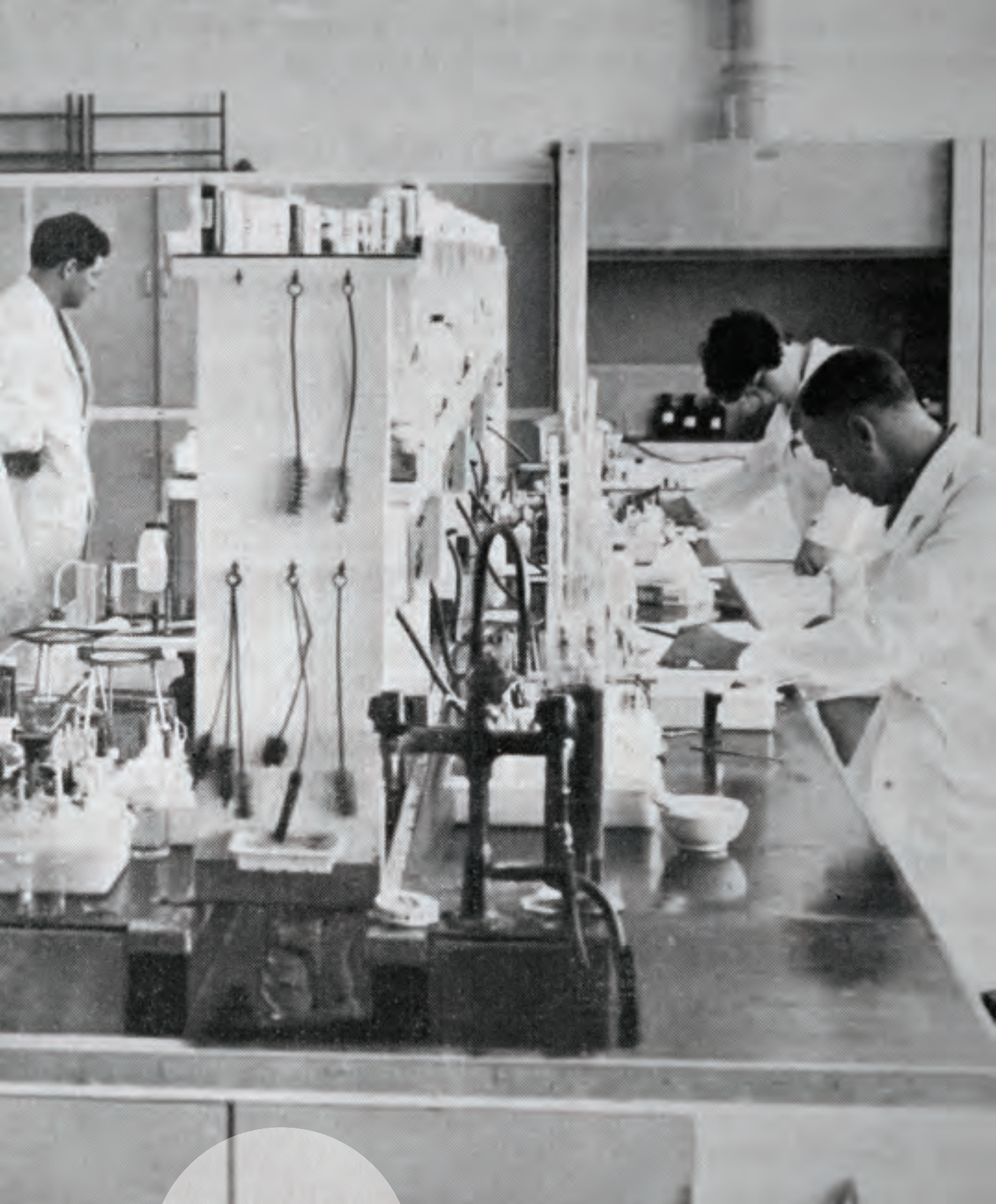
Carly makes her early start on Wintec's journalism programme in 1995 sound almost akin to running away and joining the circus. "I went to Wintec at the end of sixth form, much to the dismay of my parents, and the principal tried to get me to stay and be head girl... but there was no way.

"I'd been accepted when I was sixteen, and there was no way I wasn't going to go and do this wonderful course, what I truly wanted to do," she grins.

"I love writing, I love reading, and I love working and talking and interviewing – so I guess I knew I was either going to be an English teacher like my parents, or a journalist.

"I can't think of another life." ●





A man with short dark hair, wearing a black leather jacket, stands outdoors with his hands clasped. He is positioned in front of a modern building with dark wood paneling and a large, rusted metal pillar to his left. The pillar has several circular holes and a large circular cutout near the bottom. The building behind him has a corrugated metal roof and a glass door with a wooden frame decorated with carvings. The ground is grassy.

“

As a Māori I felt proud to be in an environment that enhanced my identity and made me feel good about who I was and who my people were.”

Darrin Haimona

Former programme co-ordinator of Wintec's Te Whiuwhiu o te Hau (Māori Counselling programme)

Inspired by community

By Mereana Austin

Darrin Haimona is inspired by helping his community, and nine years spent working at Wintec helped him on his mission.

Darrin is chief executive officer at Te Hauora O Ngati Haua Trust, an iwi health, social service and whanua ora provider. The organisation provides a range of government funded programmes such as youth mentoring, lessening family violence and strengthening families.

"We want to ensure our families and people have access to basic needs to be able to survive," Darrin says.

Ngati Haua covers Waharoa, Matamata, Cambridge, Hamilton and Te Aroha and provides services for around 1500 people a year.

Darrin wants to make his community safer.

"We want to make sure that we take advantage of all the opportunities of a citizen, that we can be well educated, well employed, healthy and strong and have meaningful roles in our lives.

"Being part of that is also being able to practise who we are as being Māori and our cultural identity is really important for us."

Darrin taught Te Whiuwhiu o Te Hau, Wintec's Māori counselling programme, between 1994 and 2003.

He was also one of the programme designers for the Bachelor of Applied Social Science. The degree brought together a number of programmes such as Māori counselling and social work. At the time there were numerous diplomas but no degree so the various programmes were linked to enable those who had a national diploma to stay on another year and complete a degree. The idea was to equip students with the skills not only to deliver out in the community, but also to become accomplished in academic writing and research.

The Bachelor of Applied Social Science was accredited in 2002.

Darrin says not only was Wintec a hub of learning and practice, but as a Māori, it was a great environment to be in.

"During the time I stayed there Māori were visible, were visibly proud of their identity and their uniqueness, which I think they expressed confidently in that time," he says.

"So as a Māori I felt proud to be in an environment that enhanced my identity and made me feel good about who I was and who my people were."

Darrin also speaks with immense pride about Wintec's previous wharenuī, Te Kakano a te Kaahu.

"Its stories, its environment, where it was located, it embraced every student of every culture, of any age, whether they came from Waikato or not. And so the stories in there were an important part of my identity."

Darrin says his involvement at Wintec gave him ideas about what he could do.

"It was the knowledge I amassed over the whole nine years I'd been there that helped me to think about and put in place the issues I'm doing today in my own community," he says.

When asked about his achievements at Te Hauora O Ngati Haua Trust, Darrin laughs and says "we're still going".

"We were initially a two-year pilot but we still exist after 14 years," he says.

"I think we're really proud about the fact that there's been a reduction in the levels of violence in our communities through education. That people are more aware about the environment and the community's more conscious about issues that impact their lives like health and education, even the environment.

"But there are still on-going pressures that affect people so that's a serious concern for us."

Ultimately Darrin wants to make a difference.

"And to empower our people to have control over their lives and their destiny," he says. ●



“In a way I was quite relieved to retire but I also was very sad to go because it was a tremendous place to work. So many brilliant people, smart people, and the students were great.”

Peter and Joan Johnson

Wintec principal, 1982 – 1994 and wife, Joan Johnson, former Wintec librarian

The pushbiking chief executive

By Alyson Eberle

“He must be the only CE who rode his bike to work every day,” Joan Johnson says with a laugh of her husband Peter.

Today, the term CE may be associated with fast cars, business suits and long-afternoon work-lunches, which is a world far from the little villa in a Flagstaff cul-de-sac where Peter and Joan Johnson live.

Peter was the CE at Wintec (then called the Waikato Technical Institute) from 1982 until 1994, but Hamilton is a long way from where Peter began his career.

Born in the United Kingdom in 1933, Peter arrived on New Zealand shores in 1955. After working at different educational institutes around New Zealand and Singapore, he started at the Waikato Technical Institute in the late 1960s.

“First of February 1968 is when I started and I was the head of buildings department for the polytech, which you now call Wintec. It wasn’t until 1982 that I was appointed as Principal, what they call now CE of the school, but I don’t like that title, never really suited me.”

The following year the future Mrs Peter Johnson, Joan Duthie, joined the polytech staff.

Joan, who was born in Dunedin in 1935, joined as a librarian.

“It was a small place back then, around 23 or so staff, everybody knew everybody,” says Peter.

“And I was their first full-time librarian at Wintec,” adds Joan with a smile.

The technical institute was where the two first met and over time it became the backdrop for their budding romance. “He was a good customer,” said Joan. “I’m not sure he turned all his books in on time though.”

“I was a regular library user - I was very keen on building up the library stock and that is how we met,” said Peter. “I like to think the main effect of Joan and I marrying was that instead of me having to remember to turn my library books in on time, she would just return them for me when she knew they were due.”

The two married some time in 1981.

The couple worked together until 1994 when they both

decided to retire in their 60s. “We retired together,” says Peter. “Yes, on the exact same day in ’94. In a way I was quite relieved to retire but I also was very sad to go because it was a tremendous place to work. So many brilliant people, smart people, and the students were great. It was wonderful, so I didn’t want to leave from that, but I knew the time had come and I had to go.”

Since retiring Peter and Joan have kept themselves busy with their three children and six grandchildren. “We’ve got three children, one boy and two girls. It’s interesting we have, and this is not bragging, but we have masters degrees in the family - my other daughter is studying for hers, so almost four. So all my talking up on polytechnics, and we all still have university degrees,” laughs Peter.

Along with their family commitments the two keep themselves busy with side jobs in the education field. “I still work as a reader/writer at the Polytech,” says Joan. “But that may not last for much longer.”

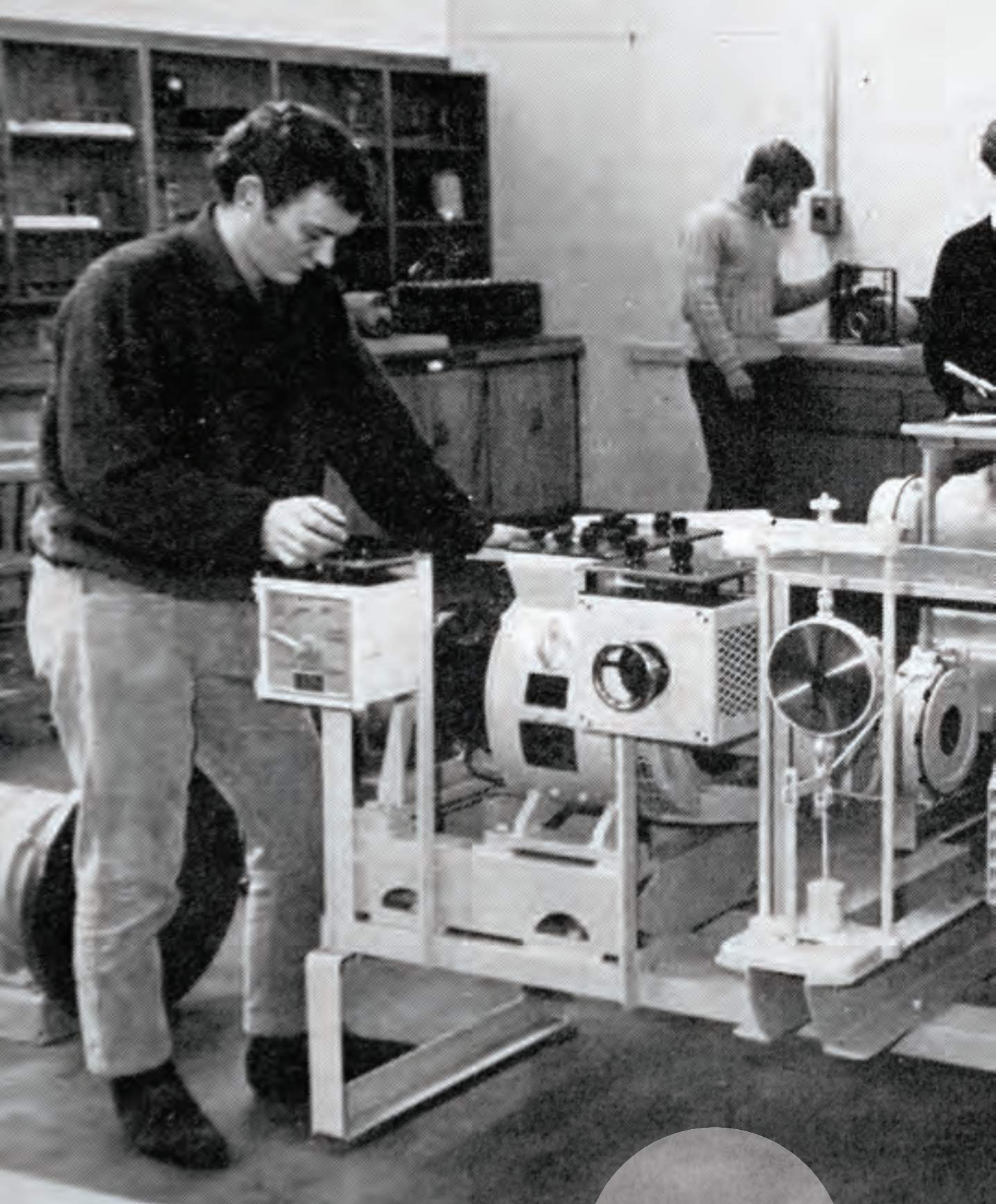
“I also still do some teaching,” adds Peter. “My colleagues would laugh - at polytech we had a staff room, and when we were still small, most people went there for morning and afternoon tea. I used to go there and I made a point to sit with the various groups, and whenever I sat with the information technology people I could only ever understand the words: ‘if’ ‘and’ ‘but’ and ‘that’ - every other word I couldn’t understand. So if they knew now that I was teaching basic computer skills at Senior Net, they would laugh.”

When they are not busy with family or teaching the couple enjoy travelling abroad.

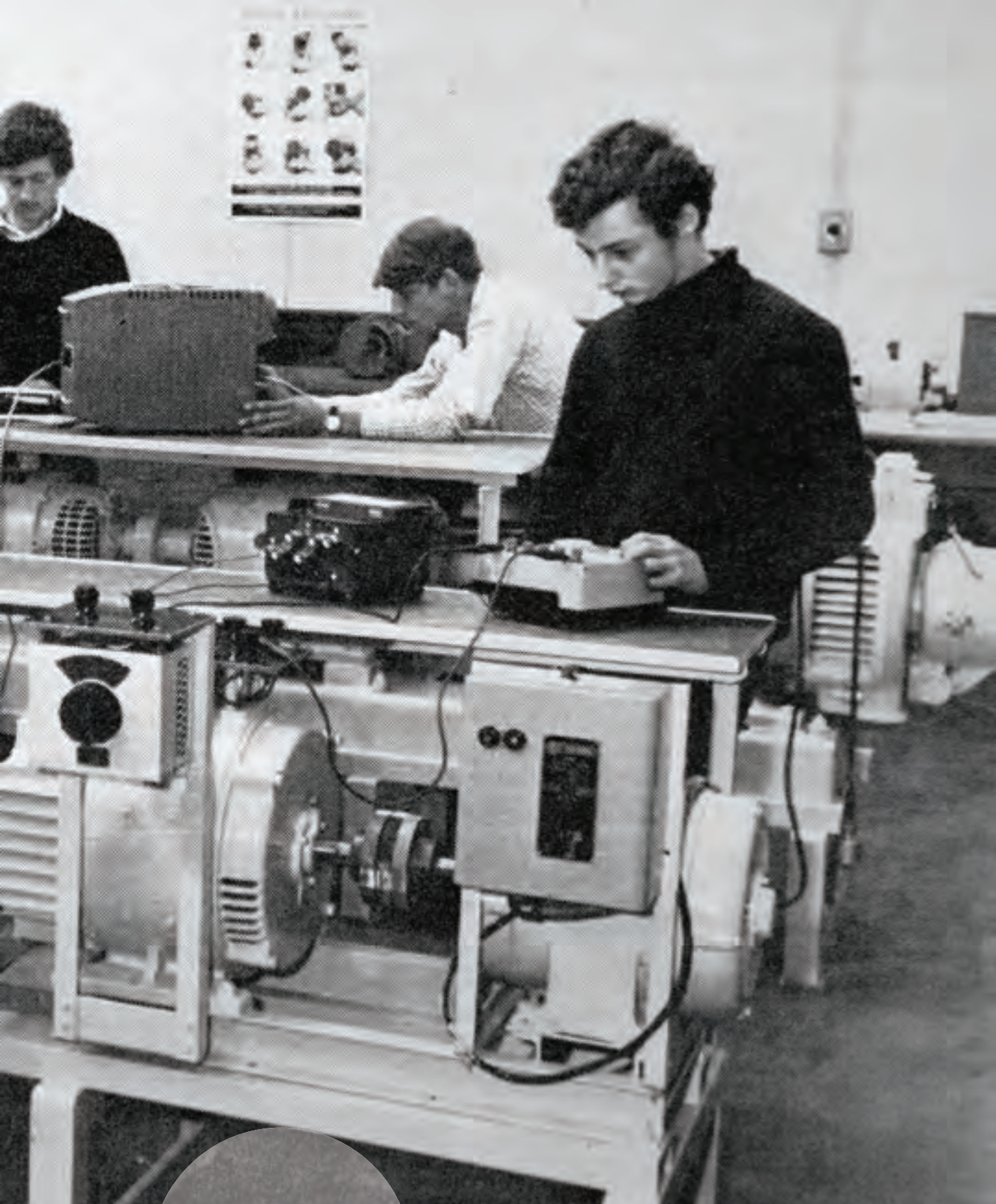
“We do two forms of travel,” says Peter. “We travel together through home exchanges. We’ve been to Spain, France, the United States three times, Canada, the UK, Zimbabwe, a variety of places.

“The love of my life, apart from my wife of course, is cycling. I have done and still do a lot of long distance cycling. I’ve ridden across Australia, I have ridden the length of the UK twice, and I’m going again this year,” says Peter.

“It is surprisingly a busy life, I can’t understand why. I suppose you do everything a bit slower and take time to enjoy life.” ●



Students hard at work, Waikato Technical Institute, 1970s



“It was terrible because you were involved with all that, people missing, dead. People that you knew very well.”



For art's sake

By Nancy El-Gamel

In 1939, New Zealand entered a war that sent 140,000 men and women overseas to fight for King and country. The walls of the then Hamilton Technical College were lined with photographs of those students and teachers who had gone to war.

The college was a combined secondary, night and trade training school. While most students would have been tasked with washing paintbrushes or cleaning blackboards, John Millar was in charge of updating the information on each young soldier pictured on the wall.

His wife, Minette, remembers the details well.

“John did all the names and information and ranks and everything, all underneath all these photographs,” she says.

He would also update information as news came back from the war. He had been given an emotionally heavy task.

“It was terrible because you were involved with all that, people missing, dead. People that you knew very well.”

The walls that held the photographs of serving and deceased soldiers are now part of Wintec, after the college later became a technical tertiary institute.

As the Millars remember the rationing and hardship New Zealand experienced during the war, they sit in their beautifully presented home surrounded by John's artwork.

The living room is filled with his sculptures, sketches and ink and wash artwork.

John and Minette both studied at The Hamilton Technical College in the 1940s. Although they were the same year at school, they didn't get to know each other until they had left.

John and his pals spent their school days in the art room and rarely left. In one non-art exam John took, he remembers getting just one mark for turning up, because he didn't attend the other classes.

“It was highly illegal, but we got away with it for years!”

“You people did,” remembers his wife. “The rest of us didn't!”

John had the opportunity to go to Christchurch to study art after winning a scholarship. His principal, Whampoa Fraser, suggested that John should talk the scholarship over with his mother.

But John's mother would never know of her son's artistic success.

His father had died when John was younger and his family was too poor to consider sending him to Christchurch. So he never told her.

As it turned out, John didn't need to attend art school to harvest income from his talent.

While Selfridges and Bloomingdales in London and New York were making a stir with their window displays, John became the artist in charge of the windows in Hamilton's own department store, H&J Court.

His neighbour, Barbara Jordan, remembers going into town every Friday and making a point of visiting the store, just to peek at the windows which were famous, not only in town but around the world.

“We used to get them [the windows] all dressed on the Friday and we would leave them screened until about quarter to five,” he remembers as they discuss the excitement of the windows' big reveal.

John's windows won many awards and were even featured in *Das Schaufenster*, a highly respected window display magazine from Germany.

John would begin with a colour, which was assigned to him from the agencies in London and New York, and then make a mock-up of the designs in his workshop on Ward Street.

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The wall in his workshop was divided into the different windows he had to dress, and his team would help him put them all together, using all sorts of texture and assorted models, which would then be moved to the shop for display.

John relied a lot on the lights that they had and, at times, the whole street in front of the windows would be bathed in colour from the displays, which on rainy days would shimmer off the saturated pavement.

Surprisingly, Christmas was not John's favourite season to work in. "It's a lot of work and a lot of small stuff. Spring was the nice one because everything was new, like the flowers."

By now he had married Minette after meeting her at a dance. "Everybody was after her," he says, smiling at his wife.

She knew his name from their schooldays, but that hindered rather than helped him. Luckily, John had grown up a bit since then.

After asking her to dance, and being turned down a few times, John finally convinced his wife to let him take her home.

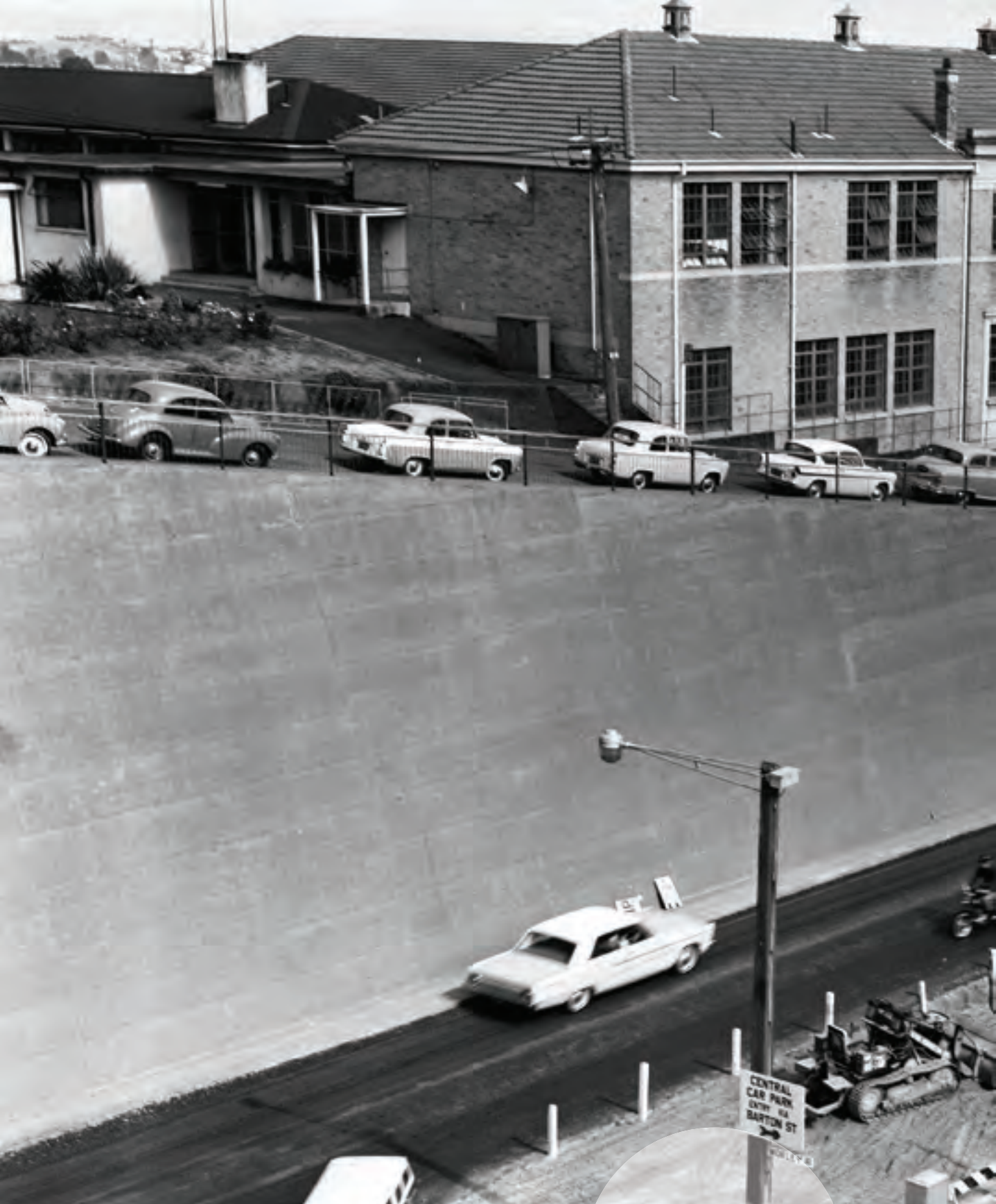
"I couldn't believe this nice young man was the same hooligan from tech," she recalls. "It didn't match up!"

A trainee nurse at the time, Minette was not in a rush to commit and claims she kept John guessing for quite a while.

The couple laugh as they seem to hear each other's side of the story for the first time, 64 years of marriage later. ●







Aerial view of Wintec House looking northwest, 1960s





Students get "hands-on", Waikato Technical Institute 1970s













“I’m so grateful that I get to do a job that can make a real difference, whether it’s campaigning to get legal highs off our streets, or to make our cities safer, or if it’s simply to inspire people to be kinder to each other.”

Making a difference

By Erin Majurey

The sun beams through the windows of the Hamilton News boardroom as editor Danielle Nicholson [Dani] jokes about which photo should be used to go with her profile.

"I don't want to look like a poser," she laughs.

But as the 33-year-old shares the tumultuous journey of losing her husband Clinton to brain cancer just a few years back, she is humble.

"There had been stuff going on with Clinton's moods, he had bad headaches...we discovered that he had a brain tumour." That was in July 2010, and their daughter Emma was 15 months old.

"Life fell apart," she says, holding back a tear. "It felt like everything as we knew it was tumbling down around us.

"I became a taxi driver, a counsellor, a psychiatrist, a nurse, a mum. I had to take over everything. Our roles as husband and wife were quite traditional in that he dealt with finances and the lawns, and I did the housework and the cooking and looked after Emma. All of a sudden he had major brain surgery and he couldn't deal with any of that stuff."

The surgery wasn't successful so the couple researched their options and Clinton underwent further brain surgery just three months later.

"It totally changed his personality and he became quite a volatile person to live with so life was harder than ever before," she says.

"Initially doctors told us that he might make eight to ten years, but the further we got along the whole brain tumour journey the prognoses kept being pulled back and pulled back."

Clinton died within two years of his diagnosis. It was then that Dani said she made the decision almost straight away to go back to her solace - writing.

Back in 2001, fresh out of Wintec's Bachelor of Media Arts and Diploma in Journalism courses, Dani put her skills to good use immediately. That year she secured her first job

as a sole journalist at the City Weekend. She stuck around when its content was merged into the Hamilton Press, which is where she really got a feel for community writing.

"Features have always been one of my favourite things to write, colour pieces, and my editor at the time really encouraged that and would give me constructive feedback on my writing. She also took me through subbing and layout, which has been hugely beneficial in my roles since."

After a change in management Dani chose to take the voluntary redundancy clause in her contract so she and Clinton could move to Perth. The couple moved back to Hamilton in 2005, following an 18-month stint in Australia and a short stay in Ireland. While she was doing some temp work for Fonterra, Dani was contacted by a friend and told to apply for the position of advertising features editorial supervisor at the Waikato Times. She nailed it.

"I had the interview and it was terrifying to be honest. I wanted to be back there so badly."

Dani says she loved her time there. "I was really proud of the work that I did there, especially on House and Lifestyle magazine. It was like a compact version of New Zealand House and Garden."

Dani and Clinton decided they would start trying for children. Emma was born in April the following year.

On maternity leave, Dani continued to do some freelance work for the Times and everything was going great; until it wasn't. Clinton's death was devastating but Dani says she refused to let it break her.

"In a situation like that you either become a victim of your circumstances or you just pull your socks up and get on with it. And I just thought, you know what, for Emma's sake I need to not be a victim."

Then came new beginnings - a new home, and a new job with Hamilton News.

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"I started back as a journalist with Colin Vincent just doing three days a week, with the plan to take over his role as editor because he was looking to retire."

Now, just on from the two-year anniversary of Clinton's death, Dani has not only relaunched the paper under a new vision, but has also taken out two major awards at this year's APN Regional Media Awards including Senior Community Journalist of the Year. In July the paper was named as the only New Zealand finalist in a field of 10 in the community newspaper of the year category in the prestigious PANPA awards.

"I'm so grateful that I get to do a job that can make a real difference, whether it's campaigning to get legal highs off our streets, or to make our cities safer, or if it's simply to inspire people to be kinder to each other.

"As a journalist you've got to be a pretty tough nut. I don't think I would bring what I do to this job now if I hadn't gone through all that stuff over those couple of years with Clinton. I'm a completely different person now.

"Don't get me wrong, I'm really grateful for everything in my life, I have a fantastic family, a great little girl, a job that I absolutely love but it's really hard sometimes," she says, laughing.

"It made me realise, as a woman I'm capable of so much more than I ever thought I was capable of." ●







“I plan to be here for a long time. I want to contribute to the community.”

Ye Tun Oo

Burma Refugee and Wintec student

Safe haven in Hamilton

By Donna-Lee Biddle

Chanting, “Doh Ayey! Doh Ayey!!” (Our cause! Our cause!), Ye Tun Oo marched the desolate streets of the Burmese delta town, Bogalay. The 18-year-old was angered about the absence of civil freedoms for his people under the military dictatorship. He found other students who spoke his frustration and joined what later became known as one of Burma’s most violent protests, the Uprising.

On September 18, 1988, a month after protests had begun, martial law was imposed and all public demonstrations were banned. It is estimated 3000 people were gunned down. Tun was scared but stayed to continue with what is most important to him, his education.

“There is no importance placed on education, it’s a fight,” says Tun, who is now studying information technology at Wintec.

Back in Burma, it was a lengthy road for the media and computer student, but he did well in his studies and started working with computer software in a photo and video studio.

In 2006, Tun, who had continued to protest against the regime, felt that it was no longer safe for him in his hometown of Bogalay. He left for fear his mother and two younger sisters would be harmed. With no identification and few belongings, he fled to Thailand.

His new home was in the Umpiem refugee camp. There was no electricity and restrictions were placed on all 20,000 refugees. They were not allowed to venture from the camp without permission.

“It is hard in the refugee camp, the living conditions – they are poor.”

He met his wife Ohn Mar in the first year at the camp and they shared the same values. They had a son, Min Thant Aung, four years later.

“We set up a small school and used leaves for the roof. My wife taught the nursery children.”

After the birth of his son, Tun wanted more for his family. Representatives from the New Zealand Embassy were walking around the camps and it was Tun’s chance to apply for a better life.

“They asked us if we wanted to apply and we jumped at the chance. We knew New Zealand would be a good place for us.”

Weeks after arriving in New Zealand with his son, wife and mother-in-law Tin Nyo, he enrolled in Wintec’s Certificate in English as an Additional Language. The certificate helps foreign students with their speech, reading and writing skills to prepare them for tertiary study in New Zealand. In two years, he completed the certificate, the Diploma in English as an Additional Language and a Certificate in Computing.

Hamilton has become a safe haven for Tun and his family. His son is settled at kindergarten and his English is excellent. “He (Min Thant Aug) sounds like a Kiwi kid, he watches lots of YouTube videos and that helps with learning the language. He teaches me!”

His wife is also studying at Wintec and is studying towards a Bachelor of Science and Technology.

Tun is always smiling. He is polite and his English is good. His face is weathered but you would never guess he has been through the struggles he has. He comes alive when he talks about his studies.

“The tutors are very supportive. The learning I do is very precious.”

He is thrilled that in New Zealand he gets to continue with what he fought for all those years ago.

“We have the chance to continue to get an education,” says Tun.

There is a substantial Burmese community in Hamilton and they have been a welcoming support system for Tun and his family.

“There are about 20 families here; some were in refugee camps too. We get together and talk and cook,” says Tun.

The longest-running military dictatorship in the world ended in Burma in 2010. Attitudes have changed slightly and Burma is now a safer place.

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Phone calls have been his only link to home. He has not seen his mother and sisters for eight years and hopes one day soon he will get to travel back.

The father of one is now enrolled in the Bachelor of Information Technology and is excited to start work when he graduates in 2016, hoping to one day work with a Burmese business.

"I plan to be here for a long time. I want to contribute to the community," says Tun. "This is a nice place for me and my son." ●







“I tell my Māori students
that you can do it, you can
achieve this too.”

The power of education

By Rachael Clarke

Young Tame dries a plate with a fresh tea towel and stacks it on top of a pile of plates, a pile he did not make himself but will claim he did if asked. He takes a glance over his shoulder; his plan is proceeding nicely. His nans and aunties spot him. They are impressed and give a proud nod. He has been in the wharekai all of five minutes, they think he has been pulling his weight all morning. It's all about strategy, he tells me. "They would say 'you're not a tourist, you are here to look after the people'. So as long as they see you working, you're okay. I learnt from a young age how to pacify our kuia in the kitchen."

Tame Pokaia's marae Tūrangawaewae is more disciplined than most as it is home to Kīngitanga. Pōtatau was the first Māori King selected by iwi in 1858 to unite the Māori people, stop intertribal warfare and block land sales. Tame tells the story of how before the ink was dry on Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the crown began acquiring vast amounts of Māori land. Governor Grey saw Pōtatau and the Kīngitanga as a threat. He said: "If you don't give up your reign as king, I will fight you, and I will take your resources." Pōtatau replied: "A puddle will go dry, but where I get my water from is deep in the bosom of mother earth, and it will never run dry." "And when that is all gone?" said Grey. "Then I will eat you," Pōtatau replied.

The land wars then began with Māori men, women and children losing their lives. In 1995 Queen Elizabeth travelled to New Zealand to apologise for the actions of the Crown during confiscations of land. "People may say Māori are uneducated, but we are a country that has brought Queen Elizabeth all the way over here to apologise," says Tame.

Tame loves his role as a Māori orator, historian and Wintec kaumātua, but the stories were of little interest when he was a young boy in Ngāruawāhia. Each year thousands would converge on his backyard, Tūrangawaewae, to celebrate the Coronation of the king.

He summarises his childhood in Ngāruawāhia simply. "I was born in that little town, I grew up in that little town and I love that little town." His life was a triangle where he went from Tūrangawaewae, to the Waikato River, to the football field. He only wanted to know about cars, playing sport and chasing girls. He didn't want to know about his genealogy. School wasn't cool for young, athletic Māori boys, explains Tame, so

he dropped out of secondary school. He wanted a cool car and needed money to do that. "I was tired of having no money in the weekends. If I wanted to go to the movies I had to wait for mum to get her benefit."

So he got his first job at the Horotiu meat works, earning \$160 a week and saved hard to buy his first car, a Morris Oxford. "It's one ugly car." After selling the Oxford, his collection of Ford Zephyrs began. "I had a Mark I, a Mark II, a Mark III, a Mark IV. The Mark III had a spoiler... a big stereo... me and my mates would cruise down the street like the kids do today. Everyone wanted to be my friend when I got my car."

At 18, Tame became an apprentice mutton butcher, earning \$600 a week. But not surprisingly he grew nervous at management's talk of restructuring. "Restructuring - just a nice way of saying see ya later," says Tame. He was flatting, had a young family, a daughter; he had responsibilities. "I thought - I've got no skills, I'm in serious trouble. I'll be down at the council picking up rubbish or something." So when Tame was made redundant, he made the big decision to spend 95% of his redundancy on his mortgage and the other 5% to go back to school. He was the first of his 18 brothers and sisters to attend university, an unknown world to his whānau. Confused about what he should study, he realised he knew his history like the back of his hand. "I knew it, but it meant nothing without a piece of paper. That paper had more mana, more power."

Tame took night classes at Waikato University as a tester to see if he could read and spell first. "My English and my Māori improved. I started getting passes. I thought, I can do it." When he decided to try full time study in teaching and Māori at Wintec, his wife Sandy wasn't enthused. "She said I'll be sitting in the library on holiday. Can't you go get a job at the bakery? I didn't feel fully supported at the time."

Tame persevered and soon after graduating, Wintec offered him a summer school teaching job. He says while only a geek would teach during summer, it was the best thing he has ever done. "Everything in our household changed. This word bill, it wasn't around any more. Mortgage - gone. All because of that sacrifice of working all summer." Then he started speaking on his marae, impressing Te Arikui Te Atairangikaahu who asked Tame to speak on her behalf in 1990. It is a proud

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achievement still evident in his voice today. When offered the role of Wintec kaumātua in 2006, Tame knew he was young for the job, but he was well suited due to his knowledge in the Māori world. “I have been a staff member at Wintec ever since I graduated,” he says proudly.

Tame’s knowledge of his whānau, their story and of the Waikato area has turned out well for him. It gave him opportunities in terms of education and careers that may not have happened otherwise. “I just tell my Māori students that this can be done, you can do this too.” He is still studying at Wintec, currently towards his Masters. “Put it this way – I’ve never finished studying,” he laughs. It took a backseat at the beginning, but education is now his life. ●







*“I put myself in the community
to do different things and
meet different people.”*

Journey to New Zealand

By Renee Warne

Kai Quan drinks tea in a noisy café, in the heart of Auckland's hustle and bustle. You can see the twinkle in her eyes as she talks about the journey of her life and how she ended up in New Zealand.

Kai is originally from China, a well-educated woman who gained a diploma in law back home. Even so she found it hard to get work so she decided to travel to Ireland, where she lived for five years. After working many part-time jobs and saving enough money to continue her studies, she decided to come all the way to New Zealand.

In 2009 Kai settled in Hamilton where she began studying at Wintec. She graduated in 2012 with a Bachelor in Applied Social Science, majoring in social work.

Being an international student Kai thought it was important to be involved with the community.

"Doing volunteer work gave me an understanding about New Zealand."

Kai was involved in a number of community-based organisations such as Lifeline, the Salvation Army and Shama, Hamilton's ethnic women's centre. From helping out with meals to cleaning dishes and supporting ethnic women against family violence, Kai saw it all as a way to grow not just as a person but also in her career.

"I put myself in the community to do different things and meet different people. It's a part of my job, I need to work with people and know what it means for the community and my clients."

In 2011 Kai was named International Student of the Year by Education New Zealand for the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics sector. The award is aimed at highlighting contributions international students make in the community around them, their academic success and how they have involved themselves in New Zealand culture.

The award was a surprise for Kai, who says she was honoured to be recognised.

"I gained acknowledgement for what I did, and acknowledgement for international students as a whole, because I think we don't often get a lot of attention from mainstream education.

"It was really good of Education New Zealand to acknowledge what I had done."

Kai puts her success down to being supported by Wintec throughout her years of study.

"It's quite multicultural. You have more one-on-one and intimate connections with tutors and classmates. We support each other with study and different things outside of Wintec."

After studying, Kai worked as a caseworker for Parentline, an organisation that works with children and their families who have been traumatised by abuse and domestic violence.

"I was pretty lucky, I got recommended by Wintec so I got my first job just after I finished my study," says Kai.

After working for Parentline for over two years, in December 2013 Kai decided that a change was needed and moved to Auckland.

Now Kai is working at the other end of the spectrum, for Age Concern as an abuse and neglect coordinator. Age Concern is an organisation promoting wellbeing and rights for older people in the community. Kai loves the people she works with and says it's an interesting job.

"Every day is different learning and it's challenging too. That's how we learn.

"My job is to support them if they experience abuse or neglect."

Kai puts her connection with older people down to her culture, as back home older generations are highly respected. She also remembers her mother always helping other people while she was growing up.

As well as working for Age Concern, Kai is studying part time a Graduate Diploma in Not for Profit Management. Even though Kai is uncertain what the future holds, right now she is enjoying living in Auckland, as there are so many opportunities and things to do.


"It's about having an open mind, if something comes take it.

"Maybe in a few years' time I might become a Mum, that is my plan too." ●



Top: Students get stuck into project-based learning at the newly built Engineering and Trades facility, 2014 [68]
Bottom: The Gallagher Hub, opened in 2007, has become a popular place for study and recreation, 2014



A man with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a blue button-down shirt, a dark blazer, and blue jeans, stands with his hands in his pockets in front of a modern building. The building features large glass windows and yellow panels. The sky is blue with some clouds. A quote is overlaid on the right side of the image.

“At the end of the day people are better off if they think about applied learning.”

Aaron Rink

Wintec council member, businessman and father of eight

View from the helicopter

By David Nicoll

Governance wasn't something Aaron Rink thought would be his passion. Like most things in his life it just happened. He's been on the Wintec council for eight years and sits on various boards in the Waikato. He has become an enthusiast about Wintec and training future tradespeople.

Before he got involved in governance, he was a plumber and before that, a country kid from Taumarunui who never wanted to be a plumber. "I didn't hate plumbing but I said to myself, I'm never going to be a plumber like my old man. I didn't want to follow his footsteps.

"I had to spend every school holiday and every weekend with him, helping him out."

When he left Taumarunui, he found freedom. He enrolled in an engineering course at Wintec (then called The Waikato Polytechnic), lived in the student village and worked in a night club.

"I wasn't academically prepared to go to uni, so this was a really great option. I'm a practical kid. I just didn't want to be a plumber."

After completing the first year of his engineering course he decided to take a year off. "I didn't click with the engineering, it didn't push my buttons."

Eventually he fell back into plumbing. "It was like what can I do? I have all these skills in plumbing from working with my dad as a high school student. So it was a natural progression."

He started his apprenticeship working for CF Reese Plumbing, the company he would eventually go on to own. He enrolled in a pre-trade certificate at the Waikato Polytechnic, doing block courses over the next three years.

In 2002 he and his wife Sarah took over the business after they bought the remaining shares from the founder Colin Reese. It was in this role he started to get a taste for governance.

"They say governance is your helicopter view, management is down in the trenches." Aaron's helicopter seemed to be doing the trick. Under his leadership the business won several awards including Master Plumber of the Year in 2005.

In 2012, he stepped away from the business so his wife Sarah could pursue a career in medical management.

While raising the kids she's been working through her post graduate qualification. She finished her MBA two years ago.

"She got to the end of her MBA and said, Aaron, it's your time to take the lion's share of the kids."

For Aaron, "it was perfect timing".

"I retired at 40," he says jokingly. But it wasn't long before Aaron started his plumbing consulting business, Flow Consulting, which gave him the freedom to work around the kids. He started to take on more board roles.

It was the experience that Aaron gained from setting up a board in his own company, combined with his desire to pass on his knowledge, that drove him to seek out more board roles.

The remarkable thing is that Aaron has managed all this success while raising eight kids. "Four boys, four girls, same wife, no twins," he says of his family. "You can't stop to think about it cause you might freak out and think, how are we doing this?"

For Aaron he's on the go from 6.30 in the morning. Making lunches, dropping off the kids, back for a second load then it's off to work. If it's not a board meeting he's off to in the family van, he'll be back home in the office or hiding away in Wintec's Hub working on plumbing designs.

"I suppose you just become really accustomed to it."

His oldest son is about to turn 18 and is starting to think about study. Aaron says he wants to be an accountant. They've already talked to Wintec about courses and getting him into a firm so he doesn't have to go to university and get a student loan.

"There's nothing wrong with going to a polytech and becoming a tradesman, or doing something that's applied learning. You don't have to go to university to be successful.

"At the end of the day people are better off if they think about applied learning.

"I didn't click at school, but now if I find something like plumbing or governance that I can connect with, I study it." ●



“We met all sorts of characters. There was a man who lived on an island out from Coromandel who used to row in his boat to the peninsula to have his eyes photographed.”

Susie Ryan

Clinical nurse manager, Waikato Regional Diabetes Service and founder of Waikato diabetes education programmes

A life in nursing

By Bronwyn Llewellyn

When Susie Ryan left school in the 1960s, girls had three choices. There was nursing, teaching and clerical.

Susie chose nursing. Even though she really wanted to go to university, the conservatively brought up farm girl did what her parents said.

“My choice was nursing, simply because I had a friend with an older sister who was a nurse at Waikato Hospital. I thought her uniform was rather smart, and I liked the idea of living in the nurses’ home with a bunch of other girls, away from my parents.”

Over a career spanning four decades, Susie rose in her profession, and now heads the Waikato Regional Diabetes Service in Hamilton as nurse manager.

The expansive clinic in lower Clarence Street is home-base for 42 staff including doctors, nurses, podiatrists, dieticians, a psychologist, a medical photographer and clerical staff. Susie manages it all. The centre offers a comprehensive service encompassing testing, diabetes type 1 or 2 management, community visitation and counselling services.

Susie’s formative 1960s nurse training was completed in-house, at Waikato Hospital. In the 1980s, nurse training shifted towards the polytechnics. Susie had to complete a Bachelor of Nursing degree at Wintec to progress in her career.

“I did four papers in one year. It nearly killed me, because I was working fulltime as well,” she says.

Susie had clocked up 20 years in nursing by then. For 10 of those she worked as a district nurse in Cambridge, juggling family life with work.

“It was an old fashioned district nursing service in those days. We did everything. There was no such thing as hospice. We did all the wound care, the terminal care, intravenous drugs, morphine pumps, and all manner of things with people in their own homes.”

In the 1990s, Susie Whitcombe, as she was then known, took a major role in a Waikato-wide research project called Discovering Diabetes.

She was the research nurse for the project, which was set up to look at diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes in the Waikato. Her role was to visit doctors all around the Waikato District Health Board (DHB), organise and advertise for the public screenings, have interviews with local newspapers, and encourage people to have an eye test to predict whether they had diabetes or not.

The eye test endured after the study ended in 2004, and is still being done by the mobile retinal photo-screening service using a van set up with specialised equipment and staff. An eye camera takes retinal photographs of the eyes which detect indicators for diabetes. Results can be given on the spot.

“People with type 2 diabetes often have diabetic eye disease but they don’t realise it until their vision is affected. By that time, it’s often too late to retrieve the vision,” Susie says.

The mobile van is part of the Waikato Regional Diabetes Service Susie manages. The catchment extends from National Park in the south to the top of Coromandel Peninsula in the north. The van goes to outlying communities and every town in the DHB, along with marae-based screenings and visiting places such as prisons.

“It was good fun setting it up. We met all sorts of characters. There was a man who lived on an island out from Coromandel who used to row in his boat to the peninsula to have his eyes photographed.”

Because of the mobile service, they picked up a lot of people with diabetic eye disease, particularly in the first two years.

In the late 1990s, GPs were funded to do annual checks for people with Type 2 diabetes. This task was handed to practice nurses.

“The problem was that the practice nurses didn’t actually have the skills to do these checks. There was no training available.”

Susie came up with the idea of offering a short 12-week course to give registered nurses the skills and knowledge they needed. This ran out of the Waikato diabetes clinic for many years.

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Susie began consultation with Wintec's Centre for Health and Social Practice, Postgraduate Team Leader, Helen Nielsen, with a view to the diabetes care and management training being offered as part of the Wintec graduate nursing programme.

Together, Susie and Helen developed 700 and 800 level programmes designed for practice nurses to qualify as diabetes nurse specialists.

"The same programme is delivered from a lot of sites now, in South Auckland from Middlemore, at the Manukau Institute of Technology and in New Plymouth. We deliver it at [Rotorua] Lakes, Gisborne, and in Hamilton."

Last year, the Waikato Diabetes Clinic applied for recognition to the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) for these programmes.

"This is the global standard," says Susie.

"Well, we got recognition last year. I was just thrilled about that. It was just so exciting to have the recognition of a global organisation."

"You can't do this on your own, it requires a team," she says. ●







“The Olympic Games is a competition of the best athletes in the world of sport. Qualifying standards are hard and it takes a lot of hard work over many years to get there and perform well. It’s a fantastically unique environment.”

Coaching the stars

By Genae Johns

Athletics coach Debbie Strange is putting her charges through their paces on a Wednesday afternoon at Hamilton's Porritt Stadium.

The Wintec sports tutor arrived before the two athletes so she could set up the session. When they arrive quarter of an hour later, a quick run around the track gets both men warmed up for their afternoon of javelin training.

Stuart Farquhar and Ben Langton-Burnell are ranked first and second in the country for javelin, but there is no hint of competition between them as they train, only mutual encouragement. And there's feedback from Debbie, also one of the best in New Zealand at what she does.

The three clearly enjoy each other's company. They bond like family. During the session, Debbie demonstrates what to do and what she expects to see, and questions them to make sure they understand. When she realises something is up, she asks one of them if he's okay. "Yup, just thinking about the move," he says. "Don't think too much, just throw" she jokingly responds.

Three-time Olympian Farquhar knows this ground well. At the 2010 Porritt Classic he threw a then personal best of 85.35, and has won the event ever since. Langton-Burnell is the relative newcomer, younger than Farquhar and a recent arrival in Hamilton from Manawatu. Debbie completes the trifecta by coaching New Zealand javelin's No 3, Johan Smalberger, as well.

While coaching some of New Zealand's top field athletes, Strange has also taught in Wintec's Centre for Sport Science and Human Performance for the past 15 years.

"Time flies," she says.

Coaching was a natural development for Debbie, who put her heart and soul into sport during her school years after growing up on a farm at Tamahere.

Around 1988 Debbie was still competing in discus and javelin throwing with the Hamilton Athletic Club when one of the younger guys, Phil Jensen, came up and asked if she would help him learn to throw a discus because he really wanted to be a hammer thrower. Debbie became very interested in hammer throwing once it was mentioned.

"I knew nothing about it, so we set off together to find out as much as we could. Within two and a half years Phil Jensen represented New Zealand at the Commonwealth Games in Auckland," says Debbie.

She found that she really enjoyed making the change from competitor to coach and has always specialised in throwing events. Having a good relationship with the Hamilton City Hawks club helps.

"I coached a really good throws group in the club, coaching at club level was so much fun and people were achieving things they never thought they were capable of," Debbie says. She found this really satisfying.

Debbie has coached two athletes who went on to compete in the Olympic Games in Athens, Farquhar and discus thrower Beatrice Faumuina. She started with Faumuina at the end of 2000. After coaching Beatrice for five years, Debbie continued to coach Stuart to 2 further Olympic Games (Beijing and London). She has been coaching him since he was 15, and he is now 31. Farquhar has just got better and better so Debbie stayed in the coaching world and became more specialised in the javelin area.

"The Olympics Games is a competition of the best athletes in the world of sport. Qualifying standards are hard and it takes a lot of hard work over many years to get there and perform well. It's a fantastically unique environment where there is instant respect amongst all the athletes and coaches."

Debbie gets just as much of a kick as the competitors out of the events.

"I am very proud of what my athletes achieve both in and out of the sporting arena. They have successful personal lives as well alongside the sporting life"

There is no particular coaching style when it comes to Debbie and her team.

"They are all individuals. I wouldn't be working with them if I didn't think I could make a positive impact on their performance," she says. ●



“Anything with wheels
and an engine, I love it.”

Kevin Sweeney

Wintec engineering tutor since the 1970s and creator of New Zealand's first mobile classroom

Classroom on wheels

By Manpreet Farrar

Kevin Sweeney is a car enthusiast, an engine lover, a motorhead. "Anything with wheels and an engine, I love it."

He's the kind of guy who designs and builds his own motor home, with his children.

He's the kind of guy who, based on that experience, goes on to create the first mobile classroom in the country, the "Tech Mobile", which held computer courses for up to 10 students in the smaller centres of Waikato.

Kevin created it in 1990 and it was used for four years. His logic behind designing the classroom was simple: if you don't try something and put it out there, how will you know if it works?

Kevin was born in Napier in 1946 and moved to Hamilton with his parents and older sister at the age of seven. He attended Hamilton Technical College, now known as Wintec, in his adolescence. Kevin's father worked in the local post office. Kevin studied electrical engineering in the late 60s at Auckland University and later followed his father's footsteps, also becoming a post office engineer at Telecom designing a telephone exchange for the city.

His love for technology helped lead the mischievous young boy into his future career path.

One afternoon Kevin and a high-school friend were fiddling around with a model aircraft radio control. His father in the next room slowly began getting frustrated with the new TV the family had just bought. Kevin and his friend had managed to get the radio transmitter to interfere with the home television signal, turning off the TV. "When we learnt that we could do that, we went around all of Hamilton turning off people's televisions until they got annoyed, and then we would move on and continue at the next house," he says.

University was more of the same for Kevin. "I loved university so much that in the first year they let me in twice," he says, laughing. But when Kevin did start to focus he thoroughly enjoyed his engineering studies.

What he loved about studying back "in the good old days" was that the tutors who had taught him had industry experience. "They knew what they were talking about, because they had been there and done the work."

In 1973 Kevin returned to Wintec, not as a student but as a tutor. He began teaching the New Zealand Certificate in Engineering and later became head of department for heavy engineering and control tech. He believes that having a hands on approach to education helps students understand more. "That is what I looked for when I hired staff at Wintec."

Alongside a busy career Kevin had a daughter and son who grew up to also become engineers. During school holidays and as side project at home Kevin and his children designed and built the mobile motor home that led to the Tech Mobile.

His mobile classroom was a "roaring success". It was, however, a little tight and in 1994 Kevin and his fellow tutors built the Art Tech Mobile, an improved version which could seat up to 16 students. Tutors were able to teach classes within 10 minutes of the Art-Tech Mobile arriving. The classroom was used to teach about 10,000 students, finishing up in 2010.

The bus helped as a way of offering taster courses for potential students. Providing students with a learning environment that they were comfortable in because it was close to home was a great way to get them started.

In 2007 Kevin was diagnosed with cancer and decided to retire. Seven years on he is still a part of Wintec as a volunteer and a long-serving staff member, providing the Waikato DHB with the same Art-tech vehicle owned by Wintec. "I'll be doing that voluntarily for as long as I can." ●



“What does being Māori mean to you? “Being who I am. Knowing who I am. Being proud. Being privileged.” ”

Okeroa Waitai

Wintec graduate and former long-time te reo tutor

Woman of mana

By Oliver Dunn

Tucked away in the most unlikely of places, between car lots and sports bars, lies a classroom bubbling with life. A classroom in every sense of the word, with a teacher and students, whiteboard and desks. But there is something different about this room, a feeling not so easily defined. It sits in the atmosphere, something that can only be described as mana.

It's a Saturday morning and the students at the noho marae are immersed in their study. Their topic? Te reo Māori. This is no beginners' class, these are students who have given up their precious weekend to live and breathe the language, accepting a learning style that drops students in to the deep end. It's a kind of passion for te reo that is inspiring, and with one look at their teacher, it's clear to see where it comes from.

Okeroa Waitai does not start class at her desk, nor does she sit down after introductions. Instead she moves around the room, seeing every student and answering every question. For Okeroa it's a process that is more than just teaching, it is a sharing of knowledge that goes both ways between teacher and student. It is an approach no doubt adopted from growing up in the close knit community of Te Kuiti.

When asked what her favourite childhood memory is, Okeroa goes back to one place in particular: "Growing up on my marae." It was there, at Te Tokanganui a Noho, in the middle of Te Kuiti, that her values and tikanga were instilled. Growing up in a whānau strongly connected to their marae exposed Okeroa to a rich Māori culture that led her to pursue a career in keeping the language alive. There was never any doubt about Okeroa's future as a teacher; after all, it was her childhood dream to become one.

In 1988 Okeroa took her first steps towards a career in Māori when she studied the teaching of te reo at Wintec. The course explored the methodology and teaching of Te Ataarangi, a learning style which fully immerses students in te reo. A one year course soon became a 22-year relationship with Wintec as Okeroa became a

teacher of te reo. It was here that she helped develop a programme that grew from a night class to a bachelor's degree, a programme made to revitalise the language and keep it alive for the future.

Watching Okeroa in her element, teaching a class with a range of ages and backgrounds, you get to see her two sides. There is the soft-spoken woman who speaks English, careful and thoughtful with every word. Then there is a passionate woman who speaks te reo, clear and powerful with every word.

Okeroa is still a huge part of the revival of te reo Māori in New Zealand. It's here on a Saturday, at the Raroera whare, that she teaches the noho marae, a course for those unable to study fulltime. She stands at the front of the class in a bright yellow t-shirt, hands outstretched, emphasising every word with emotion and gesture.

Earlier in the week, returning to Wintec, the place in which she spent so much of her life, was a homecoming of sorts for Okeroa. It's a chance to breathe in the new air and culture of Māori that has risen since her departure from the school, and a chance to reminisce with old colleagues and friends. No interview with Okeroa can be complete without a handful of interruptions consisting of friends eager to catch up.

Mana is described as prestige, authority, control. It is a kind of force in a person, place or object. There are moments in life where mana can be felt in the air, like experiencing a haka live or when you hear someone talk proudly of their heritage and culture. Two questions asked of Okeroa bring it out.

What does being Māori mean to you?

"Being who I am. Knowing who I am. Being proud. Being privileged."

What does te reo mean to you?

"Everything." ●



“I’m an entrepreneur, I like making things happen. My nature is not to sit on the sideline and grizzle, or blame people, I like to get involved.”

Dale Williams

Former Mayor of Otorohanga and key player in setting up Wintec's Otorohanga Trade Training Centre

From motorbikes to politics

By Megan Cameron

Dale Williams was three months into a year-long world trip with his wife Marion when he heard the MP for Taranaki-King Country would step down at the next election.

That threw the safe National seat open for all comers, after it had been held by Shane Ardern since 1998. Dale, recently retired mayor of Otorohanga, wasn't going to let the opportunity pass. He cut short his trip and returned to New Zealand to make a bid for involvement at the highest level of decision making.

Speaking in March just days before the decision was made, he said: "I think I've got something to offer, and something to add to the conversations and the debate just based on experience. I'm not academic, I'm not a bureaucrat, I'm just a basic person."

He is also a canny politician, and made sure he had a return ticket to Europe in case he missed out. In the event, Barbara Kuriger got the nod and Dale used the ticket.

The year off came after he stepped down as mayor in October last year, and before Dale's daughter Harvey started school. Dale's other two children Danielle, 29, and Kieran 26, are self-sufficient and well accomplished in their own lives.

Dale hasn't always been into politics, it was accidental that his love of motorcycles led him to that path. Born and bred in Te Aroha, he left school at the end of sixth form. "I was just mad keen to do an apprenticeship and be self-employed." He took up an opportunity in Cambridge, working for a guy who was an international road racer at the time. He served his mechanic's apprenticeship in motorbikes and also learnt sales.

By age 23, he was ready to start his own business. He did his research and found out from the distributors and manufacturers where they wanted dealers. Otorohanga was one of those places. So he moved there in 1985, and spent the next ten years running and progressively building his motorbike businesses which included stores in Taumarunui and Piopio.

But the time came when he outgrew the shop. Dale had a dream to build a palace for his bikes. After a visit to the bank he was told of the homework he had to do, and one port of call was the local council. He found that the current council members were old, conservative and did not like spending money.

"I'm an entrepreneur, I like making things happen. My nature is not to sit on the sideline and grizzle, or blame people, I like to get involved," said Dale.

He stood for council and was elected in 1995.

"I found I enjoyed council more than I did work, so I sold all my shops in 2004 and knew the mayoralty was coming up. I stood for that, and got elected."

It was not long after that his involvement with Wintec came about. The shocking suicide of two teenage boys highlighted an issue of unemployment and unhappiness among youth in the town.

Dale organised a meeting at which the young people told him how much life "sucked" in Otorohanga, and if they didn't go away to university then they were doomed.

"Here I am in charge, I'm going to do something to fix it," says Dale.

The ingredients were there, with a good college and employers wanting to employ youngsters with the right skills. It became a community effort to set up a Wintec campus to be used as a trade training centre, involving the council, local employers, clubs such as Lions and Rotary, and Dale himself. It was opened in 2005, and the town soon made headlines for achieving zero youth unemployment. A huge culture shift took place, and issues of vandalism and graffiti also virtually disappeared.

Driving around "Oto" with Dale, it's evident he's a well known man, as he returns the waves from locals. Even out of town, Dale continues to be thanked by young people who have come through the Trade Centre.

...continued

These days Dale keeps an interested eye on the centre. “My blood, sweat, and tears went into it, I wouldn’t like for things to fall over. It’s always difficult when you step down from mayoralty and you’re still in town, you’ve got to create a bit of separation to give the next person the opportunity to create their own priorities.

“My life’s been sensational. When I was in the bike shop, and in council I used to get out of bed in the morning and pinch myself, thinking people actually pay me to do something I enjoy. I’m very lucky.

“When I do finally pop the clogs, there won’t be any regrets.” ●









