

KERRIN JOHN BISHOP (KB)

16 OCTOBER 1948 – 11 MARCH 2008

CELEBRATION OF LIFE
MANUKAU MEMORIAL GARDENS CHAPEL
357 PUHINUI ROAD, PAPATOETOE 15 MARCH 2008, 12.30pm

Celebrant: Rhys Bean
Personal Eulogy: Rhys Bean
Gymnastics Eulogy: Tas Evans, Marie Stechman
Pallbearers: Michael Bishop, Trevor Bishop, Les Johns, Mike Laker, Marshall Taylor, Rob Wood

Kerrin was a real gentleman – calm, measured in his manner, even tempered, composed and considered. He was a dedicated family man and he was also married to his gymnastics.

Kerrin's life began in New Plymouth, born the eldest of three children to Margaret and Harold Bishop, elder brother to Diane and Trevor. As a youngster he suffered from osteomyelitis resulting in one leg developing slower than the other, so to strengthen his leg muscles he attended gymnastics lessons at the New Plymouth YMCA. What started out as a hobby developed into a passion and lifelong commitment to the sport.

He attended the local primary school and New Plymouth Boys High School for his secondary years with involvement in rugby and tramping. How could you not tramp with Mt Egmont on your doorstep? Kerrin's involvement with tramping included the formation of a YMCA tramping club, building huts and volunteer service with Taranaki Search and Rescue. For six years he was also a board member of the YMCA and worked hard for the YMCA international service club Y's Men's. His love and passion for the mountains never ceased.

It was through tramping that Kerrin caught the eye of a beautiful young woman, Sharleen, who made the first move and the die was cast. Sharleen and Kerrin were a fantastic couple who epitomised the best of married and family life. In spite of his community involvement Kerrin was first and foremost a family man. He started his working life as a carpenter joiner with Jones and Sandford in New Plymouth and spent his spare time building furniture for their family home. After their move to Manurewa he built an extra room onto the house and undertook extensive alterations.

Kerrin changed jobs and became a sales representative for Hurricane Wire, was appointed Branch Manager and moved to Manurewa when daughter Carly was two years old. Son Michael was born after the family moved north. In 1992 Kerrin commenced working for Fox Masking Products and New Zealand Packaging and Tapes Supplies and remained with them throughout his illness. He insisted on

staying at work and his family drove him to visit his regular clients over his last few months.

Kerrin , or KB as he was affectionally called was one of the GREAT'S as a gymnastic volunteer, always busy, always found time to do what was needed, worked for everyone and all gymsports. He has been described as being "fairly strict, but strictly fair".

As a gymnast he was a member of the "world famous in New Zealand" NEW PLYMOUTH YMCA SILVER SQUAD. His most notable and memorable achievement was as a member of the team who won the Men's Ledgerwood Shield. KB was able to share in this honour again in 2006 when, to his personal pride and joy Gymsport Manukau won the Women's Ledgerwood Shield.

In 1980 KB turned up at Counties Gymnastic Club to enrol 6 year old Carly and let it slip that he was an ex gymnast. He was asked to help coach a pre-national boy's class and this was the start of his gymnastics coaching volunteer career. He became chairperson of the Counties boys committee in 1984 and started on the pathway to build up the boys section and put an end to the girls programme dominance within the Club.

Unassuming of his own ability, he always gave credit to others. During this period of time KB was totally dedicated to the Club fundraising for the new gym. He was a member of the fundraising committee for 18 years. The building of the new gym became his focal point. On the day for 'turning over the first sod of earth' to officially start the building project he commented to Bruce Pulman "we could run nationals here, next year, you know".

Sure enough it happened in the year 2000, in a non-commissioned building, with a new set of equipment, setting up around builders, plumbers, electricians, sound engineers, you name it, they were all there. Amongst the bedlam, KB calmly worked like a beaver to get the gymnasium set up in time for nationals to commence as scheduled.

Event Management, another of KB's pet volunteer projects. The regular events team including one laid back 'she'll be right on the day KB' undertook many gymnastics events for the Club, Region and GSNZ (previously NZ Gymnastics). When KB wanted something done 'his way' he just blithely continued on, ignored everyone else and did the task how he wanted it done. He was determined, in his quiet way and he did not like change.

It took 6 years of continual harassment to change him from calling the girls "females" instead of girls or women. He never changed his deliberate programming of the men and women at different times creating chaos on the competition floor and he never accepted he could not be Event Director, Announcer, Equipment Manager and then 'disappear' from the control table, discard his headphones, leave his post and go and judge the boys. "Where are you KB" was repeatedly heard through the communication system.

So, KB was a coach, judge, member and Vice President of Counties Manukau Gymnastic Club (CMGC), President of Gymsport Manukau RSC. He was awarded Life Membership of CMGC in 1997, in 2007 he was honoured with the Club award for

Outstanding Service and also received a Counties Manukau Regional Sports Trust Sporting Excellence Award for SERVICE TO SPORT. He was the recipient of service awards from Auckland Gymnastics and Gymsports New Zealand (GSNZ).

When KB was nominated for the GSNZ Men's National Technical Committee, never one to sing his own praises, he asked the question "do you think I am ready for that?". He was duly elected to this national committee in 1997, was appointed Chairperson in 2002, has withstood many changes and last year was appointed chair of the new GSNZ Sport Development Committee.

For several years Kerrin was the Chairperson of the GSNZ Management Group and his fair and unbiased position on matters relating to all gymsports was appreciated by all. He really cared for people. KB was always there and he never shirked away from the hard stuff.

His dedication to Men's Gymnastics, in particular to the levels programme, the APEX training programme, coach development and international tour experiences for the boys will long be remembered. He made many friends in Australia through gymnastics. KB's touring highlight was the Peter Vidmar competition in USA, an event which he held in high esteem and continually strove for its inclusion in the GSNZ men's tour calendar.

Tours or trips with the Club were part of the Club culture. KB's position was "no need to fly, we will go as a Club in mini vans". For many years there was an annual pilgrimage to the Wellington Championships, 6am depart from Manurewa, drive to Wellington, two days competition, overnight drive home on Sunday evening. KB did it all, the driving, coaching and judging. There were other annual trips as well, including Rhythmic to New Plymouth and coaches to Gym School. As a creature of habit, he stopped at the same cafe's, stayed at the same motels, went to the same restaurants. "If something works, why change it."

Kerrin was a person in gymnastics with a passion and a mission.

Quotation from Jeff Thomson, Canadian Gymnastic Federation, Men's Program Director. *"KB always struck me as one of those great individuals who just went about his work in gymnastics in a quiet understated way. The kind of person who neither expected nor assumed credit or accolades for his effort and achievements. I sensed a genuine sincerity to his character and I believe that he possessed that attribute which I feel is the most important one for anyone working in sport that was, the kids came first".*

Throughout his years of coaching KB has been more than a coach to his boys. He was a lifelong mentor, colleague and friend. In the words of one of Kerrin's gymnasts, Jared Lockhart: *"I've often looked back on my time in gymnastics and the one thing I've grown to appreciate most, after all those hours of training, is the self discipline gymnastics taught me."*

"It's a funny sport gymnastics, not only did it teach me body control but being an individual sport, it showed me from an early age how to focus my mind and get things done. I guess what I am trying to say is that the coaching I received through

gym has shaped my life to a far greater extent that I could have realised whilst training. For that I thank you KB."

Everyone involved in gymnastics, throughout New Zealand, expresses their thanks to Sharleen, Michael and Carly for sharing Kerrin with us all.

Family were also just as large a part of Kerrin's life, as was travel. In recent years when Carly lived overseas they had wonderful times in Europe, his highlights being visiting Mt Pilates in Switzerland, travelling around Scotland and Spain, a fantastic road trip in Morocco. Anything to do with mountains and climbing was high on Kerrin's agenda. Recently he climbed Mt Egmont wearing the boots he had when he was 18 years of age and taking his wonderful ice-pick. In total he climbed Mt Egmont, Taranaki 13 times.

As a family man he worked about the house, renovated Carly's house for her, always loved wooden furniture and always made sure all new furniture purchases were made of beautiful native NZ timbers. He also played golf and learned to cook! His music tastes, which changed through the times, were varied, Dire Straits, Elton John, the Bee Gees to Westlife and Evermore. He was passionate about the news, and read the daily paper from cover to cover always starting with the sports section. He watched the TV 6.00pm news every day. Kerrin, the family man, was very proud of his children, Carly and Michael. He was also a romantic. He had his regular stopping places where he bought bright coloured gerberas for Sharleen, was addicted to pineapple lump confectionery, and again had his regular source for the 1kg bags.

A people person, Kerrin was very well mannered, always said please and thank you, remembered names and was able to make people feel important. Although determined and strong minded he was not known to lose his temper or raise his voice. Some of his final words heard were to say how lucky he had been to find his lovely Sharleen and how they both feel lucky to have had thirty six wonderful years together. That is the legacy he leaves us with – to delight in those we love and live every day for the best.