

Jill Vernon

23 December 1957 – 20 January 2011

It is with great sadness that we announce the tragic passing of Jill Vernon a valued member of the Auckland and New Zealand Swimming Communities.

Jill joined the swimming community in 1990 when she was involved with the Waterhole Swim Center with their learn-to-swim programmes. Within two years her children had progressed to become competitive swimmers and so began a journey of almost 20 years valued service to the local, regional and national swimming communities.

In 1996 Jill became a member of the Waterhole Club Committee, was the Secretary of that club from 2002 – 2009 and was made a Life Member of the Waterhole Club in 2005. When one of her children became a member of the West Auckland Aquatics Club in 2003 she began working for that club as a volunteer in addition to her simultaneous service to the Waterhole Club.

In 1996 Jill began her work as a swimming official, qualifying as Timekeeper in 1996, Inspector of Turns (IOT) in 1997, Starter in 2006 and further as a Referee in 2006. The quality of her service as an official was further recognised when she was inducted as a National Inspector of Turns (2006), Starter, and finally as a National Referee in 2010.

Jill served as a member of the Auckland Swimming Associations Regional Events Management Group responsible for the efficient organization and management of regional and national swim meets since 2003. She was the Chair of the Auckland Technical Committee in 2008, 2009 & 2010 and in that role became well known for her kind and gentle mentoring of new officials. Those who were 'examined' by her in this capacity were universally

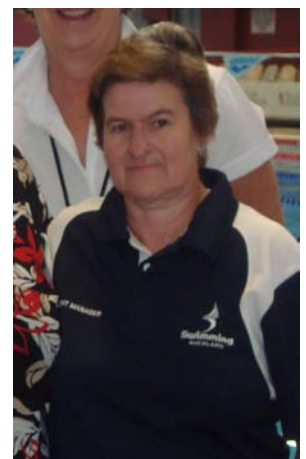


appreciative of her quiet and non-judgmental advice and encouragement. **“Remember, we are here for the swimmers”** was her frequent refrain to trainee and newly qualified officials.

During her time as a Referee, Jill would officiate at an average of 30 swim meets (many over multiple days) per year, but in the last year of this extraordinary life of service this number increased amazingly to in excess of 40 meets. She officiated at Swimming New Zealand's National Age Group Championship meets in 2008, 2009 and 2010, the Swimming New Zealand Spring Short Course meet in 2008 and 2010, and also Swimming New Zealand's Division II Championships in 2009. She noted recently that a highlight in

her career as an official was the opportunity to officiate at the Special Olympics National Summer Games in Palmerston North in December of 2010.

Not content to serve exclusively as an official Jill will be fondly remembered for her service catering for other officials when National Championships were held at the West Wave Aquatic Center in West Auckland. This would most frequently involve early morning starts for breakfasts, lunches and



then evening suppers all of which she then interspersed with further work as a part of the Event Management team in the administration center. Jill would also provide invaluable help to the association's regional office in the preparation for regional championship events and also of the Annual Awards event – she would cheerfully polish and order trophies taking great pleasure in the knowledge that these would be awarded to the very people whom she was so dedicated to serving – the swimmers, whose dedication she so admired.

Few who worked with Jill during these times can ever remember arriving at the pool before she did, or leaving after her. She was always there to open the door and lock up at night. Jill has been an absolute star.

The Auckland Swimming Association recognised Jill for her service with an Auckland Service Award in 2004 for outstanding and exemplary service to the swimming community. Swimming New Zealand recognised Jill's exemplary service with the award of a Swimming New Zealand Service Award in 2010.

Outside of the swimming community Jill had given a lifetime of tireless service to the Girl Guides Association and will also be particularly remembered for her assistance and dedication to the disabled.

Jill is survived by her husband, Neil and three children Deborah, Sarah and Andrew.

Jill will be fondly remembered by all.