

In Memory of George Rainey, AHRIH

10 February 1930 – 13 May 2003

When George Rainey passed away in May this year, at the age of 73, a ripple of sadness went through several sectors of New Zealand society. To sportspeople generally he was a national leader in the field of Rugby League. During his time as President of the New Zealand Rugby League he led the move to freehold Carlaw Park in Auckland.



George Rainey

The land that cost \$200,000 in 1974 is now estimated to be worth \$13 million, and is a valuable financial asset to the Auckland Rugby League. At the time when George was heavily involved with Rugby League in 1972, he became President of the New Zealand Nurserymen's Association. The commercial horticultural fraternity elected him to three terms as its president, the second term as the leader of the renamed New Zealand

Garden Industry Association. After serving more than 20 years on the executive, he was made an honorary life member of this organisation in 1990.

George began his training in horticulture at an early age at Palmers Nurseries in Auckland. He served his apprenticeship there and later became foreman. Before long his ambition to have a tree and shrub nursery of his own led him to purchase some land in Glen Eden. This terraced block was soon full, and later he developed his new and larger nursery in Mountain Road. He was one of the pioneers of tree and shrub production in containers, and the business supplied retail outlets only. His enthusiasm for promoting training in horticulture was a great support to the Institute when the National Diploma in Horticulture was developing from one general Diploma into four main streams. These were Amenity Horticulture, Nursery Production, Fruit Production and Vegetable Production. For outstanding service to horticulture in New Zealand he was awarded the highest honour that the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture can bestow, that is the Associate of Honour.

In his later years, George picked up a keen interest in the development of the Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens. For 21 years he was Chairman of the Tree and Shrub Advisory Panel. He also was elected Chairman of the Development Plan

for the Gardens and presented the report in 1998. His long association with the Friends of the Botanic Gardens led to his election as Chairman for the two-year period in 1997. In 2000 he served as Chairman of the Trustees, and in 2001 he was made a Life Member of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens. This quote from the Friends' eulogy, read by Jack Hobbs at George's funeral on May 19, is a fitting tribute to a much-loved man.

"He was a leader, a powerful advocate, never one to shy away from a contentious issue. He has been one of the Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens' greatest supporters, but perhaps more than anything else, George Rainey will be remembered as a true gentleman".

John Taylor
President, RNZIH