

Richard Noel McMillan, QSM

9 July 1934 – 28 August 2012



Highly-respected teacher, nurseryman, plant breeder and committed community worker R. Noel McMillan QSM, of Ohinewai, Huntly died suddenly on 28 August 2012.

When Noel began teaching at Huntly Primary School in 1960, he supplemented his income by growing plants on his parents' quarter acre section. This enterprise quickly expanded to become McMillan Hardy Plants.

Noel and his brother, Don, bought a four acre property at Ohinewai turning it into a garden centre. This family business, McMillans Garden Centre, was a successful tree and shrub nursery that ran for many years and was always a credit to them.

Noel became fascinated by the potential and possibilities of polyanthus. Plants he raised from seed originating from California were

so stunning in form and colour and people were so eager to buy them that McMillan Waikato Polyanthus was born.

Cyclamens were Noel's other major plant breeding interest and he spent many hours developing his bearded mini, midi and maxi cyclamen which again became very popular with gardeners. In 1998 he was presented with the New Zealand Region of the International Plant Propagators' Society (IPPS) Award of Merit, acknowledging his achievements in this field.

Noel was an important part of IPPS in its formative years, joining in 1975. He was a very active member and participated in organising conferences and field trips. He was also a long-standing member of the RNZIH, joining on 12 June 1961.

Noel was also deeply involved in community projects for which he generously gave his time. His contributions were acknowledged in 2006 when Noel received a QSM for Public Services. He was a long standing JP and had only recently retired from this role. Noel was the driving force behind the development of Karioi Outdoor Adventure Centre in Raglan.

Noel was part of a group of dedicated Huntly citizens known as "Friends of the Lake" who worked tirelessly to create a walkway around Lake Hakanoa. This was achieved by cleaning and clearing around the lake, constructing the walkway and planting extensively. The Waikato District Council have now taken over care of this popular walkway. Noel was a hard working member of the Probus Club and they have dedicated an annual walk around the lake in his memory.

Another of his passions was fishing at Opito Bay in Coromandel. Noel was a much loved husband to Lois, father to three children and adored grandad and great grandad. His memory will live on in all those who knew him and in the beautiful plants that he raised.

Based in part on obituaries published in the IPPS Newsletter, September 2012, Vol. 43, Issue 3, 2012 (www.ipps.org.nz/news/1208mcmillan.htm) and in *Commercial Horticulture* magazine, October/November 2012.