

We, the elected members of the Whangarei District Council representing our Whangarei District Residents are here to serve in lots of various roles, one is to pay tribute and honour our outstanding citizens who have contributed to the well being of our district, Northland and our Country

Culham David Alfred (Dave) Q.S.M

Passed away at home surrounded by his much loved family, on the 11th Dec 2012, aged 81

A country boy, Dave grew up on a Taipuha farm, and was sent to Whangarei Boys High school as a boarder at Curruth House; there he developed his independence that was to guide his life.

Always practical, Dave left school and took on a five year blacksmith (boilermaker) apprenticeship for Tapper Engineering. It was here that Dave's passion for steel began.

Dave then went out on his own, hiring his first apprentice, and working with tools from the boot of his car. He obtained work at AFFCO in Moerewa and this is where steady growth began.

In 1958 (54 years ago) Dave formed the Whangarei based business Culham Engineering, a business that grew steadily to become one of New Zealand's biggest privately owned companies.

Dave consistently stuck to his principles of advancing young people's lives by always employing apprentices, a feat he was extremely proud of.

From its inception through good times and bad, Culham Engineering taught trade skills to over 600 young men. Total employment of personnel peaked at 280 with several employees working with him for over 40 years and a couple making it to the 50 year mark.

The company's contribution to the Northland economy, by way of these wages packets, and his company's Whangarei based contracts, has been immense.

Culham engineering gained substantial contracts across NZ. Two examples are Rolling massive RSJs for the Tunnel Formers of the Southland Manapouri power project, and constructing the hanger Trusses and doors for Air NZ at the Auckland Airport.

Dave and his team were really tested here, as there was not a New Zealand crane big enough to lift the weight of these trusses, so Kiwi ingenuity was put to the test and Dave and crew erected two towers, one on each side and made a special gantry to enable the lift.

Success was achieved.

While doing this contract Dave and son Shane piloted Cherokee six aircrafts and flew their workers down daily on these planes, as this was more cost efficient than housing them in Auckland.

On a recent montage of family photo's Dave's contribution was highlighted.

Who else in our District has had Prime Minister's visit their workshop, a photo of the Governor General presenting him his Queen Service medal, and had his local MP at his send off. This shows the massive respect Dave was shown from our highest NZ offices

Last year Dave was awarded his Queens Service Medal for his contribution to Business and the community.

He was also presented with an honorary Fellowship from North Tec for services to the Industry.

In the 1970s Dave was on the Northland Regional Development Council, which looked at how businesses operated and what help was required for those businesses to allow them to be sustainable. IZARD saw blades based in Wellsford was one such company.

In 1989 Dave entered Local Government Politics, on the amalgamation of Whangarei City, Whangarei County Council and the Hikurangi Town Board and formation of our current Whangarei District Council. Dave was an instigator and part of the powerful Progress team that swept into power. Stan Semenoff was the new Mayor

Dave's skills were to be tested here as the new council took a hard business approach to local Government. Big changes were made and strong leadership was needed, as at one time staff went on strike in resistance to this new way forward.

Dave took the Chairmanship of the Commercial Enterprises Committee (In those days included the Library services and Parks and reserves) and led major changes.

Staff accommodation became an issue and Forum North was reconfigured, the restaurant and bar were removed for customer services, The Art Museum shifted to the Rose Gardens, and Dave actually became Chairman of its first board, so it was set up right and ran to the tight annual budget of \$87000

Dave, together with Stan, Wally Redwood, Wally Yovich and co opted architect Murray Stiff started the Town Basin. Fortunate, to have the total funding for this project from the proceeds of selling the Whangarei Power Board this tight group forged ahead and delivered this fantastic new space.

Dave was the driving force, providing the enthusiasm, skill and construction knowledge. The others were Wally Yovich (the finances) Wally Redwood (the history) and Murray the co-ordination and design, with Stan doing the complete overview.

It would not have been proper not to include some steel in this mainly wooden development, so it was Dave who drew out the design of that massive sun dial, included Maori features and had it made in his workshop and Donated this to the District residents as a long lasting feature for that Time zone part of the Town Basin.

Dave completed three terms on council (1989-1998) and led discussions on many big projects, such as a new water strategy with the linking of Hikurangi and Whangarei Heads to the city water supply, and the development of the Wilson Dam. But for a Businessman in council, it was always a challenge to generate speed into a project and often frustration took over, once pulling out his engineering chalk from his pocket and writing C A N 'T on the floor during a white board exercise on the District plan and in a nonchalant way walked forward, standing on the T and exclaimed to staff and fellow councillors "now what does that say"? C. A. N. Typical Dave's can do attitude.

Dave also began a role of a Northpower Trustee helping guide that Whangarei Company to bigger and brighter activities that saw positive growth and that company running to good profit margins, enabling rebates to customers to be paid out.

Support for sport in Northland was also evident; having played rugby for Manaia and Eastern Suburbs out at Onerahi, and also competing in wrestling, including a bout against another Whangarei Icon Lofty Blomfield. Dave was well versed in what was required by clubs and players.

The Northland Rugby Union is indebted to him. Dave, through his firm, sponsored the annual Culham's Primary School Tournament and the Primary School rep team for ten years. All these team photos are displayed on his company's office walls.

In 1995 the Northland Rugby Union had the opportunity to host the final All Black trials before the Rugby World Cup in South Africa, but the Union needed high quality lighting to achieve this.

Dave offered advice and arranged the dismantling of the main towers that the NRU had purchased from NZ Railways, working with one of his mates at a sister company in Auckland (Central Cranes)

to lower the light towers from their sites at the Auckland Rail yards and load them onto trucks for transport to Whangarei.

At the Okara stadium he took charge on the placement of these towers, using his staff and his own crane company to delicately lift these towers complete with lights installed into position. This was all done on a handshake and a sponsorship arrangement

Later, professional rugby saw players being enticed away from the province and a rallying cry for help from NRFU was answered by many businesses. Team Northland was formed with Dave being the first cheque contributor and becoming founding member. This proved to be successful as this union is still competing strongly.

Always a man on a mission Dave brought a farm out at Waipaipai (inland from Sandy Bay). He successfully transformed hundreds of acres of gorse and scrub into pastureland where he ran Hereford cattle and had tractors and machinery for every task. It is only in recent times that Dave and Gay moved to their coastal home near Jack's Bay just out of Russell.

Dave also was involved in the Northland District Aero Club, purchasing his own plane, which he used, often flying home to his airstrip and hangar

Dave is survived by his wife Gay, son Shane and Daughters Lynley and Glenys with 8 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

We value your Drive, commitment and your Passion that you brought to the various roles you have played.

We pay tribute to you Dave as a monumental leader and achiever in our Whangarei District, and we note the final message on your coffin

A/H 0800 LEGEND

RIP Dave