Susie has played and contributed leadership to a variety of sports and sports organisations within New Zealand and internationally. These sports include Squash, Hockey, Athletics and Golf. From 1996-2002 she was the President of the World Squash Federation (WSF). Since 1997 Susie has been a member of the New Zealand Olympic Committee Board.

REFLECTIONS ON CHILDHOOD

“I am a country girl. I was born on a farm in a very small community on the outskirts of Feilding. My childhood was very much orientated around our farming community. My mother enthusiastically shut after a long illness and was just 42 years old and my youngest sister was three. As the eldest of the children, my father relied on me enormously. I believe that I have learnt many management skills and have taken on leadership roles easily as a result of this experience.

I attended a boarding school in Stratford. The Headmistress there had a huge impact on me. She was inspirational. She believed that nothing was impossible, for example, she decreed that ‘if’ we were going to build our own chapel, then we must to do it ourselves. We laid the floor and worked on the walls until they began to lean and the chapel was completed. We were brought up to believe that nothing was impossible!

We must realise is that it is quite difficult to accept women initially in any sport. I was first elected as a Vice President of World Squash Federation in 1989 shortly after the men’s and women’s organisations amalgamated. The constitution said, of the 3 Vice Presidents, one must be of the other gender, always anticipating that there would be one woman. The President of World Squash at that time was a Malay woman, Tunku Inran who I found totally inspirational. He is a mentor to me, and a very special person. I was proud to be elected President of the World Squash Federation in 1996, following Tunku Inran.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Being an Effective Role Model

Whilst managing New Zealand teams one of the areas that was obviously deficient in New Zealand squash was a lack of a Squash Institute. I became involved in the setting up and planning of a New Zealand Squash Institute. I seemed to always be the one that ended up chairing these bodies. The only woman, I was perceived to have the time and energy to do the hard yards and the organisational work.

Inspirational Role Model

I trained with the athletes, that was the way I did it. At the management level I believe that if you have come through that and you have been there – done that at every phase along the line then that is respected. I was first elected as a Vice President of World Squash Federation in 1989 shortly after the men’s and women’s organisations amalgamated. The constitution said, of the 3 Vice Presidents, one must be of the other gender, always anticipating that there would be one woman. The President of World Squash at that time was a Malay woman, Tunku Inran who I found totally inspirational. He is a mentor to me, and a very special person. I was proud to be elected President of the World Squash Federation in 1996, following Tunku Inran.

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