

OLYMPIC MUSEUM
New Zealand Olympic Committee

www.olympic.org.nz

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'm a country girl. I was born on a farm in a very small community on the outskirts of Fielding. My childhood was very much orientated around our farming community. My mother unfortunately died after a long illness when she was 42 years old and my youngest sister was three. As the eldest of five 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.

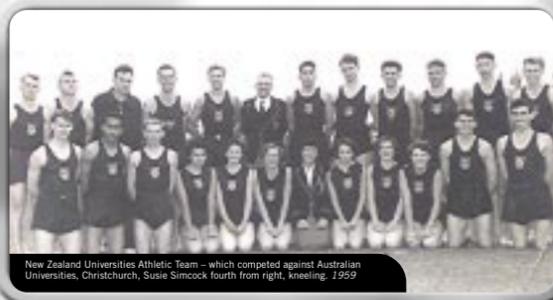


St Mary's School Basketball reps in a Taranaki Schools Representative Team. From left: Susie Simcock, Malafata Moinoi, Sianui Mataiava. (Photo taken approximately 1951)

INSPIRATIONAL ROLE MODEL

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 decided that 'we' were going to build a Chapel for the school. She got the builders plan and a concrete mixer. We laid the floor and worked on the walls until they began to lean dangerously outwards... at which time professionals were brought in – the chapel was completed. We were brought up to believe that nothing was impossible!

My passion was sport. I loved competing in every sport at school, basketball, hockey, table tennis, tennis, athletics... the whole lot! I loved the concept of being the best I could absolutely be. I liked winning! Team sports were a special passion. What I enjoyed was the fact that you had to work together to achieve a common goal. We were committed to excellence. My father was very keen on excellence in all things. Initially I did rather badly in academic work because I wanted to play sport all the time. He would 'bribe' me into getting good results. He told me I would not be going to the National Tournament with the Taranaki Women's Hockey Team unless I came top of the class. Well, of course I had to come top of the class, so I was allowed to go away in the hockey team!



New Zealand Universities Athletic Team – which competed against Australian Universities, Christchurch, Susie Simcock fourth from right, kneeling. 1959

I left school to train as a Physiotherapist. I'd considered Physical Education but didn't really want to teach. I just wanted to do the sport, so I chose physiotherapy instead. I found I really, really enjoyed physiotherapy and it was during my training in Dunedin that I met my husband.

After some years overseas, we returned to Auckland. I was introduced to squash – the perfect sport for a mother with three young children.

In time I developed from a fun casual player to a Provincial and National level player. I was appointed Manager of the New Zealand Women's Squash Team for six years. This then led me on to become President of the World Squash Federation.



Remuera Rackets Squash Team, Winners of the Mitchell Cup - National Interclub Competition. 1981
Back left to right: Katie Leabourne, Judy Espie. Front left to right: Donna Gurrin, Susie Simcock, Annette Owen

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!



New Zealand Women's Squash Team. Runners-up at the World Women's Squash Team Championships, Ireland 1985. At the same time Susan Devoy (far left) was the World Champion, from left: Susan Devoy, Donna Gurrin, Robyn Blackwood, Norm Coe (Coach), Susie Simcock (Manager).

BEING INSPIRED BY OTHERS / HANDLING INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

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 Malaysian prince, Tunku Imran 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 Imran.

Respect for Universal Ethics of Non Discrimination

Our rulebooks all had pictures of guys running around with racquets 'he' was used in all the rules. It took me several years as a member of the board of World Squash to persuade my colleagues that we had to have rules that explicitly included both men and women. Now they had problems with that! They said we can just put a disclaimer at the end of the rules and say where it says 'he' it could be 'she'. I didn't make a big thing about it but just really plugged away.

We must realise is that it is quite difficult to accept women initially in situations where there's traditionally been only males on a board or in management roles. So it's very important for a woman who comes in to take it quite gently to start with.

OLYMPIC MOVEMENT PARTICIPATION

Board Member – New Zealand Olympic Committee

NEW ZEALAND OLYMPIC COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

I've always known that for any sports person the opportunity to compete in the Commonwealth Games and the Olympics is absolutely the pinnacle of an athlete's career. In any sport it is the most valued and important goal for them. This was my initial reason for getting involved in the New Zealand Olympic Committee (NZOC Board Member since 1997). I think for every sport involved in the Olympics, it is the ultimate experience. There are so many other benefits, and I love the opportunities, particularly in today's society, of promoting the values of the Olympic Movement through sport and education. So much can be achieved through the Olympic Movement in so many ways. The opportunities that I had as a child to discover the joy and satisfaction of sporting involvement through my passion for sport has had a huge impact on my life. Through the Olympic Movement there is the possibility of providing similar opportunities to children all around the world.



At the World Men's Squash Championships, Qatar, Persian Gulf. 1998
From left: Jahangir Khan (Vice President of World Squash), local resident, Jonathan Power, (Canada, World Champion), Susie Simcock (President of World Squash Federation), Local Hisham / Championship Director.

MESSAGE TO YOUTH

The most important thing is don't be too narrow in your thinking. Keep an open mind, you just never know what opportunities might be around the corner. Opportunities aren't only restricted to athletes who excel in sport, there are so many other ways to be involved. Be a Referee, or try Administration. I was asked to do things, I didn't say no!

I encourage every child to get out there and 'have a go', not only in sport, but in all things. Make sure you do it well, Make that commitment."

