



OLYMPIC MUSEUM
New Zealand Olympic Committee

www.olympic.org.nz

6

"I was born in Papakura. Mum and Dad were quite young parents and they were yachting enthusiasts. I grew up on a yacht and came from a very, very strong yachting family. Our boat was always known to the locals. They could always spot our boat because we had all the nappies strung off the rigging and towed behind us to be cleaned.

This boating experience instilled in us a sense of adventure and exploration. I was quite a confident child growing up and that comes from parenting. Never saying, 'you can't do this, you can't do that', so I grew up very, very balanced and then I was introduced to lots and lots of different things as a child and found that I had a natural flair for yachting.

I attended Bucklands Beach Primary School where we did lots of productions and I did all the normal things like go to Brownies, Girl Guides and I did gymnastics.

Then I went to Bucklands Beach Intermediate School followed by Macleans College.

EARLY ROLE MODELS

Mum and Dad were adventurers and they were quite competitive. They used to race our yacht in all the cruising races and we were always very successful.

I remember climbing up waterfalls with Mum and Dad hoisting us up between each other and they had no limits. That was instilled into us kids.



"Kendall Kids, Mercury Islands, on the Paddle Board that dad made for us". From left: Barbara, Bruce, Wendy. Photo taken approximately 1975.

I got involved in windsurfing in 1984. My brother Bruce had been windsurfing for some time before that. He had just won the Bronze Medal at the Games of the XXIII Olympiad, Los Angeles 1984, in the Yachting / Windglider Class event. After only a few weeks I entered into competitions and then after a few months went to the World Windsurfing Championships at the age of 17.

Windsurfing for women was not included on the programme of the Olympic Games until 1992. However, there were many women competing on the professional circuit and that's where I aspired to go because that's where the money was. I saw it as a career option.

At the time windsurfing was a sport that was exploding with quite big budgets, and big advertising budgets, and I just thought, well, that's where I want to go. So it was just like kids seeing All Blacks, they see it as a career option. I didn't know if I could make it but I knew that that's what I wanted to do.

The thing that made it easier for me was the fact that my brother Bruce was himself a windsurfer. At that time windsurfing was very 'out of the box' to be involved with. So it was quite a big move but my parents were very supportive. I was travelling to Europe virtually on my own for 3 months, and Mum let me go, I was only probably 18 or 19, but my mother gave us the freedom to go and do that.



"First trip in my car with me driving. I went surfing with my best friend Clare Daley and it was the first time that I stood up on a board." - Summer 1984
"Poser - Mum made the dress for my first School Ball." 1984

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Balance of Body, Will and Mind

I had a natural fitness, but I was never like a super athlete. At school I was never a good runner or a good swimmer, but because I danced I had a natural fitness and that helped me a lot. As windsurfing evolved it became more physical so gym work became part of my training routine. It was good to have that challenge of the new discipline as windsurfing evolved, and it was a new area that I had to get good at.

REALISING YOUR DREAM

It starts with dreams! I had a competitive flair, I was competitive, and believe that you are actually born with that flair - that competitive nature - so I have that, plus I had a high level of self-confidence. Therefore, you base that dream on the things that you're good at, and then you can apply those skills of motivation, skills of goal setting, skills of making sure that you've got challenges.



"My Starling Scallywagster - in 1984 I won the Auckland Champs in it against the boys. My sister was second - Girls Cleaned Up!"

DEALING WITH CHANGE / EVOLVING WITH THE SPORT

Windsurfing is a very diverse sport, in fact it is like having five different sports in one.

For example, you have slalom sailing, wave sailing, speed sailing. I diversified when I got bored. All the skills I had actually crossed over to each of the other disciplines and that's one of the advantages of the sport.

THE OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

When I was young we had a black and white TV - it was around the era of Nadia Comaneci (Romania) who gained Gold Medals in the sport of gymnastics at the Olympics (Games of the XXI Olympiad, Montreal 1976 and the Games of the XXII Olympiad, Moscow 1980), scoring perfect scores in gymnastics, and I recall thinking that it would be neat to go to the Olympic Games. She was just a little bit older than me so I thought, I can do it too! It was also the time of the John Walker (NZL) era and of watching New Zealand marching at the Opening Ceremony and feeling very proud.

REFLECTIONS ON OLYMPIC COMPETITION

My whole motivation with the Olympics was to go and compete against the best people in the world and be the best you could be for that time and the prestige of competing for your country in an event that only happens once every 4 years. So it was more the competitive side that I saw than the Peace, Unity and Friendship. These aspects of the Olympic Games came later for me.



Barbara Kendall, Olympian (right) competing in the Lechner A-390, Women (Boardsailing) event, Games of the XXV Olympiad, Barcelona 1992. Barbara went on to win the Gold Medal in this event.

GAMES OF THE XXV OLYMPIAD, BARCELONA 1992

In 1992 I was there at the Barcelona Olympic Games just to compete. To me it was just like, 'oh, here we go another windsurfing competition', and I had no idea of the power of the Olympics. Which in a way was a blessing in disguise because it allowed me to focus on my event and to not get nervous.

GAMES OF THE XXVI OLYMPIAD, ATLANTA 1996 / FLAGBEARER

Being the Flagbearer for the New Zealand Olympic Team was an amazing experience but it also created a great deal of pressure on me to once again win a Gold Medal. On one hand it was very exciting and on the next hand it was very foreboding because there was a lot of expectation and I couldn't cope with it very well during my event.

GAMES OF THE XXVII OLYMPIAD, SYDNEY 2000

At Sydney I focused on my competition. It was not until afterwards that I made special friendships with the athletes that were members of the New Zealand Olympic Team. We shared a common bond through the effort it took to get to the Olympic Games.

REFLECTIONS ON WOMEN IN SPORT

I really enjoy competing in a male dominated sport, because when you beat men it feels great! I have always considered that I have pioneered the notion of women taking on sport as a career. Windsurfing is 'out of the box' and they didn't know where to put it.

In my sport of windsurfing it's been an advantage being a woman, it's been a disadvantage because of the sport being so new.

Women in sport today are getting into the 'old boys network' and coming in with a slightly more balanced approach than men. Women can handle stress better than men!

BEING AN OLYMPIC LEADER NZOC ATHLETES' COMMISSION

Sometimes sports funding decisions are made by people that do not understand what it's like to compete any more. This motivated me to sit on the Athletes' Commission of the New Zealand Olympic Committee. My biggest concern was making sure that the links between administration and the athletes were maintained to ensure that they were thinking along the same lines. This meant that athletes were involved in the decision making of sport.

OLYMPIC GAMES PARTICIPATION

Games of the XXV Olympiad, Barcelona 1992
Yachting / Lechner A-390, Women (Boardsailing) event.
Gold Medal

Games of the XXVI Olympiad, Atlanta 1996 Yachting / IMCO
One-Design: Mistral, Women (Boardsailing) event.
Silver Medal

Games of the XXVII Olympiad, Sydney 2000
Sailing / Women's Mistral (Boardsailing) event.
Bronze Medal

MESSAGE TO YOUTH

Think about all the things that you would like to do with your life. Think about what excites you! What are you passionate about, what gives you that feeling of, 'oh, I can't wait to get out there and do this'? Being a leader you need to be 'in your truth' with clear intentions. Be honest and if you're in your truth you'll never go wrong because it will be your intuition that is telling you things that you should be doing and if you're in your truth you're never going to do the wrong thing."



Barbara Kendall, Olympian, Winner of the Bronze Medal in the Women's Mistral, (Boardsailing) event, Games of the XXVII Olympiad, Sydney, 2000