

# women talking politics women talking politics

NEWSLETTER OF THE AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND WOMEN AND POLITICS NETWORK

Spring, 2001

New Issue No. 4

ISSN: 1175-1541

## Women and the 2001 Local Government Elections – Some Surprises

By **Jean Drage**, School of Political Science and International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington

There are some surprises in the provisional figures collated on women and the 2001 local government elections.<sup>1</sup> While it appears that the number of women elected to city, district and regional councils is similar to the 1998 numbers, there are two significant differences.<sup>2</sup> Firstly, the number of women who actually stood for election is down on the last election in 1998. Secondly, the number of women elected to mayoral positions was considerably less than last time - 19 elected in 1998: 12 this time.

**Table 1: Number of women elected to councillor positions on Local Authorities between 1989 and 2001**

	1989	1992	1995	1998	2001
City councils	87	87	80	82	88
District councils	149	164	178	177	175
Regional councils	44	33	38	37	34
<b>Totals</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>297</b>

Note: Figures for 2001 are provisional. These figures do not include community board positions or mayoralties

The number of women elected in the 13 October election show that women gained 88 seats on city councils, 175 seats on district councils and 34 seats on regional councils – a total of 297. We can see that comparisons with the numbers of women elected from previous elections (see Table One) show a similar number of women – 296 in the 1995 and 1998 elections to 297 in 2001.

<sup>1</sup> Note that as the election was held only 2 weeks before this publication goes to print figures are only provisional and collated from several sources including LGNZ, newspapers and a Gender Analysis of council candidates by Joe Hendren in Liz Gordon's parliamentary office.

<sup>2</sup> Community board elections are not included in this analysis.

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The number of women has increased by 6 on city councils and decreased by 2 on district councils and 3 on regional councils.

While the difference is small the question has to be asked – has the number of women being elected to local government seats peaked? Is there a ceiling here? These election results show that the actual number of women elected is not increasing at the same rate as it has in the past.<sup>3</sup> A major reason for this is that fewer women are actually standing for election. Table Two shows that since 1989 the number of women candidates increased by 44 in 1992 and in 1995 and by 56 in 1998 whereas in the 2001 elections there is a reduction in the numbers of women standing – 31.

<sup>3</sup> While the actual number is not increasing, the proportion of women continues to rise slightly as a result of the number of elected positions declining every 3 years. See my article in the Winter 1999 edition of *Women Talking Politics*, New Series, No. 1

**THE AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND  
WOMEN AND POLITICS NETWORK**

**October 2001**

This is the only Women in Politics network newsletter published in 2001. Because of work pressures it was decided that we would produce one double issue and this is it.

The material included in this issue is topical. We include articles on the local government elections held earlier this month, the recent MMP review, the NZ Labour Women's conference held in September and Prime Minister's spouses. Two of the women in our department are currently in Washington on Fullbright fellowships and they have contributed some very interesting articles on current issues in that part of the world. We have also included an index of all the articles that have been in this newsletter since we took on its publication in 1999.

The Editors for this issue are Jean Drage and Kate McMillan. Thanks to Charlotte Connell for her formatting skills.

**Future Newsletters**

While we have enjoyed putting together this newsletter we feel we have had our turn. Is there a group of women in a tertiary institution who are prepared to take it on for here?

Please contact us with your offers and your suggestions for future publication at:

The School of Political Science and International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington.

Email: [J.Drage@xtra.co.nz](mailto:J.Drage@xtra.co.nz)  
[Kate.mcmillan@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Kate.mcmillan@vuw.ac.nz)

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The website for the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan is [www.rawa.org](http://www.rawa.org)

**EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE**

**Table 2: Number of women candidates for councillor positions on Local Authorities between 1989 and 2001**

	1989	1992	1995	1998	2001
City councils	219	206	219	229	204
District councils	295	292	318	367	354
Regional councils	98	58	63	60	67
<b>Totals</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>625</b>

Note: Figures for 2001 are provisional. These figures do not include community board positions or mayoralties.

One reason for a fewer number of women standing for local authorities could be related to the district health board elections held for the first time in 12 years. Health has historically been seen as legitimate territory for women's involvement and women's success in the past at gaining seats on hospital and area health boards has been far greater than in any other area of local government. When these boards were disbanded by a National government in 1991, women filled 53 percent of elected positions on the 14 area health boards, with all the seats on one board going to women and 8 other boards having women elected to more than half the seats.<sup>4</sup> In the 2001 elections for district health boards, held at the same time as local authority elections, women made up about 45 percent of the 1,082 candidates and 65 women were elected to 147 seats (44 percent).<sup>5</sup>

Another reason for fewer women standing could be related to an erroneous perception that there are already enough women in local government and they are having a significant impact on this level of government. While this is partly true in that there have been many high profile women in local government who have clearly been progressive leaders in their communities, it is also clear that parity has not yet been achieved and will not be at the rate set in recent elections. At odds with this view is the fact that these elections have resulted in several local authorities in this country with either no elected women (the Waimate district and the West Coast regional council) or only one elected woman (Opotiki, Central Hawkes Bay, Stratford, Masterton, Grey and Central Otago districts and Northland and Taranaki regional councils). While the rural factor is a common denominator (common to the historical evidence that rural local authorities have been inherently male), the subsequent debate in the South Canterbury area raised some surprising

<sup>4</sup> See Jean Drage, 'The Invisible Representatives: Women Members of Hospital and Area Health Boards', *Women and Politics in New Zealand*, edited by Helena Catt and Elizabeth McLeay, Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1993, pp. 79-97.

<sup>5</sup> Preliminary results from Ministry of Health website – <http://www.moh.govt.nz>.

suggestions for the lack of success of women candidates. One opinion was that there had been a “backlash against women in power”, a backlash attributed to the fact that women hold the top positions in this country and they are “not making the difference other women thought they would.”<sup>6</sup> While 5 of the 8 councillor positions on the Waimate district council were uncontested, there were nevertheless women candidates for both the remaining council seats and for the mayoralty. Anne Townend, a mayoralty candidate suggested that the district was “in a time-warp, electing instead a 72 year old male representative, adding to the already aged, all-male council.”<sup>7</sup> Her views were not shared by one retired man who said “he was thrilled there were no women elected. ‘They should be in the kitchen with the pots and pans. It’s hard for a woman to make a decision. I like women but I feel they have no right to be on the council’”.<sup>8</sup>

Women continue to have the greatest success in urban areas: Christchurch and Waitakere cities have more women than men; Papakura, South Waikato and Hastings district councils have about equal numbers of women and men councillors while Auckland, North Shore, Palmerston North, Porirua, Upper Hutt, Hutt, Wellington and Nelson cities and New Plymouth, Waitaki and Southland districts have more than a third women councillors.

### **Women Mayors**

The 2001 elections also saw, for the first time, a reduction in the number of women mayors elected. Table 3 shows the trend over the last 5 elections, a trend that has seen the number rise from 10 in 1989 to 19 in 1998 and then reduces to 12 in the 2001 elections.

**Table 3: Number of women mayors elected between 1989 and 2001**

	1989	1992	1995	1998	2001
Women mayors	10	13	15	19	12

Eight of the 12 women mayors elected are incumbents and 4 are new to the job. Six of the incumbents are district council mayors (Yvonne Sharp in the Far North, Heather Maloney in Franklin, Mary Bourke in South Taranaki, Audrey Severinsen in Manawatu, Maureen Reynolds in Taranaki and Frana Cardno in

Southland) and 2 are city mayors (Jenny Brash in Porirua and Sukhi Turner in Dunedin). Two of the 4 new women mayors are leading district councils (Jan Beange in Tauranga and Sue Morris in Ruapehu) and 2 are new mayors in cities (Barbara Arnott in Napier and Kerry Prendergast in Wellington). Jan Beange is a lawyer and Sue Morris comes in with a career on the management side of local government. These 2 women reflect the growing trend of mayors who have not had long apprenticeships on council before being elected to this position while Barbara Arnott and Kerry Prendergast had previously been councillors, Barbara for 6 years and Kerry since 1986. Jan, Sue and Barbara are also the first women to be elected to the position of mayor on their councils. So what happened to the others? Carterton’s mayor, Georgina Beyer had resigned part way through her term when she was elected to parliament. Joan Williamson in Taupo and Lyn Hartley in Kawerau both stood down after 15 years in the leadership job and Claire Stewart stood aside after 9 years as mayor of New Plymouth. The rest (Iride McCloy in Kapiti, Noeline Allan in Banks Peninsula, Janice Skurr in Waimakariri, Mary Ogg in Gore, Christine Fletcher in Auckland and Jill White in Palmerston North) were not re-elected.

So why the drop in women in leadership positions? Is it once again an anti women thing? Marianne Tremaine’s research on women mayors provides us with clear evidence that the old boys network in New Zealand’s local government is alive and well.<sup>9</sup> However it is clear that local issues have a big impact these days on whether community leaders keep their jobs. With mayoral elections having more of a presidential style nowadays (big spending campaigns, strong media focus at the expense of other local authority positions and expectations that mayors will be full time advocates for their communities) mayors are now more likely to be blamed when things go wrong. This election saw new mayors in 30 of the 74 city and district councils (40 percent) with a third of these new mayors having unseated incumbents; a stark contrast to the 1995 elections 6 years ago when only 3 mayors were defeated.

<sup>6</sup> “Where are the women?” *The Timaru Herald*, 18 October 2001, p.4.

<sup>7</sup> “Waimate in a gender time-warp” *The Timaru Herald*, 17 October 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Krista Hunter, “Women ‘no right to be on council’”, *The Timaru Herald*, 18 October 2001, p.3.

<sup>9</sup> Marianne Tremaine, “Women mayors say what it takes to lead: setting theory against lived experience”, *Women In Management Review*, Vol. 15, No. 5/6, 2000, pp. 246-252.

### *So how can women move on from here?*

Research has shown that, in the past, women have been elected at a higher rate than men and that the reason why more women are not being elected is because they are not standing. Perhaps it is time to take a more proactive approach to encouraging more women to consider election to a local council. Many of the obstacles to women standing have been well documented – the high cost of campaigning, the low level of remuneration for a councillor, the shrinking number of electoral positions and the electoral system. But maybe it is time to tackle the issue from another perspective and look at setting up an organization or a network that will encourage women to stand and provide them with some training, financial support and mentoring through both the campaign and their time in office. The campaign training workshops for women which were provided prior to the 2001 election (see **PAGE ?** for Marianne Tremain's account of this) by women from Massey's University's Centre for Women and Leadership are a good model for starting such a network. Another model is the Australian Local Government Women's Association, an association of women already in local government, which has targeted local authority areas where there are no women elected. One way they approached this was to advertise in the local papers for women candidates and then help them with their elections. They have also run seminars for women candidates and for women in local government.<sup>10</sup> And of course, in New Zealand, the Women's Electoral Lobby has a long history of actively encouraging and supporting women to stand for election. In order to break through the ceiling that appears to have been reached and to continue to increase the numbers of women prepared to stand for local government seats, some forward planning to set in place something that will ensure this happens in 2004 seems in order.

If you feel enthusiastic about being part of a group – a New Zealand Women in Local Government Association – let either Marianne Tremain or me know. Email: [J.Drage@xtra.co.nz](mailto:J.Drage@xtra.co.nz), or **INCLUDE LATER**.

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<sup>10</sup> See Ros Irwin, *The State of Women in Local Government in Australia*, a report prepared for the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2001.

### **Holding Election Workshops for Women on Crafting a Campaign Strategy**

By **Marianne Tremain**, Centre for Women and Leadership, Massey University, Palmerston North

For Massey University's Centre for Women and Leadership, the local government elections this year seemed like an opportunity and a challenge. The Centre's mission is to advance women as leaders, so clearly the elections were an opportunity. But the non profit-making Centre does not have funds to run programmes, so each venture must be self-supporting, which is always a challenge. Even more challenging than the lack of financial resources was the short time frame. There were only a few short months left to get organised after an informal meeting in June when Professor Judy McGregor, Head of the Department of Communication and Journalism, first mooted the idea of doing something to support women standing for office that would help them get elected.

Judy McGregor's idea needed to take shape quickly if it was to be of any use to the women who were considering putting themselves forward for positions on councils. A decision was made that the area most useful to women standing for election would be information on planning a campaign. Elizabeth Hughes of Local Government New Zealand reacted enthusiastically when told about the idea and volunteered to approach the Ministry of Health to seek funding. As there had not been elections for District Health Boards for 13 years, the Ministry was concerned to encourage participation from as broad a range of people as possible and were willing to consider a proposal for funding. Putting the proposal and budget together as quickly as possible was a demanding task. The team planning the one day workshops wanted them to be offered in three centres, Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. There were costs of catering, travel and accommodation, but the budget had to be finely-honed to offer the participants free registration. The three women involved in planning the workshops, Judy McGregor, Margie Comrie and Marianne Tremaine were determined that women who were already meeting election costs out of their own pockets would not be prevented from coming to the workshop by an unaffordable registration fee.

After some discussion, the Ministry of Health approved the Centre's proposal and jointly with

Local Government New Zealand gave the workshops full funding. The next task was getting the word out to likely participants via posters, leaflets and e-mail lists. The workshops were planned for August and the format for the day started with a panel of women who had had experience on district health boards and councils, then moved to planning a campaign and to developing a public voice and public profile. After these sessions the participants moved around three smaller workshop groups to get practical experience in making a campaign speech, writing a press release and designing a flyer.

Over 100 participants attended the workshops and several different ethnic groups were represented, although there were only a few younger women in the under 30 age bracket taking part. The enthusiasm, energy and gratitude of the participants was intense. Contact with them following on from the workshops has shown that they put their workshop experience to good use. They planned their campaigns to get the best mileage out of advertising and exploited all the avenues for cheap (or better still free exposure) that they could find. One candidate for the mayoralty in a South Island district, has said that the workshop helped her and her support team to stick to their game plan, even when they came under pressure in the campaign and felt tempted to advertise before their planned dates.

She says that without the workshop she wouldn't have known how to organize the campaign and it has strengthened her resolve to stand next time, even if she is not successful on October 13. She is already planning ways of setting up support links for women standing in 2004 and although she has experienced pressure from male contenders to bow out of the campaign, she recognizes their concern as a measure of her success with innovative, attention-grabbing slogans and a clever campaign. The workshop presenters look forward to having their efforts rewarded by seeing more women's names in the election results this year and will be watching out for familiar names from the workshops. For any woman considering standing in 2004, their advice is to start planning now by gathering and keeping examples of peoples 150 word profiles, by setting up a file on advertisements that seem effective from this year's campaigns and by going to meetings and familiarising themselves

with the background of current issues. After all the 2004 elections are only three years away.

### **Women in Local Government in Asia and the Pacific**

By **Jean Drage**, School of Political Science and International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington

*This year I was commissioned by the United Nations to write a comparative report on women in local government in Asia and the Pacific. This is a summary of my report and is based on individual reports prepared by women from the countries included.*

Regional and international approaches to increasing the numbers of women in decision-making positions have worked alongside country and community level initiatives as catalysts for change, providing support and, in some cases, resources. As pointed out in Nelson and Chowdhury's extensive analysis of women and politics worldwide, the United Nations International Women's Year and the Decade for Women from 1975 to 1985 "nourished the international connections among women in innumerable large and small ways. Whether it planned to or not – even whether it wanted to or not – the United Nations was perhaps the most important resource a resource-poor social movement could have. ... The international spotlight on women, the impetus to gather and compare data, the ability of women's groups to hold their government to account and the occasions for international coalition building represented by the ... UN women's conferences ... all capitulated the international connections among women to a qualitatively different level."<sup>11</sup> Rod Alley also points to the role of the UN in the advancement of women although he suggests that this is more a result of the activities of women than of the UN organisation. In a book on the United Nations in South East Asia and the South Pacific, Alley describes how women have used UN forums to challenge and promote the social, health, educational, employment and welfare of women. For example, at the 1995 Beijing Conference the value of the agreed platform for action "lay in the follow-up action it inspired".<sup>12</sup>

One recent example of this is a Women in Local Government in Asia and the Pacific

<sup>11</sup> Barbara J. Nelson and Najma Chowdhury, editors, *Women and Politics Worldwide*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1994, p. 9.

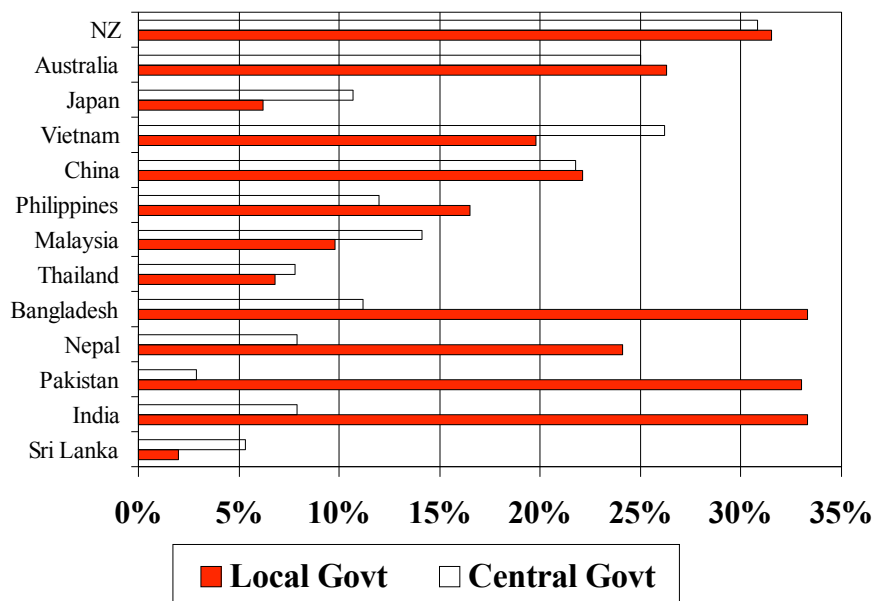
<sup>12</sup> Roderic Alley, *the United Nations in South East Asia & the South Pacific* Macmillian Press Ltd, 1988, p.162.

project initiated by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in 1999. This project set out to record the status of women in local government in this region in preparation for an Asia-Pacific Summit of Women Mayors and Councillors held in Thailand in June 2001. It had become clear that the role of women in the governance of their communities needed to be documented and the factors that helped and hindered their involvement identified in order to plan future initiatives to encourage more women to become involved in this level of government. Women from several countries in this region participated in this research, providing indepth analysis of initiatives that enable women to participate in decision-making in local government, the barriers that continued to inhibit participation and some qualitative research on the impact

women leaders are having on local government. This information was then drawn together to provide a picture of women’s involvement in local government in the Asia and Pacific region for this summit in order to provide a basis for discussion.

This comparative analysis is based on country reports from the following 13 countries: Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, China, Vietnam, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. When looking at the current situation, the following table shows clearly that while women are underrepresented at all levels of government – they have gained greater access to local government positions than to those in central government.

**Comparisons of Women in Local & Central Government**



In the South Asia countries of Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and India women hold between 24 and 33 percent of seats in local authorities as opposed to only gaining between 2 and 11 percent of seats in central government. This difference is directly related to a quota of seats being allocated for women in the local government systems in these countries. In countries like Australia and New Zealand the higher level of electoral success reflects the longer period of time in which women have

been able to vote and stand for election; the overall level of development in these countries and the long campaigns for change to increase the numbers. Other factors that influence women’s involvement in local government as opposed to central government are the higher number of positions available and less competition for these; more acceptance of women being involved in city and community government; and the fact that local government can be easier for women to fit into their lives



alongside employment and family responsibilities. The following is a brief summary of some of the factors that affect women's involvement.

#### ***Factors that Enable Women to Participate***

These include the laws, practices and initiatives that enable participation; the barriers that remain to participation; and the impact of the political system on participation. All of the countries have statutory provisions which guarantee women the right to participate, and all have signed CEDAW, which guarantees political and civil rights for women, although there are still some reservations to this. As well, they all have active NGOs which have taken a leading role in encouraging women to participate, in providing training and support and in initiating campaigns for change to enable more women to be involved. Quotas of reserved seats for women have been introduced as a direct result of these efforts.

#### ***Barriers to Women Gaining Political Power***

However the reality of women's lives in many parts of this region is that while they may have constitutional rights, they remain constrained by culture and tradition (the view that men are superior to women), religion, political turmoil, money, workloads and lack of opportunities. Demographic statistics, particularly in the South Asia sub-region, show low literacy rates, poor health rates and poverty, all of which point to a lack of basic rights to such things as education, health care, safety and employment opportunities. For instance, in Pakistan only 19 percent of women in rural areas and 52 percent of women in urban areas are literate. The infant mortality rate for girls between the age of 1 and 4 years is 66 percent higher than for boys. And Nepal is one of the few countries in the world where life expectancy is lower for women than for men, the average lifespan of a women being only 53 years. This is due, in part, to the poor health of women in this country, as almost 80 percent are anaemic and infant and maternal mortality rates are high.

The status and rights of women are also affected by political and economic instability that impedes the development of a political culture with democratic norms, respect for human rights and the rule of law. Socio-cultural norms and religious interpretations are frequently used for challenging and reinterpreting women's rights and creating insecurity for women. And although women

have equal political rights to participate as voters and representatives, in reality they can be actively discouraged to do so. Highly patriarchal societies enforce rules, responsibilities and behaviour for women, enforcing these norms in ways that affect their self-confidence, limit their access to information and skills and reinforce their lower status. One example of this is in Pakistan where women are prevented from exercising their vote by their families and by local and spiritual leaders. Agreements are even made between candidates and political parties to restrain women from casting their votes.

Women also face discrimination when standing for office and when elected or appointed to local government positions. Attitudes that put politics and decision-making into the male preserve see women as incapable of management and governance roles. And governance practices in which important decisions are made during drinking sessions exclude women from participating. Survey results in many of the country reports show that conservative attitudes, particularly towards women at senior management level, have meant that women did not fit the image of the 'man in charge'. This prevailing attitude to women contributes to the lack of confidence that many voters have in women. In Japan some women reported facing gender-related discrimination from their opponents when standing for election, including mass dissemination of handbills that contained slanderous information on the women candidates. In Australia the harassment and intimidation of one woman chief executive resulted in a public enquiry and subsequent dismissal of the council. The enquiry found that "a lot of the hostility to, and prejudice against her [had], as one of its principal causes or roots, the fact that she is not only a women, but a forceful and successful one at that."

The male environment within political institutions can deter women. The fact that there are few women on decision-making bodies means that these women have to work within styles and modes that are acceptable to men. As a result women find they cannot be open about women's issues and social justice. Some also find they are judged harshly by society and by their colleagues. For example, if they handle matters as men do they are said to be arrogant and seeking the limelight. One example of this in the China report described how traditional beliefs about superiority of men can have a

negative impact on how women are seen as decision-makers. In the indirect elections for village committees the women are criticised and rejected despite the fact that they have often outperformed men.

Women's involvement in local government can also depend on the level of democracy practised. Women can be disadvantaged by a system of local government which is strictly controlled by central government, is totally reliant on central funding to provide local administration, has little accountability to the community within which it operates and to which members are appointed. In Malaysia where elections have been suspended since 1960, all councillors are political appointees and those considered for appointment have had to have worked long and hard at both grassroots and senior levels for the party. As a consequence, women form less than 10 percent of nominated members and there are few women in management positions. Women are more likely to participate in a devolved system of local government that, while working within central or state government statute, has more autonomy, greater financial freedom (local rates revenue providing funding), holds regular elections and is more responsive to local communities and open to influence. An example of this elected /appointed difference is in Vietnam where nearly 26% of locally elected people's council seats are filled by women whereas appointments to people's committees have only resulted in about 6% of these seats going to women

While the introduction of quota systems for women in local government in many countries in the South Asia region has meant the difference between almost no women in these positions and an increase in the number of women being elected and employed in local government, they **are** not favoured by those who prefer to contest seats via the traditional 'merit based' system.<sup>13</sup> Even with quotas there are still barriers to women effectively participating in local government once there. Reserved seats can be seen as having an inferior status and a lack of constituency and the ability to be part of decision-making can still be blocked from within the system. And when elections are held infrequently and reserved seats are decided through indirect election, women in reserved

seats have little autonomy as they have been expected to support the politics of the group that have elected them.

As well, many women are just not prepared to be involved in political environments which support an aggressive culture, combative debate and personality conflicts. Nor are they prepared to have to deal with male colleagues who have difficulty coping with women and so belittle and personally attack them. The increasing corruption in politics has been another disincentive, as growing disillusionment over the inability of political parties to deliver and a lack of faith in the electoral process itself has resulted in a general downward trend in overall voter turnout, in some countries.

The detailed comparative report and individual country reports, as well as the proceedings of this summit for women mayors and councillors, will all be on the Human Settlements section of the UNESCAP website. See [www.unescap.org](http://www.unescap.org)

#### **Conferences Box / News From Australia**

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<sup>13</sup> It is worth noting that quotas have implemented as a result of major campaigns by women's groups.



## Is That It? The Report of the MMP Review Committee

By **Stephen Church**, Research Fellow, Public Policy, Victoria University of Wellington.

After 16 months of deliberation, hearing public submissions and gathering polling data, the select committee charged with reviewing the electoral system reported back to Parliament on 8 August 2001. And the verdict? Well... er... the thing is... they couldn't quite agree on what changes should be made to MMP. In fact, they couldn't even agree that there shouldn't be any changes to the electoral system. Confused? Let me try to explain.

The Electoral Act 1993, which established MMP as New Zealand's electoral system, included a requirement that after two elections, Parliament should review three specific aspects of the system:

- The method for determining geographical electorates
- Provisions for Maori representation
- Whether there should be a further referendum on changes to the electoral system

When the committee was established, the government decided to add four further terms of reference, asking it to consider:

- Whether the number of MPs should be reduced from 120 to 99
- The extent to which party lists have resulted in better representation of women
- The effectiveness of the current electoral system with respect to tangata whenua and ethnic minority representation
- Any other matter relating to the electoral system

Clearly, the issue of the number of MPs was added to the Committee's work as the government's response to the results of the 1999 Citizens' Initiated Referendum (CIR), whereby 81.5% of voters supported downsizing Parliament. Given the obvious improvement in the representation of women, Maori, and ethnic minorities under MMP, the inclusion of the next two criteria could be seen as an attempt to build a case against changing the system. As Rae Nicholl noted in her earlier article on the proceedings of the committee (see *Women Talking Politics* newsletter, Spring 2000, p.13), a reduction in the size of Parliament is likely to impact negatively on the representation of these groups.

It's important to note that none of the terms of reference required the committee to decide whether MMP should be retained or replaced with another system. A minority of submitters expressed a desire to return to 'first-past-the-post', and even fewer opted for yet other systems, but the committee had to deal with these suggestions under the final, 'miscellaneous' term of reference. Thus the committee's work was very much a review of the workings of the current system, rather than a forum for canvassing alternative systems, in the way that the earlier Royal Commission on the Electoral System had operated.

This still doesn't explain why the committee were unable to agree on some of the significant issues relating to the system that we do have, such as the number of MPs and the question of a further referendum. The answer lies in the decision-making rules adopted by the committee. Normally, select committees make decisions by a simple majority vote. However, given the constitutional significance of the work of the committee, it was desirable to build a broader base of support for the recommendations made. In deliberating on the electoral system, decisions made by the committee had the potential to impact upon the ability of the various parties to win seats. Thus it was deemed important to avoid 'bloc' voting by a majority, whether by the government and its allies, or by the major parties against the minor parties, because the losing side could be adversely affected by any changes that were recommended.

It was decided that the committee should make recommendations only on the basis of unanimity. If this was not possible, decisions could be reached by 'near-unanimity', if dissent was limited to a small proportion of the House. The upshot of this was that there were very few issues upon which the committee was unanimous, and universal agreement on the following matters were essentially cases for the status quo:

- The criteria used by the Representation Commission when drawing electoral boundaries to be retained
- The number of seats allocated to the South Island to remain the same
- That no waiver of the threshold for Maori parties should be introduced
- That no legislative measures to enhance representation of women or ethnic minorities should be introduced

- That candidates should continue to be able to stand both on the list and for an electorate

The committee also agreed that consideration should be given to ways in which proportionality could be maintained in light of the steady increase in the number of electorate seats at the expense of list seats (assuming a fixed size of Parliament and a guaranteed number of South Island seats). There was one issue on which the committee were near-unanimous. ACT, the Alliance, the Greens, Labour and National were all in favour of retaining the system of closed national lists, whereas United supported the adoption of open lists (which would allow voters to rearrange the rankings of party list candidates,

or opt for certain individuals). So no big changes there.

By default, the status quo also remained for every other matter relating to the electoral system, such as the number of MPs, the need for a further referendum, the threshold and the future of the Maori seats, precisely because the committee couldn't come to a complete agreement on these matters. The members of the committee acted very much as party delegates in deliberating on these questions, and the following table gives an indication of the divisions in Parliament on some of these issues.

### Issues relating to the electoral system on which the MMP Review Committee was divided

ISSUE	IN FAVOUR	AGAINST
Reduction in the number of seats to 99	National, United, ACT (only if the size of Cabinet is reduced)	Alliance, Greens, Labour
Referendum on whether MMP should be retained	National, United	Alliance, Greens, Labour, ACT (all thought that more time was needed)
Reduction in the party vote threshold to 4%	ACT, Greens, United	Alliance, Labour, National
Removal of the one-seat threshold for list seats	ACT (only if the party vote threshold is reduced to 4%)	Alliance, Greens, Labour, National, United
Retention of the Maori seats	Alliance, Greens, Labour, National, United	ACT
Increase in the tolerance between electorate populations from 5% to 10%	ACT, Alliance, Greens, National	Labour, United

On first impressions, it appears that the inability of the MMP Review Committee to find agreement on the substantive issues tells us very little about the future of the electoral system. The Committee recognised in the introduction to its report that 'the absence of decisions and recommendations on many of these issues may disappoint many'. However, if anything, the disagreement between the stated positions of the parties on the relevant issues might be more influential in the longer term.

There are a number of reasons to believe that outstanding issues relating to the electoral system will continue to linger. To begin with, the government must respond to the report of the MMP Review Committee by early November, in line with Parliament's Standing Orders. It could choose to propose changes to the electoral

system that did not achieve unanimous support, and this is where the relative positions of the parties becomes important. However, some provisions relating to the electoral system (such as the term of Parliament, the Representation Commission, the division of electorate boundaries, and the method of voting), are entrenched under section 268 of the Electoral Act, which means that they require 75% support in the House or a majority of votes in a referendum before changes can be enacted. Add to this the unknown factor of New Zealand First, which chose not to sit on the committee, and did not make a submission.

If the government chooses not to propose changes to the electoral system, there are two other avenues for change. The first is a Member's Bill introduced by the Ex-Leader of

the Opposition, Jenny Shipley, which seeks two referendums on the future of MMP. By circumventing the review process, the Bill seeks to publicise National's support for a further referendum, but it is unlikely to proceed based on the divisions expressed in the committee. However, the party could choose to campaign on the issue in the run-up to next year's election, and could get its wish if the results shift the balance of support in the House.

The second means by which changes to MMP could be put back on the agenda is by CIR. A group called Citizens' Majority Trust, headed by Stuart Marshall, has started a petition in the hope of securing a referendum on the question: 'should a binding referendum be held to decide the future voting system, based on a Parliament of 99 MPs?' The polling conducted by UMR Insight on behalf of the MMP Review Committee suggests that there is little interest in the electoral system amongst the wider populace. Nevertheless, the not-so-subtle inclusion of the issue of the number of MPs within the petition question is likely to boost support for the poll. The petitioners have until March 2002 to collect the signatures of 10% of registered voters (about 260 000) before a referendum can be forced. Even if this target achieved, and a referendum on this question is held in conjunction with the general election of next year, the government is not bound by its results. If the government did choose to act on a strong referendum result (which will in turn depend on which parties are in government), this essentially requires a further binding referendum on the electoral system. Confused? So am I.

The Report of the MMP Review Committee (including the results of public opinion polling by UMR Insight) can be viewed at Parliament's website

<http://www.parliament.govt.nz/publications/index.html>

## **OPINION: No Escaping the Abortion Debate in the U.S.**

By **Rae Nicholl**, Victoria University of Wellington, Fulbright Fellow, Women and Politics Institute, American University in Washington DC.

In late August 2001, I arrived in Washington DC to take up a ten-month Fulbright Fellowship Award. I had been chosen for a pilot scheme: this is to be the first time that Fulbright Fellows take part in the American Political Science Association's Internship Programme, which begins in November 2002. For the first two months of my Award, I am a Fulbright Scholar at the Women and Politics Institute of the American University in Washington D.C.

Founded in 2000, the Women and Politics Institute is the brainchild of Dr Karen O'Connor, who is not only the Director of the Institute but also a Professor of Government in the School of Public Affairs at the American University. She is a well-known political scientist whose publications include not only one of the best-selling textbooks in the United States, *American Government: Continuity and Change*<sup>14</sup>, but also a long list of other books, articles and papers including a definitive study of abortion politics in America, entitled *No Neutral Ground? Abortion Politics in an Age of Absolutes*.<sup>15</sup>

Before I left New Zealand, I had been determined not to become side-tracked in America's abortion debate but, rather, to concentrate on my area of interest: campaign funding. I wanted to explore the correlation between the huge sums of money required in the United States to mount a viable campaign (at least \$10 million<sup>16</sup> to run a credible campaign for a seat in the Senate) and the paucity of women in central government. It is well-known that while New Zealand ranks eighth in the world with regard to the number of women in Parliament (30.8 percent or 37 women out of 120 MPs), the United States languishes in 47<sup>th</sup> position, level pegging with Slovakia and immediately behind nations such as Eritrea, Ecuador, Burundi and Andorra. At the last elections in 2000, American women gained 14 percent of the seats in the House of

<sup>14</sup>Karen O'Connor and Larry J. Sabato, *American Government: Continuity and Change*, Longman, New York, 2002.

<sup>15</sup>Karen O'Connor, *No Neutral Ground? Abortion Politics in an Age of Absolutes*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1996.

<sup>16</sup>All amounts in the article are given in US dollars.

Representations (61 out of 435) and 13 percent in the Senate (13 out of 100).<sup>17</sup>

When I began to investigate campaign funding, I discovered immediately that the subject of abortion is inextricably tied up with campaign funding. Most of the largest feminist organisations in United States such as EMILY's Choice, Feminist Majority Foundation and the National Partnership for Women and Families fundraise specifically on behalf of candidates who are pro-choice. EMILY's List will only sponsor Democratic women but Feminist Majority, for instance, assists women from either the Republican or Democratic Party so long as they are pro-choice.

The costs of running elections in the United States are now almost beyond comprehension to New Zealanders, but are destined to rise still further. An organisation called The Center for Responsive Politics keeps track of campaign spending and reports that the total price of the 2000 congressional and presidential elections was at least \$3 billion, up from \$2.2 billion in 1996 and \$1.8 billion in 1992. The centre notes that 'all indications are that the cost of the 2004 elections will far exceed the amount spent in 2000. TV ads, political consultants, and other major sources of campaign spending have driven up the cost of running for office, and there are no signs of a slowdown in the fast-rising need for campaign cash among candidates and parties'.<sup>18</sup>

With regard to abortion politics, the Center for Responsive Politics looked at how much money was given by individuals and political action committees (PACs) to political parties in the 2000 election. Under federal law, organisations such as trade unions and pressure or single-interest groups are required to establish officially recognised fundraising committees - PACs - in order to participate in federal elections.<sup>19</sup>

The Centre for Responsive Politics found that pro-life groups overwhelmingly supported the Republican Party, which gained 92 percent (\$952,985) of all the contributions: the Democratic Party received 4 percent (\$39,482). On the other hand, pro-choice contributors supported both parties. The Democratic Party received 56 percent (\$1,718,876) of the funding and the Republicans gained 44 percent (\$1,348,339). From these figures, it is clear that

the Republicans receives significant support from pro-life groups.<sup>20</sup>

With the Republican Party financially beholden to pro-life organisations, feminist groups have been vigilant in monitoring policies originating from the administration of President George W. Bush which affect women and, in particular, their right to abortion. They believe that the Republicans' goal is to overturn the 1973 Roe versus Wade decision, which allowed women the right to choose. One of the first signs of trouble came in a leaked draft document in July 2001 from the Department of Health and Human Services. A new policy was being promoted which would allow individual states to define 'an unborn child' as a person eligible for medical coverage under the State Children's Health Insurance Program, which is a component of America's extraordinarily convoluted and complicated health system.

While officials argued that the proposed change would increase insurance coverage for prenatal care and deliveries, critics argued that the new policy was a backdoor effort to advance the administration's anti-abortion agenda and to establish a legal precedent for recognising the foetus as a person. Such a change would be in complete contradiction to the Roe versus Wade decision, in which the Supreme Court said, "The unborn have never been recognised in the law as persons in the whole sense".<sup>21</sup>

While the abortion debate raged at the federal level, at the local level *The Washington Post* ran a series of stories confirming that, for the past 15 years, some women applying for positions with the police, the fire department and emergency services in the Washington DC area were required to take pregnancy tests. The paper reported that the Fire Chief, Ronnie Few, sent letters to applicants telling them that their employment was conditional on passing a physical, including a test to make sure they were not pregnant. If a female applicant tested positive for pregnancy, the job offer was put on hold.

The practice, which violated the federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act, came to light when it was revealed that a 21-year-old emergency services worker was told she would have to choose between keeping her child and keeping her job, prompting her to have an abortion. Within three weeks of the scandal

<sup>17</sup>Source: www.ipu.org, 1 October 2001.

<sup>18</sup>Source: www.opensecrets.org, 20 September 2001.

<sup>19</sup>O'Connor and Sabato, *American Government*, p. 526.

<sup>20</sup>Source: www.opensecrets.org, 20 September, 2001.

<sup>21</sup>Robert Pear, 'Bush Plan Allows States to Give 'Unborn Child' Medical Coverage, *New York Times*, 5 July 2001.

appearing in the media, the Mayor of Washington DC, Anthony A. Williams, who had initially defended the pregnancy tests, changed his mind, and changed the rules.<sup>22</sup>

The abortion debate has fallen silent since terrorists bombed the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington D.C. on 11 September 2001. In fact, not only the abortion issue but the entire policy agenda has been placed in a state of suspended animation by politicians, lobbyists and organisations, many of whom are afraid of being called unpatriotic if they challenge the Bush administration during this period when America is preparing for war. But a couple of television evangelists dared to tread where no one else was willing to go. Ultra-conservative televangelist Rev. Jerry Falwell could not help taking advantage of the tragedy to make a point and to accuse large groups in American society for being the cause of the terrorist attacks.

Falwell founded the Moral Majority in 1978, a group which worked assiduously to put Ronald Reagan in the White House but which was disbanded in 1989 having suffered a series of highly embarrassing financial and sexual scandals involving televangelists. Currently, Falwell is a Baptist minister and Chancellor of Liberty University in Lynchburg (yes, Lynchburg), Virginia. He made his comments to another televangelist, Pat Robertson, on Robertson's popular television programme, *The 700 Club*. Robertson founded the Christian Coalition after the demise of the Moral Majority and is notorious not only for his 1992 pronouncement accusing feminists of wanting to kill their children and of practicing witchcraft, but also for shady gold-mining deals in Liberia.

In the television broadcast of 13 September, Falwell placed the blame for the terrorist attacks on the United States on abortionists, feminists and homosexuals. 'When we destroy 40 million innocent babies, we make God mad. I really believe that the pagans and the abortionists and the feminists and the gays and lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way - all of them who have tried to secularise America - I point the finger in their face and say, "You helped this happen".'<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>*The Washington Post*, 6 September 2001 and 20 September 2001.

<sup>23</sup>Judy Mann, 'Falwell's Insult compounds Nation's Injury', in *The Washington Post*, 21 September 2001, p. C8.

Soon after the broadcast, Falwell was forced to apologise for his comments, saying they were 'ill-timed, insensitive and divisive at a time of national mourning'. Robertson, who had gone along with Falwell's remarks at the time, hastened to distance himself.<sup>24</sup> President Bush called Falwell's statement 'inappropriate'.<sup>25</sup> The National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (Naral) issued a statement saying that 'the remarks of Mr Falwell and Mr Robertson are truly shameful. But our thoughts are not about them, they are with the families affected by the horrific tragedy and our national leaders as they guide the nation through our most difficult hour.'<sup>26</sup>

Another voice of sanity came from Eleanor Smeal, President of the Feminist Majority. She emphasised that women's rights must not be marginalised as a side issue in the wake of the terrorist attacks in any retaliatory action taken against Afghanistan, the country suspected of harbouring the ringleader in the atrocities, Osama bin Laden. Smeal suggested that, in many ways, Afghan women were the first victims of the Taliban, the religious zealots who rule over 90 percent of Afghanistan. Further, she insisted that, in order to create global stability, Afghan women's rights must be restored.

'We have been saying for years that a country where so many people have no rights will create international instability. People just thought, "Oh, there they go about the women again." People need to realise that women are important, not just in their own right, but that we're canaries in the coal mine. How women are treated is a good indication of which way a society is going', Smeal said.<sup>27</sup>

Even as Falwell and Robertson were busy attacking one group of feminists, another woman was in trouble. Barbara Lee, a Democratic House Representative from California, who has received assistance with campaign funding from feminist groups, was the only person to vote against a resolution to give the President of the United States sweeping powers of retaliation against the perpetrators of the bombings.

In her statement to the House, Barbara Lee said:

*'I rise today with a heavy heart, one that is filled with sorrow for the families and loved ones who were killed and injured this week.'*

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<sup>24</sup>Source: [www.falwell.com](http://www.falwell.com), 18 September 2001.

<sup>25</sup>Source: [www.abcnews.go.com](http://www.abcnews.go.com), 18 September 2001.

<sup>26</sup>Source: [www.naral.org](http://www.naral.org), 20 September 2001.

<sup>27</sup>Source: [www.feminist.org](http://www.feminist.org), 17 September 2001.

*Only the most foolish or the most callous would not understand the grief that gripped our people and millions across the world.*

*'This unspeakable attack on the United States has forced me to rely on my moral compass, my conscience and my God for direction.*

*'September 11 changed the world. Our deepest fears now haunt us. Yet I am convinced that military action will not prevent further acts of international terrorism against the United States. This resolution will pass although we know that the President can wage a war even without it. However difficult this vote may be, some of us must urge the use of restraint. Our country is in a state of mourning. Some of us must say, let's step back for a moment and think through the implications of our action today, so that it does not spiral out of control.*

*'I have agonised over this vote. But I came to grips with opposing this resolution during the very painful memorial service today. As a member of the clergy eloquently said, "As we act, let us not become the evil that we deplore."<sup>28</sup>*

For these comments, Barbara Lee has been accused of being unpatriotic, of being a communist, and now must have armed guards to protect her from attack.

## **Meg Greenfield's *Washington*<sup>29</sup>: A Review**

By **Elizabeth McLeay**, Victoria University of Wellington, Fulbright Visiting Professor in New Zealand Studies, Georgetown University, Washington DC.

It is now over three weeks since the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington DC. The sense of violation, the rage and the sorrow have not gone away, and will not, but normal politics, if indeed there is ever such a thing, are beginning to resume. Meg Greenfield, whose book I shall discuss here, died in 1999. I can only regret that this distinguished print journalist is not been alive today, for she would have commented sensitively yet trenchantly on both the terrible events themselves and the responsibilities of those in political office who have to decide how to react. Fortunately, however, Greenfield has left us with a remarkable book that provides history and context to contemporary political events in the USA and beyond. It is also very much a woman's perspective on her times.

Born in Seattle in 1930, Greenfield studied English literature at Smith and then went on a Fulbright grant to Cambridge, England. She lived in Europe, went to New York, worked as a researcher and then journalist for the *Reporter*, and in 1961 was sent to DC, initially temporarily. After the *Reporter* folded, Greenfield went to the *Washington Post* where she spent the rest of her career. She also wrote for *Newsweek*. Greenfield became editor of the Editorial Page of the *Post* and, also, what is called here the 'op-ed' page where commentators (often non-journalists) write opinion pieces. In 1978 Greenfield won the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing. She accepted only one request for an interview on the topic of her award and that was for an in-house *Post* publication. In it she said, 'It's very uncomfortable to be interviewed on how you do your work...You see, I use a number two pencil...I work like everyone else—deadly chaos up until deadline. I think it's darn pretentious of journalists who see themselves as

<sup>28</sup>Source: [www.house.gov/lee](http://www.house.gov/lee), 14 September 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Meg Greenfield, *Washington* (New York, Public Affairs, 2001), ISBN 1-58648-027-8.

celebrities.<sup>30</sup> Note that *Washington* was written in almost complete secrecy; and it was published posthumously.

Greenfield's book is soaked in the atmosphere of political Washington. It is about the relatively few people at its core who are networked into the governmental structure through their roles as politicians, senior public servants (politically appointed and career), lobbyists, policy experts and those, like Greenfield, in the mass media. Political Washington is a 'community' with everyone 'inhaling the zeitgeist of the place, internalizing its idea of what matters' (p. 17). Greenfield discusses the types of people who arrive in DC and who are then shaped by this great city, the changes in political style observed during her newspaper career, the role of the media, and the position of women who, either through choice or (more likely) because their husbands' lives led them there, find themselves at the centre of federal power. Along the way there are discussions of the role played by English literature on Greenfield's own life and how 'Englishness' has become bound up in upper-class Americans' ways of presenting themselves and their homes, brief vignettes of incidents and stories that illustrate her general points, and illuminating insights into the way her career developed (arguing, as so many women do, that much was accidental and unplanned). The material is not always well-organised, understandably enough, but is unfailingly engrossing. The author had planned to write a further chapter entitled 'Friends and Family', the one that would have been 'the most intimate' of the book<sup>31</sup> but her death through cancer prevented the completion of these memoirs.

Greenfield disclaims objectivity, although her book can be interpreted as one long plea for professionalism in political life. She also disclaims personal partisanship, an interpretation of her own life and work that I am not qualified to judge. Graham wrote, however, that 'Conservatives claimed her as a friend, but so did liberals' (p. xxiii). The evidence of this book is that Greenfield certainly had independent opinions, whatever her political biases. This is shown in her treatment of Washingtonians of varying political persuasions.

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<sup>30</sup> Katharine Graham, 'Foreword', p. xxiii. Katharine Graham owned the *Washington Post*. The two women became close friends.

<sup>31</sup> Michael Beschloss, 'Afterword', p. 231. Beschloss was Greenwood's literary executor and main editor of the manuscript.

Pen portraits of political personalities, depicted primarily through the retelling of incidents, are sprinkled throughout the book. A striking characteristic about the descriptions is the way Greenfield blends toughness of judgement and almost tenderness about human fallibility. She had become deeply anxious about what happens to people when they come to Washington:

*The Washington I have observed over the past thirty-plus years has been Republican-run and Democrat-run, Congress-dominated and executive-branch-dominated. The one constant has been that in each new phase there have been some good people who turned up, doing their best to do right by the government they work for and the public their actions affect. What they have resisted is the fatal, ever-resent Washington temptation: disappearance into the abstract, bloodless, phony, self-inflating world of endless competitive image projection—at the expense of just about everything else. For the professional value system of political Washington entices those who come to from elsewhere—bureaucrats, appointees, and elected officeholders—to mask, then deny, and finally misplace altogether their own identity and acquire another, fabricated one (p. 8).*

Thus, Greenfield describes a central problem of politics everywhere: how to prevent or discourage the transformation of ordinary, necessary political power into the pursuit of selfish personal aggrandisement, a dilemma that has new dimensions and implications in the age of the mass media and instant communication between citizen and elected representative.

This theme develops into a continually recurring dialogue on the interrelationship between the media and the politicians, especially the way each uses and misuses the other. Although Greenfield certainly did not see political actors through rose-tinted glasses, as I have indicated, she pleads for media understanding of politicians as people who cannot be perfect because they are real people. Sparing neither profession—commentators nor commented-upon—she observes,

*We recognize the conflicts and susceptibilities in others largely by imagining them in ourselves. Journalists who persist in regarding themselves as thoroughly clean and the world around them as thoroughly dirty are guilty of more than misplaced moral*



*vanity. They are also in danger of rendering themselves incapable of plausibly explaining what they are covering—except as further implied evidence of their own virtue (pp. 14-5).*

Greenfield argues that although journalists can do their best to be truthful and fair it is impossible to be completely dispassionate; and journalists should recognize that this is so. They should not be too adversarial, too self-satisfied, or favour their particular sources and mates in government, and they should become aware of their own failings. These observations are illustrated with stories of episodes from Greenfield's own career. She discusses the moral dilemmas of journalists who know that what they are reporting is not the whole truth. Duplicity is 'routine' (p. 174). She points out that sometimes there are public interest reasons (for example national security) that excuse the lies, but that too often they are simply self-serving. The problem for journalists is that there is no code of conduct that can fit all circumstances. Journalists, however, Greenfield points out, are no longer as willing to cover up for officials and politicians as they once were. 'I'm glad we broke with that tradition, but I sometimes think we are unjustifiably smug about it, in that in much more insidious, uninspected ways journalists nowadays are often working well within the news and political parameters that government sets and doing its bidding, all the while boasting of our newfound independence' (p. 191). But it is a complex situation given the very close interrelationship between media and government. Greenfield's discussion of this is one of the most illuminating and thoughtful sections of the book.

Greenfield is at her most provocative with her generalisations about those who make it to Washington. Like all such typologies, there are limitations to their applicability, as the writer recognises. Nevertheless, they demonstrate her shrewd, analytical, yet metaphorical mind. Greenfield dismisses the usual description of DC as 'the quintessential company town' (p. 24), preferring instead the analogy of a high school which is a 'preeminently nervous place' (p. 23). Like school pupils, the members of Washington's political community are transient participants. Congress, like high schools, has freshmen, sophomores and seniors. Election intakes are referred as the 'class of...' and there is a strict seniority system.

Those who get to Washington are generally the children—almost always males—who are successful at school:

*Leave aside the demographics and the social science surveys and the analyses of median income, consumption habits and religious background. The key index is this. Political/governmental Washington is an adult community made up largely of people who were extremely successful children. I don't say happy children or wealthy children or godly children. I mean only people who, as children, were good at being children.*

*Many of them continue to think of themselves as children and pursue their ambitions in the manner of the successful child (p. 30).*

Very few unsuccessful children—'the kid losers' or the 'muddling, muddle-through nondescripts'—make it to the capital. Those who do tend to be the 'hall monitors' ('many more than any one city should have to tolerate'), the 'teachers' pets', those 'who mowed the neighbours' lawn and were pronounced "fine young people"', the ones who got the 'Chamber of Commerce Boy or Girl of the Year', and so forth (p. 31). Those who prevail against obstacles make it. But kid trouble-makers do not, although they do achieve in many other areas of life.

So what exactly is the problem with this sort of selection system? Greenfield says that these sorts of people 'don't just like to prevail; they need to and expect to. Prevailing in this context means securing their place at the very top of whatever social collectivity it happens to be and becoming an influential, leading member of it, a praised person' (p. 32). The problem for a polity peopled at the top with types like these is that they must keep on having to prove themselves. 'This they do through press leaks, self-promoting statements, grandstanding gestures, and subtle (of course, routinely denied) preemptive strikes at real, potential, and wholly imagined rivals' (p. 33). Unfortunately, this also sounds very familiar to those of us who do not normally live in Washington.

There are problems with the 'new improved self' (p. 67) developed with the help of the opinion polls and the consultants, the self that exists 'only in relation to [others'] perception of you' (p. 103). With the obsession with image, public statements become lies and these are then shielded through the closed nature of Washington life itself. 'We journalists, of course, bear much of the responsibility for this

phenomenon. Modern technology makes us an ever-present, all-seeing eye on public life' (pp. 67-8). And the rules themselves changed in the course of Greenfield's career. The opening up of personal lives and scandals to the media exposes everything in politics; and confidence in political authority declines. Although to some extent a healthy development, it is argued, such exposure breeds furtive behaviour by decision-makers. Greenfield pursues this thesis more completely than I can here.

Greenfield also argues that 'winning' (political arguments, policy debates) in a democratic polity, particularly one as complex as US federal government, can only be achieved through gaining the consent of other participants. This is not of course a new argument. Greenfield, however, says that a key problem is that, in the modern world where politicians communicate to their constituents indirectly through the media, they do not learn the networking and negotiating skills that the old politics of party organisation and constituency meetings fostered. They fail to gain the knack of knowing how to win. 'Winning here means winning people over—sometimes by argument, sometimes by craft, sometimes by obsequiousness and favors, sometimes by pressure, and sometimes by a chest-thumping, ape-type show of strength that makes it seem prudent to get with the ape's program' (p. 36). Unfortunately, the author argues, this is not the sole problem with the people who have got to the top. Not only have they not learned these skills but neither have they 'been sufficiently toughened and seasoned to have had to make and remain responsible for (as distinct from merely brilliantly describing to a columnist over lunch) the brutal choice between truly awful policy alternatives, and do it by three that afternoon' (p. 52). Good children do not develop the 'thick skins' of others and do not become accustomed to 'the murderous criticism' that comes with being in charge (p. 53).

As well as observing others, there is much in this book about Greenfield's own life and experiences as a woman in Washington. She tells us about the wince-making compromises she made in order to comply with the rules of a male world. Like many other successful women of her age cohort Greenfield took a while to embrace the new ideas put forward by the feminist movement of the 1970s. She retained her critical detachment, as she did with all ideas, but she herself was greatly influenced by the

women's revolution. Looking back over the anxieties and obstacles she had experienced as a senior woman journalist, she wrote somewhat bitterly,

*We were women who could be cited as proof that there were no male-imposed barriers to hiring and promotion, never mind our suspiciously small numbers. Much more important, we were women who could be supposed, by our passivity, to be on the company's or agency's side when any individual female employee or group of them came forward with complaints.*

*That was what changed....As time went on, we were generally to be found using our influence vigorously to promote their side in the office disputes' (p. 145).*

The chapter entitled 'Women and Children' is a perspicacious discussion of the relationship between politicians and their families. Greenfield observes how parents (but not wives or offspring) become the consciences of their grown political children. Harry Truman, for example, wrote to his mother every day. Of course, from time-to-time all of us can be made into children again by our parents. In Washington it is rather different though: 'It is that the abiding parental claim to be the principal guide, authoritative instructor, and moral court of last appeal extends into critical realms of professional life, not just matters of housekeeping or intrafamily dealings—and that it has so much more influence than that of other would-be judges and disciplinarians' (p. 113).

Greenfield observes that the number of men married to women who are in big government jobs is still very small. But things did indeed change in the course of her career: 'The Washington I came to in 1961 was known as a "man's town", and that was exactly what it was. Now, a generation later, thanks to epochal political and social upheavals, I believe it could be called a recovering man's town, but still a man's town' (p. 114). One crucial change is that politicians' wives no longer put up with many of the sacrificial demands previously made of them. Women now see themselves differently. Fewer and fewer wives, for example, put up with the other women in their men's lives. Greenfield is scathing about Washington's sexual scandals. Picking up the school analogy once more, she writes, 'Truly, there is something irredeemably adolescent about the public sex scandals in the nation's capital in recent decades' (p. 139). She is equally condemnatory of the exploitation of

their children by the many politicians who, undergoing criticisms of their morals and actions, have tried to wrap around themselves a protective blanket comprising their innocent families, exposing them to public gaze.

Greenfield makes an important point about women who find themselves in politics through their husbands' careers. She argues that the view of women in the old days as simply hostesses and 'stage props' (p. 117) was erroneous. To see such women as involved only in 'that grown-up little-girl life' was an affront 'to the dignity, seriousness, and value of what there *were* doing as intelligent women, wise wives, conscientious parents, and often tireless contributors to the well-being of the communities they lived in' (p. 118). Greenfield, the supremely successful, unmarried, pioneer career woman, thus cuts straight through the façade of conventional sexual role stereotypes.

The public life of political Washington might indeed be a male world, but that world has always been, and in many ways is still, supported by the many actors who play quieter but equally important political roles, and who are women. Meanwhile, women enter the official public arena in increasing numbers, but there are still far too few women's voices, whether they come from Congress, the government agencies, the think-tanks, or the mass media.

There are too few Meg Greenfields.

**CONFERENCE REPORT: Middle Eastern Women on the Move. Openings for and the Constraints on Women's Political Participation in the Middle East, Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, Washington DC, October 2-3, 2001**

By **Rae Nicholl**, Victoria University of Wellington, Fullbright Fellow, Women and Politics Institute, American University in Washington DC.

About 30 women and a small sprinkling of men attended a conference in Washington D.C. on October 2-3 2001. The theme was women's political, social and cultural development in the Middle East, with a special focus on Iran. The conference nearly did not happen. In welcoming the participants, Dr Haleh Esfandiari, Consulting Director of the Middle East Project at the Woodrow Wilson Center, said that she had been advised to postpone the meeting because of political uncertainty resulting from the bombing of the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. She told participants that she had decided to go ahead for two main reasons. First, the Woodrow Wilson Centre is a non-partisan institution and could not be accused of political and religious bias, and, second, the Middle East Project is important because it the only programme in Washington D.C. devoted to Middle Eastern women.

As it was, many of the participants were late on the first day, delayed either by new strict security checks at the byzantine Ronald Reagan Building in which the Woodrow Wilson Center is housed, or by a 20-minute power failure which caused a large section of central Washington to lose electricity. The conference room, having no external windows, was plunged into darkness but resourceful staff quickly found a supply of candles - this meeting was going to go on regardless.

The conference brought together a group of highly educated and articulate women, most of them academics, journalists or practitioners in the field of women's politics and education. For many of the Iranian women, this was the first time in 20 years that some of them had been able get together to share experiences and ideas. While most of them are based in the United States, a few of the women had travelled to America especially for the conference. Unable to fly directly to Washington D.C. because there is

no United States consulate in Iran to issue visas, they had to take a circuitous route through a third country, such as Turkey, in order to get to the meeting.

From the point of view of feminist political scientists, one of the most interesting participants was Mahnaz Afkhami, who was formerly a Minister of State for Women's Affairs in Iran before the 1979 Revolution. She now lives in exile in the United States and for the last three decades has been a leading advocate of women's rights internationally. She is the founder and president of the Women's Learning Partnership, an organisation designed to assist women mount political campaigns, particularly in Muslim countries.

In her introductory remarks, Haleh Esfandiari said that despite unpromising conditions over the past two decades, Iranian women have waged a largely successful, but as yet incomplete, campaign for the restoration of rights and access to jobs, education, and a role in politics and society. 'Through NGOs and other means, Iranian women have been at the forefront of discussion on civil society, freedom of the press and women's access to decision-making positions. Women in other Middle Eastern countries have followed the Iranian experience with great interest as an example both of what women may achieve within the boundaries of Islamic law and of the constraints within which they must operate', Haleh Esfandiari said.

The agenda was designed to examine women's experience in Iran under the Islamic Republic, that of women in a number of other Middle Eastern countries, and the ways in which globalisation and the internet have influenced and shaped the perceptions and strategies of both proponents and opponents of expanded rights and roles for women. The programme was divided into five panels, three on the first day and two on the second: each panel comprised two to four presenters, who each spoke for 15 minutes. Most of the first day was devoted to the Iranian women, who talked about globalisation and women's political empowerment in the Middle East; education and the women's press in Iran; and politics, culture and women's participation in Iranian civil society. On the second day, discussion revolved around gender politics in the Middle East and Central Asia, with panelists speaking about the Zaghreb and Central Asia regions and countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.

Several themes emerged, some familiar to feminists worldwide and some specific to Muslim women. The divide that exists between secular women and Muslim women was raised by many speakers. Roza Eftekhari, who publishes an influential religious monthly women's magazine in Iran called *Zanan*, discussed the role of her publication in attempting to bridge the schism between religious and secular groups. She believed that there were three main areas of difficulty. First, she said that in order to understand Iranian women, it was critical to understand their religious convictions and the way in which religion can be a source for promoting women's rights and the mobilisation of women. Second, any discussion of feminism tended to be seen as western and to have negative connotations for Muslim women among many in Iran. In this regard, she said that *Zanan* had introduced feminist history and feminist thinkers to its readers in an attempt to present a more balanced picture of feminism. Lastly, *Zanan* had breached Muslim social codes and met with disapproval by bringing both men and women into discussions on feminism and by publishing stories about female prisoners and run-away girls. Positive role models had also been publicised. The result of all these strategies has been some warming of the relationship between secular and religious women, Roza Eftekhari said.

Dr Nayereh Tohidi, Associate Professor at the Women's Studies Department of California State University, spoke on a similar theme when she discussed the problem of defining 'Islamic Feminism', a term often seen as an oxymoron. Like Roza Eftekhari, she believed that secular and Islamic feminists should not engage in bitter debate. She outlined three sets of realities that have to be faced by Muslim women. First, women must develop a response to modernity in the Islamic societies in which they live, second, they must find a response to patriarchy in terms of westernism and materialism, and, lastly, they must develop a response to Islamic patriarchy. One way in which Islamic feminists have responded is by being prepared to interpret the Koran: often they can read it better, and may interpret it differently, to male clerics. They are able to challenge male clerics because, as a consequence of the Revolution, women have been educated in religious traditions and theology. The result of this is that Islamic feminists are often seen by male clerics as an

even greater threat to their authority than secular feminists, Nayereh Tohidi said.

A theme familiar to all feminists is the use of new technology to spread the word about human and women's rights. Both Mahnaz Afkhami and Dr Kathleen Kuehnast discussed the influence of the global media. Mahnaz Afkhami saw the new technology as being a force for good. New technology meant that the lack of a viable infrastructure in some countries would no longer prevent women from communicating with each other. The use of the internet and cell phones allows the voices of women to be heard around the world in an instant and could be used as a force for democratisation and consensus-building. While she acknowledged that the majority of women in many Muslim countries were disadvantaged because they had no access to computers, she still believed that eventually women will benefit the most from new technology.

The media and globalisation are less benevolent forces for the Muslim women in Central Asia, according to Dr Kathleen Kuehnast, a cultural anthropologist. Under Soviet rule, women were literate, well-educated and held responsible positions but, since the fall of Communism, large numbers have lost their jobs and are suffering severe poverty. Safety nets and constitutional rights have been removed and Soviet influence regarding female emancipation is being eroded rapidly. For instance, access to abortion, once freely available, is now restricted. Extremism in the name of Islam is becoming a concern and the whole area - which includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - is becoming more conservative and women are becoming more marginalised.

According to Kathleen Kuehnast, susceptible Muslim women - the young, in particular - are being influenced strongly by media images of high fashion, youth and beauty, and are addicted to televised soap operas. The result is that consumerism is now rampant. The paradox for women is evident: on one hand, many are unable to take part in a consumer society for which they yearn and, on the other, they are pressured to sequester themselves in the home. In addition, many Muslim women, now impoverished, find they must somehow financially support not only themselves but often their extended families as well.

On a more positive note, the conference heard good news from Tehran University where a

newly created Centre for Women's Studies opened in 2001. Dr Jaleh Shadi-Talab related the story of her nine-year struggle to set up the centre, of which she is the director. This considerable achievement did not come without a great deal of long-term strategic planning and is considered a major advancement for women in the Muslim world.

At the end of the conference, the participants were left to make their own decisions on the themes, tensions and contradictions with which they had been presented. With so much fascinating information to digest, a plenary session, a summing-up or even some concluding comments, would have been helpful. Hopefully, the papers will be published with a considered conclusion.

See: [www.learningpartnership.org](http://www.learningpartnership.org),  
[www.wilsoncenter.org](http://www.wilsoncenter.org)

### **AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE!**

#### **Suffrage Doesn't Please Female Kansas State Senator**

By FINN BULLERS - The Kansas City Star  
Date: 09/27/01 22:15

A prominent female state senator has said that she does not support the 19th Amendment, which guarantees women the right to vote, and that if it were being considered today she would vote against it.

Sen. Kay O'Connor recently told the co-presidents of the Johnson County League of Women Voters that the amendment was the first step in a decades-long erosion of traditional family values.

The Olathe Republican was in the audience at a public affairs forum on juvenile justice at Johnson County Community College on Sept. 19, when league co-president Delores Furtado asked her if she was planning to attend the league's "Celebrate the Right to Vote" luncheon.

"You probably wouldn't want me there because of what I would have to say,"

O'Connor told Furtado after the forum had ended.

"Wasn't it in the best interest of our country to give women the right to vote?" Furtado asked the senator.

"Not necessarily so," O'Connor said.

Although she does vote, O'Connor said in two subsequent interviews with The Kansas City Star that if men had been protecting the best interests of women, then women would not be forced to cast ballots and serve in the state legislature. Instead, they could stay home, raise families and tend to domestic duties, she said.

O'Connor, the Senate's vice chairman of the elections and local government committee, said she could not help celebrate the 81-year-old piece of legislation, even though it gave her a statewide soapbox to share her views on everything from tax policy to school vouchers.

Asked if she supports the 19th Amendment, the Republican lawmaker responded:

"I'm an old-fashioned woman. Men should take care of women, and if men were taking care of women (today) we wouldn't have to vote.

"I'm sorry women have not been taken more care of," she said. "We have gotten the short end of the stick."

If the measure were up for ratification today, she said, she would not support it.

Furtado said she was dumbfounded by those views.

If O'Connor was just an ordinary citizen, Furtado said, "I'd say fine." But when she serves in the Senate, she represents many people. "She is the beneficiary of a system she doesn't support."

Beginning in the 1960s, O'Connor said in an interview, career doors began to open for women, bolstered by efforts of the earlier women's suffrage movement. The message to women, reinforced by books, television and magazines, O'Connor said, was to abandon more traditional homemaker roles and enter the workplace.

And with the onset of higher taxes to finance social welfare programs, said O'Connor, a 15-year homemaker, a second household income was necessary to make ends meet.

Consequently, the 19th Amendment was the beginning of a societal shift that today erodes traditional family values, she said.

O'Connor said that in her case, mounting medical bills to care for a sick daughter forced her into the workplace. Rules created by men did not allow her the opportunity to stay at home and care for her child, she said.

Searching for something to do in retirement, O'Connor got into politics by accident when she was drafted by a neighborhood gathering to run for the House of Representatives in 1992.

O'Connor, who concedes she has a reputation for speaking her mind, said she was not afraid to let her view be known.

"My husband is the head of the household and I am the heart. And the head can't live without the heart," she said during the interview. "I offer my suggestions, but I give (my husband) the right to make the final decision."

As a state leader, O'Connor said, it is more important to stay true to her convictions than simply mirror the views of her constituents.

"And if I don't get re-elected, my only punishment is to go home to my husband and my roses and my children and my grandchildren," she said. "And if the trips to Topeka get to be too much and my husband asks me to quit... I would."

O'Connor has just completed the first year of a four-year term in the Senate after serving eight years in the House of Representatives.

League co-president Janis McMillan also was surprised by O'Connor's views.

"It is mind-boggling," said McMillan. "Kay is proud of (her position) and isn't hesitant to tell anyone.

"To me, it sends the wrong message to women today that you don't need to use your mind -- just become an appendage to your husband."

The League of Women Voters is making final arrangements for its Oct. 9 luncheon. The league hopes to hold a luncheon every year until 2020 -- the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

By then, organizers hope to have raised enough money to throw a yearlong community celebration to recognize women who blazed the trail for equal pay, the right to own property and the right to hold elected office.

Tickets, which cost \$30, still are available.

**REPORT on Joan Kirner's Speech to the  
NZ Labour Women's Conference:  
Women Power – The Kirner Way**

By **Margaret Hayward**, Victoria University of Wellington.

“No-one gives you power, you have to assume it and then use it wisely,” Joan Kirner, told the Labour Women’s Conference at Parliament on 8 September. Joan, the first woman Premier for Victoria and co-author of *The Women’s Power Handbook* said, “I can’t think of one thing I achieved by myself. If women want to make a difference they must share power, you can’t make changes all on your own, but together you can.”

Joan gets angry when people refer to women as having been given the vote. “No-one gave it to you. You are given traditions, beliefs even, but not power, unless you are in a powerful family and you inherit it. Women fought to win the vote and they have to claim their power.” She emphasised the need for a critical mass of women to be elected to Committees, Boards and to Parliaments in order to achieve lasting change. (According to the UN a critical mass is 30% to 35%).

The Kirner family believed in being involved in the community. Her father was a fitter and turner and her mother a music teacher and they decided their only daughter should have a university education. Joan said she wasn’t born confident, but she gradually developed confidence through doing things she felt comfortable with. She married, “had three kids close together as you did before the pill” and that began her political activism. When she took her eldest child to school for the first time, the Principal told the assembled mothers, “Your children will be in a class of 56.” Legend has it, that Joan stood up and said, “not my child.” When the mothers stood at the school gate talking about it, she asked the other mothers, “What are we going to do about it?” (That phrase was to become her hallmark). This was the mid 60s under a Menzies government when classes were large. Unhappy with the status quo, Joan and the other mothers organised a telephone tree. They took turns at ringing the State Department in charge of building classrooms. Joan made the first call and the last call each week. For three weeks the mothers rang asking for more classrooms to be built. At the end of the three weeks when Joan rang the office she heard someone say, “It’s that bloody woman again, I’ve got to get her off my back.” There was some mumbling in the background and the departmental officer came on the line and said. “You can have your classrooms.” Joan said from then on she was always delighted

when someone called her “that bloody woman” because it meant she was getting through to them. Of course after they got the classrooms the parents and children needed more teachers and that was another campaign.

Over the next decade Joan became the leader of the State, then the National State Schools Parent Movement. In 1979 Joan was asked to stand for Parliament and she did in 1982 because “from the time Australia became a Commonwealth in 1901 they ignored the brains of 52% of the population, which was just plain undemocratic.” Some excused it by saying that women should get into Parliament on merit. When people say that Joan asks them to watch Question Time on TV and “have a good look at the blokes. Now tell me which one of those got there on merit?” Some did of course, but very few. It is Joan and EMILY’s List’s view that all candidates should be selected on merit! “Some men give you a hard time in Parliament,” she said. The Leader of the Opposition, Jeff Kennett employed bullying tactics. When she spoke as Premier he would sit on the other side of a narrow table that divided the House, within reaching distance, and would say over and over again under his breath, so she could hear him, but the Hansard reporters couldn’t. “You stupid woman, you’re just a stupid woman, how could you be so stupid, you stupid woman.” She put up with it at first and then decided to be strategic. She called on the Speaker and objected to what Kennett was saying. He then had to repeat what he had said. He didn’t want to do so, but the alternative was to be expelled. Finally he did repeat what he’d said and it got huge news coverage. He never did it again.

Joan Kirner said she learned her confidence and her feminism in community actions and at departmental meetings. “Once you get confidence then you must direct it at a purpose. Be clear about what you want to achieve. If you have a purpose, you and others know where you want to go - what you want to achieve.” Her purpose was to improve the education system and to get women into parliament.

Women standing for Parliament should also be clear about their values. It wasn’t until Joan became Premier that she had to do something she preferred not to do in Politics, and that was to sell the State Bank. It was millions of dollars in debt thanks to entrepreneurs who never went to jail. She had to ask herself, “Do I continue the State ownership of the Bank and cover the debt which means social programmes cannot go



ahead, or do I sell it to the Commonwealth Bank?" Her husband asked why she looked so worried because it wasn't like her. So, although they didn't normally discuss Cabinet matters, she told him about selling the bank. He said, "Why don't you make that decision the same way you usually do?" Mystified, she asked how she usually made decisions. He said that she thought about her values and measured the decision against her values. For the first time she wrote down her values:

- People matter;
- Men matter as much as men do;
- Women's experience should be valued and taken into account;
- Every citizen is entitled to a fair share of the community wealth.

Her decision? To sell the State Bank to the Commonwealth Bank. If she had not then the state would have been saddled with a large debt which meant the government would not be able to carry out its policies to improve education and health services.

As an aside she warned the Labour women never to let factions control their party. In the Australian Labor Party there were five factions, three to the left in the party, and two to the right. She had friends right across the spectrum but factions could create division and take the focus off policy.

### ***Affirmative Action in Australia***

Joan Kirner and Cheryl Davenport, who was also a special guest at the Conference, are the co-convenors of EMILY's List Australia (see box), which supports progressive Labor women candidates in state and federal elections. Cheryl was an MP in the State Parliament of Western Australia and guided through pro-choice legislation reform, causing former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam to describe her as "Australia's most effective state legislator."

In 1996, to encourage more women to stand for parliament they launched an EMILY's List Australia basing it on EMILY's List in the USA. To raise the "seed money" Joan and Cheryl approached all the Labor Members of Parliament, present and past, asking them to become foundation members by making a one-off donation of \$1000 each. They gained 200 foundation members and 2000 full members and now employ three people. While money is important in promoting a campaign, they had found mentoring was by far the most useful way of assisting new candidates. Joan and Cheryl

each mentor about 10 women candidates, and arrange mentoring for many others. As well workshops are run to provide training in dealing with the media, giving speeches, and running a campaign.

Joan strongly recommended that Labor women in New Zealand get Affirmative Action organised as a Party Rule because she felt, "you have just about peaked." Such an organisation could be especially helpful in getting more Maori and Pacific Island women into Parliament.

The Labour Pacific Island women then presented Joan with a lai "for love", and a feather-trimmed fan "for the flies in Australia!"

In response Joan said she was delighted with the diversity of the women attending the conference and mentioned that she was the person Jim Bolger referred to when he said, "the show ain't over till the fat lady sings." Joan who is solid, said she had "taken considerable flack for my size." It appears women (not men) politicians are meant to be slim and gorgeous, I'm gorgeous but not slim and then one day I decided I'm not going to be what they want. I'm going to be myself." One cartoonist always depicted her as wearing a big shapeless dress covered with large polka-dots and slippers. She had never worn a spotted dress in her life, let alone slippers, but it became her public persona and she had always been able to take a joke. At the end of her parliamentary career she was invited onto a comedy show, so she wore leather trousers and mimed "I Love Rock 'n Roll." Joan says that she is better known for that performance than anything she did for the community. "People loved it because I demonstrated the essential quality they want from their politicians - 'a sense of humanity'," she said.

Joan's book is *The Women's Power Handbook* by Joan Kirner and Moira Rayner, published by Viking (part of Penguin Books), in 1999 and is available from EMILY's List website: [www.emilylist.org.au](http://www.emilylist.org.au).

### **Behind Every Prime Minister is ...**

By **Margaret Hayward**, Victoria University of Wellington.

Twenty-five years has seen dramatic changes in the role of Prime Ministerial spouses. In the 1970s and 1980s Prime Ministers had wives who

stayed at home and looked after the children, and were able to travel with their husbands when their duties required it. In the 1990s Prime Ministers had spouses, male or female, who could be based at home looking after children, or could be independent people employed as psychotherapists, or academics, or farmers. Just as the Prime Ministers who have led New Zealand over the past 25 years have been very different--from Muldoon to Shipley for National, and from Lange to Clark for Labour--the roles, personalities and interests of their spouses are now very different. This article takes a look at just how different.

Over the years the spouses of Prime Ministers have kept out of the limelight. They have been interviewed by newspapers at election time, sat near the Prime Minister at the televised opening of an election campaign and have featured with the Prime Minister following an election victory. In between they have often shunned publicity. This information, gathered from biographies, autobiographies, newspaper clippings and interviews, reveals that over the past 25 years the spouses of Prime Ministers have lived more varied lives than ever before.

### ***Thea Muldoon***

Thea Flyger was born in 1927 and was educated at Belmont Primary and Takapuna Grammar Schools. Her father, Stanley, was an Auckland builder. He and his wife, Annie, had three children of whom Thea was the second. Raised an Anglican, she taught Sunday School at St Michael's Church, Bayswater, worked for the public accounting firm of Battley and Johnson and was one of only three women enrolled in accountancy night classes at Seddon Memorial Technical College. Later she worked in the costing office of Holeproof Ltd.<sup>32</sup>

With her father she attended both Labour and National party meetings and helped her uncle and aunt at functions organised by the Belmont National party. She joined Young Nationals for the social activities and became North Shore representative on the Divisional Junior Education and Political Committee in 1947 where she met Robert Muldoon (whom she always called Bob), during a discussion on compulsory unionism. Rob Muldoon wrote, 'I was interested in this rather slight young woman who was taking part in this somewhat unlikely activity, and when I discovered that she had

passed various final accounting subjects and was a company secretary I was even more impressed.'<sup>33</sup> Thea, or Tam as Rob Muldoon called her, was quietly spoken and was almost the opposite of Rob's mother, Annie Muldoon.<sup>34</sup>

They began attending social functions together in March 1948, and were married at Holy Trinity Church, Devonport, on 17 March 1951. Rob Muldoon was 29 and Thea had just turned 24. The story goes that as it was Lent, it was suggested they wait till after Easter so they could have flowers in the church, but Muldoon said they should be married by 31 March so that he could claim the married couple's tax rebate for the previous year.<sup>35</sup> They lived with Thea's parents while her father and brother built them a new home in Lake Road, Devonport. Thea stopped work after her marriage and only months after the wedding Muldoon sought the nomination for Mt Albert electorate, but was beaten by the Mayor of Manurewa, Reg Judson. Between 1951 and 1956 the Muldoons had three children, Barbara, Jenny and Gavin. Muldoon also joined the Auckland Lily Society and became prominent in the horticultural society. Gustafson noted that in later years the lily growing and general gardening was left largely to Thea. In both 1954 and 1957 Rob Muldoon was a National Party candidate in Auckland electorates but it was not until he stood for Tamaki in 1960 that he won the seat he was to hold for the rest of his life. At the time Barbara was 9, Jenny 8 and Gavin 4 and after 1960 Thea became virtually a solo parent, later being the parent who taught them how to drive. The children found it difficult having a father who was a politician. Barbara, a nurse, frequently lost her name badge and would deny, if asked, that she was related to Muldoon. Jennifer, a clothing designer, called herself Jenny Roberts.<sup>36</sup>

From interviews it appears Thea always put her husband first. She accompanied him to Wellington when he became Prime Minister and they lived at Vogel House, Lower Hutt. Private secretaries reported that Muldoon was inclined to treat her as a useful appendage to accompany him to functions. During that time, as Gustafson puts it, there were rumours of Muldoon being 'sexually promiscuous'. Gustafson contacted about a dozen of those with whom Muldoon was

<sup>32</sup> Barry Gustafson, *His Way: a biography of Robert Muldoon*, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2000, pp.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Muldoon, *The Rise and Fall of a Young Turk*, Wellington, Reed, p.21.

<sup>34</sup> Gustafson, *His Way*, p.

<sup>35</sup> Gustafson, *His Way*, p.51.

<sup>36</sup> Gustafson, *His Way*, p.65.

rumoured to have had affairs and ‘most of these people, when questioned by the author about the supposed relationship, admitted that Muldoon ... after drinking had flirted with them but all denied they ever had an improper sexual relationship with him. Such rumours, however were very distressing to Thea...’<sup>37</sup>

During her husband’s lifetime Thea Muldoon devoted herself to caring for him. A Counsellor at the NZ High Commission in London recalled that during a visit to London, he arranged for Lady Muldoon to be taken to Greenwich for the day by the wives of directors of the Ports of London. He had expected her to talk to them about New Zealand, and perhaps books and the theatre. Instead she talked about looking after Bob, and the special way she had of making his shirts look good.<sup>38</sup> In No. 38, Muldoon wrote that ‘the greatest pleasure I have had in all the years I have been associated with the award of Royal Honours’ was the award of the Queen’s Service order to his wife, by the Labour government. That the Queen was in New Zealand and able to invest Tam with the award ‘was one of the nicest things that has happened to me since I have been in politics.’<sup>39</sup>

When Clem Simich, Muldoon’s successor as MP for Tamaki, took exception to Gustafson’s reference to Muldoon’s drinking of alcohol in *His Way*, Lady Muldoon told the *Evening Post* that her husband had drunk heavily and did have a chronic problem with alcohol. She and a daughter had tried unsuccessfully from 1975 to get Muldoon to recognise and deal with the problem.<sup>40</sup> It seemed life as the wife of a Prime Minister could sometimes be difficult for Lady Muldoon, but at the end she was appreciated. Gustafson wrote that Muldoon, only a fortnight before his death, told him to remember that ‘the best thing I’ve ever done was to marry Tam’.<sup>41</sup>

After her husband’s death friends reported that Lady Muldoon ‘blossomed’ and began travelling to more unusual destinations, such as a trip up the Amazon. A colleague who interviewed her earlier this year described her as enjoying life and having a very positive attitude.<sup>42</sup>

### ***Naomi Lange***

Naomi Crampton was born in Lancaster in 1948. Her father was an electrical engineer and when she was three her parents moved back to Newark in Nottinghamshire, where the family originally lived.<sup>43</sup> Naomi went to secondary modern school in Newark and then to a technical college where she learned shorthand and typing. Her schooling suffered because of her frequent attacks of asthma and bronchitis. The Crampton’s were staunchly Methodist and Naomi began a 3-month apprenticeship with the National Children’s Home in Solihull, Warwickshire, but found it Dickensian. She moved to University Hospital in London’s Gower Street but again found she was general ‘dogsbody’. She had begun attending the West London Mission, and eventually gained an office job there.<sup>44</sup>

Naomi met David Lange at the West London Mission. He was very large but he appealed to her as a person who, despite his university education, ‘also seemed to have commonsense, and who didn’t talk down to you... It didn’t seem to matter to him that I didn’t have the same sort of education that he did.’<sup>45</sup> When he went to meet her parents he discovered they lived in an area which was full of his forebears. Her parents were naturally worried that he would take Naomi back to New Zealand, but by that time Naomi was clear that she wanted to marry someone who was involved in the church. ‘I couldn’t have married someone who said, “Oh well you go off to church, I’ll stay at home”’.<sup>46</sup>

They were married in the Barnby Gate Methodist Chapel at Newark. Naomi was 20 and David Lange was 25. The wedding was the day before Lange turned 26, and his return ticket, a youth fare, expired on his 26th birthday. The next day they left England for Europe, thence to India, which Lange loved and determined to visit again, and then to New Zealand.<sup>47</sup>

Lange took over a run-down law practice in Kaikohe. Naomi was very ill most of the time, but the cause was a mystery. At the end of 1969 the Langes moved back to Auckland as David had decided to do a Masters degree at Auckland University. He passed with First Class Honours in 1970, gaining the highest marks ever attained in his specialist area of medico-legal problems. Meantime Naomi continued to be unaccountably ill. She was taken to Auckland Hospital where

<sup>37</sup> Gustafson, *His Way*, p.210.

<sup>38</sup> Interview, Graydon Nelson, 94.

<sup>39</sup> Robert Muldoon, *No. 38*, Auckland, Reed Methuen, 1986, pp.74-75.

<sup>40</sup> *Evening Post*, 21/8/2000.

<sup>41</sup> Gustafson, *His Way*, p.5.

<sup>42</sup> Personal communication, Jon Johansen, 4/10/01.

<sup>43</sup> Wright, David Lange,

<sup>44</sup> Vernon Wright, *David Lange, Prime Minister*, Wellington, Port Nicholson Press, pp.59-61.

<sup>45</sup> Wright, *David Lange, Prime Minister*, p.62.

<sup>46</sup> Wright, *David Lange, Prime Minister*, p. 62-63.

<sup>47</sup> Wright, *David Lange, Prime Minister*, pp.63-66.

she was given psychiatric assessment and told it was all in her mind. Her father-in-law, Dr Roy Lange, visited her and asked if they couldn't see she was dying. At his urging they looked further and she was diagnosed with salmonella poisoning, and was unconscious for five days before she gradually began to recover.<sup>48</sup>

In Auckland, Lange took over the law practice of Allan Nixon, who was known for having many clients who could not afford a lawyer. Lange continued that tradition. As the President of the New Zealand Law Society recalled, Lange 'cheerfully helped the bewildered, the helpless and the hopeless so often for no fee.'<sup>49</sup> In 1971 the Lange's first son, Roy, was born and in 1974 came Byron. In 1975 David Lange stood for the Hobson seat, traditionally National, except for a short time when it was Social Credit. To campaign, the family moved in to a shell-only house with no lining, no plumbing and no electricity. They fetched water from a nearby football ground and kerosene lamps and candles provided the lighting. The Langes, with their two small children, travelled around the large electorate in a caravan as David fought an unsuccessful campaign. In 1976 Emily was born. Naomi was not houseproud and devoted little of her time to the house, but a lot to the children and helping less fortunate people through her church activities.<sup>50</sup>

Early in 1977 Lange nominated to become the Labour candidate in the Mangere by-election, caused by Colin Moyle's resignation. Naomi said it was she who convinced him to nominate although she did not attend the selection meeting. He won the Mangere seat he held until he retired from parliament in 1996. His rise was meteoric. In 1979 he became deputy leader of the Labour Party and in 1983 was elected leader of the New Zealand Labour Party. Then, in July 1984, Naomi Lange found herself the wife of the Prime Minister. When Lange became Prime Minister it was decided she would remain in Auckland as the shift to the Prime Minister's residence, Vogel House situated in Lower Hutt, would disrupt the children's schooling.<sup>51</sup>

Naomi remained very active in the electorate, but when she travelled to Wellington she was at first lampooned by the media because of her loud voice and Lancashire accent. Naomi was

also criticised for her choice of clothes, although she always looked neat. Her husband did not help by sometimes poking gentle fun at her. After a backbencher talked of American dirty tricks, including efforts to compromise MPs, Lange observed: 'I have been waiting a month now to be compromised and all that happened was that Naomi turned up.'<sup>52</sup> Between 1987 and 1989 as the rift deepened between Lange and his Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas, over the direction the Labour government should take, Naomi continued to be supportive and to look after the children from their home in Mangere. Harvey McQueen, Lange's education adviser, recalled setting up a photo opportunity of the PM and Naomi posting their ballots for the first school trustees election. Naomi nominated the post office nearest to their home. When Lange learnt of her choice he shuddered because that particular post office was to be one of the closures. 'My wife doesn't understand politics' he said.<sup>53</sup> Gradually they were drifting apart. Colleagues noted that when Lange went on holiday to somewhere like the Cook Islands to relax and get away from New Zealand, although the children usually accompanied him Naomi did not, because she didn't like hot weather.<sup>54</sup>

The day David Lange resigned as Prime Minister, Naomi Lange was pictured on the front page of the Evening Post with two women friends making jam to raise funds for the Labour Party in Mangere. She said it would be lovely to have him home more often. But Lange had a different agenda. Ten weeks after his resignation he told Naomi he was leaving. A hurt Naomi went public with her recriminations, phoning the Dominion Sunday Times. Lange's mother, Pheobe, who was 80, said she had 'aided and abetted' Naomi in exposing Lange's reasons for the marriage break-down.<sup>55</sup> 'I'm very angry with him, so angry that I could behead him with my crutch.'<sup>56</sup>

The split gained even more publicity when an irrepressible Lange said the way his marriage break-up was being presented it sounded as if he was living in a soap opera called *The Lays of our Dave*. Later he admitted his joke was in

<sup>48</sup> Wright, *David Lange, Prime Minister*, p.77-78.

<sup>49</sup> Wright, *David Lange, Prime Minister*, p.86.

<sup>50</sup> Interview Ken Hastings, 25/7/94.

<sup>51</sup> Harvey McQueen, *The Ninth Floor: Inside the Prime Minister's Office*, Auckland, Penguin Books, p.207.

<sup>52</sup> Pat Booth, 'Why David Lange had to go', *North and South*, September 1990, pp.53-62.

<sup>53</sup> Harvey McQueen, *The Ninth Floor: Inside the Prime Minister's Office*, Auckland, Penguin, 1991, p.207.

<sup>54</sup> Interview Hon Dr Michael Bassett, 21/6/01.

<sup>55</sup> Anamika Vasil, 'Why I backed Naomi—by Lange's mum', *The Dominion*, 114/11/89, p.3.

<sup>56</sup> Bronwen Reid, 'Waiting for the Call', *Time*, 13/4/92.

‘appalling bad taste’ but it was also very funny.<sup>57</sup> Naomi remarried, but that marriage failed and David Lange was recently reported as saying he and Naomi are now good friends.

### **Margaret Pope**

Margaret Pope did not become the spouse of David Lange until he after he resigned as Prime Minister, but she is included as she was important to his political life.<sup>58</sup>

Margaret Currie was born in Croydon, Surrey in 1951, of Scottish parents. The family moved to New Zealand when Margaret was 13. Her father, Tony Currie, had been a television engineer (some reports say a policeman), who had always wanted to act. In Wellington he gained a principal role in TVNZ’s first home-grown soap, *Close To Home*, as the father, Don Hart.<sup>59</sup>

Margaret studied at Wellington Girls’ College, then at Victoria University where she gained a BA (Hons) in history. She then worked as a researcher and later as an executive officer in the Citizenship Department of Internal Affairs. In 1973 she married Campbell Pope, an architect. They gradually drifted apart and separated in 1985.<sup>60</sup> In 1982 she began a thesis towards an MA in history on aspects of the early years of the Massey Government, and moved from Internal Affairs to a part-time position in the Opposition Research Unit. She wrote ‘a couple of speeches that led to an offer to work in the Prime Minister’s office as a speech-writer after Labour won in 1984.’<sup>61</sup>

When Lange became Prime Minister she was reputed to have come up with the phrase, ‘I can smell the uranium on your breath’ which Lange used so effectively in the Oxford Union debate. Gradually Margaret was regarded as having too much influence over Lange, although she was not an outgoing person. One colleague in the Research Unit described her a ‘sombre woman, strangely silent, withdrawn’, while another saw her as ‘critically shy’.<sup>62</sup> McQueen, described her as an intelligent and solitary woman. ‘An ideas person, she was clear, incisive, quick and an

excellent wordsmith. She helped me with my tasks with kindness and patience’.<sup>63</sup>

As early as mid-1985 anonymous notes were circulating saying that Margaret overrode Lange’s assurances to the secretary of Foreign Affairs ‘and now instructions [are] sent in writing so the PM won’t have to face Norrish who cannot deal with Mrs Pope as her role with Lange is a more personal one... There is some doubt now if she’s the substantive head of the ministry or Norrish’.<sup>64</sup> Chris Laidlaw, employed in the Prime Minister’s office, wrote: ‘There was of course one woman in the Beehive who was never seen by the outside world but who pulled more Prime Ministerial strings than any other cabinet minister... She caused the Ministry of Foreign Affairs countless sleepless nights because of her adamant insistence that she have the last word on all speeches’.<sup>65</sup>

Members of the ‘fish and chip brigade’ who originally promoted Lange’s leadership—Roger Douglas, Michael Bassett, Mike Moore and Richard Prebble—were also concerned about her role. Margaret was the outside influence whom Michael Bassett blamed for the downfall of the government ‘The trouble was that there were... forces that we couldn’t get at that were really pumping him up.’<sup>66</sup> Another colleague described her as ‘a very intelligent and bright woman but she had David under her thumb and she knew precisely what she wanted and she got it.’ In the war that waged between Lange and Douglas, Margaret was thought to be making the bullets for Lange to fire. She was even reputed to threaten Lange with her resignation when she couldn’t get her own way. When asked about her ‘career of threatened resignations’ Pope said, ‘They were tactical usually. I may have wanted more money or I may have been dissatisfied with the office management—things like that—but they were not deeply serious threats’<sup>67</sup> There is no doubt, however, she did pull Lange to the left, and worked to stop Roger Douglas’s flat tax package, although Pope said the Prime Minister ‘was worried about it himself. He didn’t need me.’<sup>68</sup> In *Broken Circle*, Simon Sheppard reported Ross Vintiner, Lange’s

<sup>57</sup> Anthony Hubbard, *The Lines of Our Dave*, *Listener & TV Times*, 15/2/90, pp.4-6.

<sup>58</sup> See Fran O’Sullivan, ‘Lange v Douglas—the Pope revelations’, *Evening Post*, 18/10/89, p.7 and Chris Laidlaw *Rights of Passage: Beyond the New Zealand identity crisis*, Auckland, Hodder Moa Beckett, 1999, p.112.

<sup>59</sup> Lynn Loates, ‘Out of the Shadow’, *More*, May 1991, pp.37-45.

<sup>60</sup> Lynn Loates, ‘Out of the Shadow’, pp.37-45.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Controversy part of relationship’, *The Dominion*, 14/11/90, p.3.

<sup>62</sup> Loates, ‘Out of the Shadow’, p.40.

<sup>63</sup> McQueen, *The Ninth Floor: Inside the Prime Minister’s Office*, p.206-206.

<sup>64</sup> Murray McLaughlin, ‘Lange’s Lot’, *The Listener*, 10/12/88, pp.18-20.

<sup>65</sup> Laidlaw, *Rights of Passage*, p.112.

<sup>66</sup> Karen Brown, Michael Bassett: no room for sentiment’, *Evening Post*, 1/9/90, p.27

<sup>67</sup> Loates, ‘Out of the Shadow’, p.45.

<sup>68</sup> ‘How Pope argued for Douglas’s dismissal’, *Evening Post*, 18/12/89, p.7.

communications adviser, as saying he disagreed entirely with the letters Pope had drafted for Lange to send to Roger Douglas but agreed with her perspective on the flat tax package itself.<sup>69</sup> Jonathan Hunt saw it differently. 'In the end the people who couldn't get on were Bevan Burgess [Douglas's press secretary] and Margaret Pope. And they kept their respective bosses at arms' length, frequently only writing letters to each other, and that was fatal' He felt Douglas and Lange were being drawn rightwards and leftwards by their closest confidants.<sup>70</sup>

While Lange tried to meet Douglas on middle ground, Margaret Pope saw no middle ground. 'I kept telling him—and I'm proud of it, "Get rid of Douglas, you're better off without him". But he never did.'<sup>71</sup> Lange, defending Margaret, said of the Douglas supporters, 'They're obsessed by her,' and pointed out she worked in his office only half-time in 1988 while she studied for a law degree, but the rumours were part of 'the endless slander that goes on around this place'.<sup>72</sup>

After Lange's separation from Naomi he and Margaret lived in Karori and worked together on his book *Nuclear Free—The New Zealand Way*, published in 1990. Just before Christmas 1991 they were married in Scotland. They have one daughter, Edith. Since Lange retired from parliament in 1996 they have lived at Mangere Bridge.

### **Margaret Palmer**

Margaret came from a strongly Presbyterian family and first met Geoffrey Palmer when they were both at Nelson Central Primary school. She then attended Nelson College for Girls while he attended Nelson College. After gaining an arts degree in English and music from Canterbury University Margaret shifted to Wellington to be with Geoffrey as he was studying law at Victoria University. They married and she taught for a year at Samuel Marsden Collegiate School to support him while he completed his law degree. She didn't enjoy teaching as she had received no teacher training and preferred a one-to-one situation rather than a class of 30 or more.<sup>73</sup> In 1966 they travelled to the United States, living in Chicago's poverty-stricken south side while

Geoffrey studied law graduating Doctor of Law from the University of Chicago.

That year Margaret came to view herself as a socialist (later she was to say she was a social democrat although she felt uncomfortable with labels). She said her philosophy stemmed from her Christian belief of caring for people and translating it into national politics to ensure the country was run for the benefit of everyone. While in the US she began teaching remedial reading and on her return was told she would need to complete primary school teacher training to be able to teach here. But in 1974 and in 1975 she was rejected for teachers' college because she was married and immobile. Undaunted, she taught remedial reading at Hutt Valley Memorial College and obtained her teacher's diploma through Correspondence School.<sup>74</sup>

In 1975 Margaret Palmer joined the Women's Electoral Lobby, focussing on health and childcare. 'My experiences in America made me dread the day when we see the health system run down in New Zealand to the extent that private health care takes over, as it has in the States.' She encouraged her husband to stand for the Christchurch Central nomination after he had been unsuccessful at gaining the Labour nomination for the Nelson electorate. When he won the Christchurch Central seat at a by-election in 1981 the family moved to Christchurch. The Palmers by that time had a son and a daughter. Margaret gave up her job to work, unpaid, as her husband's electorate secretary. She saw as many as 10 people a week with housing problems and worked with the local Housing Corporation to try and help families who 'were absolutely desperate'.

She was quite clear in her mind 'that I was not working for Geoffrey, I was working with him. I quite strongly resented certain feminists attacking me for working for my husband. I wanted to do it, and we chose to do it together.'<sup>75</sup> When they returned to Wellington in 1984 and Geoffrey became Deputy Prime Minister, she trained as a psychotherapist and counsellor and set up her own practice. It was an almost natural progression from her work as electorate secretary when she found people 'coming into the electorate office with a

<sup>69</sup> See Simon Sheppard, *Broken Circle: The Decline and Fall of the Fourth Labour Government*, Wellington, PSL Pres, 1999, p.56, and Chapter 3 for a detailed account of the different political philosophies of Lange and Douglas.

<sup>70</sup> Sheppard, *Broken Circle*, p.70.

<sup>71</sup> Loates, 'Out of the Shadow', p.41.

<sup>72</sup> McLaughlin, 'Lange's Lot', *The Listener*, 10/12/88, pp.18-20.

<sup>73</sup> Brent Edwards, 'Caring and life with the Labour Party', *Evening Post*, 13/9/89, p.2.

<sup>74</sup> Brent Edwards, 'Caring, and life with the Labour Party', p.2.

<sup>75</sup> Ruth Nichol, 'Life With Geoffrey "far from dull"', *The Dominion*, 14/8/89.

problem, wanting to talk to someone and personal problems often emerged'.<sup>76</sup>

When her husband became Prime Minister, following David Lange's resignation, Margaret said she did not agree with everything the Labour government had done and, 'I feel very sad for the people who have been hurt. At the same time New Zealand was in such a terrible situation economically, financially, when this Labour Government took over.' Drastic action had to be taken but she considered it was still a government of goodwill. 'The disagreements are very often about the means rather than the ends.' She was constrained about what she could say publicly about the government, 'but I don't feel constrained with Geoffrey'.<sup>77</sup> Asked about the perception of her husband as a boring man, she said, 'I have found life with Geoffrey anything but dull and boring. We have done so many different things, lived in so many different places, that life has been extremely stimulating and very far from dull.' They had moved 19 times during their married life and she did not think they would move to Vogel House but stay where they were.<sup>78</sup> Interviewers described Margaret Palmer as a very private person, quiet, softly-spoken with a gentle sense of humour and a surprisingly loud laugh. Her interests included reading and music - not the country and western music her husband enjoyed - not Willie Nelson but more Luciano Pavarotti.<sup>79</sup>

Geoffrey Palmer resigned as Prime Minister in 1990 just a few weeks before the general election after he was approached by a number of colleagues because of unfavourable polls. The Palmer's had moved into the newly restored Premier House in Tinakori Road (which had been a sesquicentennial project) and Margaret said wryly it would be their 21st shift. She supported her husband in stepping down as he had spent two weeks mulling it over before deciding that was the best action. They would be working in the electorate until the general election when her husband would resign from politics. Margaret said, 'I'd like to wish the Moore's the very best of luck' and the interviewer concluded there was no doubt she meant it.<sup>80</sup>

The Palmers have two children: Matthew who is Professor of Law at Victoria University of

Wellington and with his father co-authored *Bridled Power: New Zealand Government under MMP*, and Rebekah, a journalist, who has just had her first novel, *The Thirteenth Life of Frank Finnigan*, published.<sup>81</sup>

### **Yvonne Moore**

The first time Mike Moore glimpsed Yvonne Dereany was when her parents showed him her photo as he visited their factory, Sonny Elegant Knitwear. Yvonne was overseas at the time but Moore made up his mind to meet her.<sup>82</sup> When Yvonne returned she became a trainee teacher, they did meet, and were married in 1975.

Moore had become MP for Eden in 1972 and 1975 proved an eventful year for the Moores. Not only did they get married, but Mike became a vice-president of the Labour party and lost the marginal Eden seat at the general election. That was a shock to an ambitious young politician and his supportive wife and they determined to find a less marginal seat. Warren Freer, MP for Mt Albert, recalled that the Sunday morning after the 1975 election defeat Moore had phoned saying he wanted to come and see him. Freer told him he had visitors, how about a bit later but Moore said he'd be over straight-away. 'When he and Yvonne arrived he said something like, "Right Warren, I want your seat. You've had enough years in Parliament, time you pulled out".' Freer refused<sup>83</sup> so the Moore's began looking for a winnable seat. Moore tried for the nomination in both Mangere and Auckland Central but missed out. Yvonne, concerned that he was unusually tired, sent him to his doctor who found nothing wrong. She then insisted he see her doctor and the next day he was in hospital, diagnosed with cancer. An operation and radiotherapy seemed to cure it and they found a possible electorate, Papanui, a suburb of Christchurch. They travelled down and lived in a camper van until they both got jobs. Yvonne auditioned for a children's show on TV, *Romper Room*, and became the presenter.<sup>84</sup> In 1978 Moore, having won the nomination for the Papanui electorate, gained the biggest swing to Labour in the country, with a majority of 3700 votes. But the cancer had recurred. Once more the Moores faced the possibility of his death. This time he underwent chemotherapy which

<sup>76</sup> Edwards, 'Caring, and life with the Labour Party, 13/9/89

<sup>77</sup> Edwards, 'Caring and life with the Labour Party, 13/9/89, p.2.

<sup>78</sup> Nichol, 'Life with Geoffrey, "far from dull", 14/8/89.

<sup>79</sup> Nichol, 'Life with Geoffrey, "far from dull", 114/8/89.

<sup>80</sup> Alan Samson, 'Mrs Palmer 'no longer upset or bitter', *The Dominion*, 5/9/1990.

<sup>81</sup> Nick Barnett, 'Three grumpy men and a baby', *The Dominion*, 4/8/01, p.11.

<sup>82</sup> Mike Moore, *Hard Labour*, Auckland, Penguin Books, 1987, p.37.

<sup>83</sup> Interview, Warren Freer, 24/7/94.

<sup>84</sup> Moore, *Hard Labour*, p.65.



cured him but despite two close-to-death experiences he remained a chain-smoker.<sup>85</sup>

When Labour was elected to government in 1984 Moore became the Minister of Overseas Trade and among his promotional ideas was the lamburger. Moore genuinely loved his lamb as a journalist noted when she watched him 'have a huge plate of lamb for dinner, followed by lamb for desert.' His wife, Yvonne, explained that lamb is 'like nicotine with him. He's always building up his lamb levels...'<sup>86</sup> Roger Douglas said of Moore: 'He's a bundle of energy - drives you nutty just watching him. He's constantly questioning what is and what could be. Dangerous? Well, he knows what he wants and he goes after it in a pretty solid sort of way.'<sup>87</sup>

Moore became Prime Minister just weeks before the 1990 election campaign and Yvonne accompanied him on what was a hyper-active campaign. The Press editorialised that Labour now had a natural politician as its Prime Minister and 'that Mr Moore will continue to fight as hard and unforgivingly as he knows how'. Yvonne told a journalist: 'Of course he's ambitious. I knew he would do it. I always knew he would be Prime Minister. It was just a question of time.'<sup>88</sup> Yvonne is slim, with long blonde hair and favours short skirts. A story has it that an overseas visitor was shocked to see the Prime Minister out with a 'dolly bird'. The response was: 'That's no dolly bird, that's his wife'. During the election campaign Moore sometimes referred to Yvonne and himself as 'beauty and the beast'. The polls showed Moore to be the most favoured person for Prime Minister over his opponent Jim Bolger, but National won the general election and Moore became Leader of the Opposition.<sup>89</sup> In 1993 Labour again lost the election, but by only a small margin, and again Moore was the most favoured person for Prime Minister over his opponent Jim Bolger.

In December 1993 Moore was replaced by Helen Clark as leader of the Labour party. Moore was very bitter about it, partly because he had seconded the motion to have a leadership

vote, when he could have avoided it.<sup>90</sup> Yvonne took the leadership change very personally, insisting she and her husband weren't bitter, but the 30,000 or 40,000 people who had contacted them in the past few weeks were, and how wrong Clark was to say that 'they'd been responsible for a pro-Mike talkback radio campaign, and the picketing outside MPs' houses, and that Mike had used abusive language to her.'<sup>91</sup> She felt Clark should have sat down and talked it over with Mike because 'if he was stroked in the right places, there's a possibility he might have stepped down. We're both frontal people. We don't hide away in smoke-free rooms and plot and plan.'<sup>92</sup>

In 1993 Mike Moore dedicated his book *Fighting for New Zealand: New Zealand in the 21st Century* to Yvonne: 'Kindest critic, tolerant and adored friend'.<sup>93</sup> Yvonne and her husband are now based in Geneva where he is Director-General of the World Trade Organisation.

### **Joan Bolger**

Joan was born in 1939 into a committed Catholic family and described herself as a 'very shy child'.<sup>94</sup> She went to Pungarehu school, which was the school the children from Parihaka attended. Joan trained as a primary school teacher, and returned to teach at the small Taranaki township of Rahotu, just three miles from where she went to school.<sup>95</sup> She met Jim Bolger in 1961: 'We were both involved in Young Farmers . . . and he ended up coaching our girls' debating team'.<sup>96</sup> They were married in 1963, she was 24 and he was 30. Two years later they moved to a farm in Te Kuiti. Joan hadn't expected her husband to enter politics when she met him but she did realise that, 'Jim would not have been content with a life spent running the farm.... He was always a leader,

<sup>85</sup> See Moore, *Hard Labour*, p.70-76

<sup>86</sup> Sue McTagget, 'Mike Moore: No Kidding', *The Listener*, 14/5/83, pp.20-21.

<sup>87</sup> McTagget, 'Mike Moore: No Kidding', 14/5/83, pp.20-21.

<sup>88</sup> Rosemary Vincent, 'I've always said he'd be Prime Minister', *New Zealand Women's Weekly*, 24/9/90, p.16.

<sup>89</sup> See Jack Vowles and Peter Aimer, *Voters' Vengeance: The 1990 Election in New Zealand and the Fate of the Fourth Labour Government*, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1993, p.196.

<sup>90</sup> Seishi Gomibuchi, *Followers and Leadership Durability: An analysis of leadership support in the New Zealand Labour Party, 1990-1996*, Ph.D thesis, University of Canterbury, 2000, pp.88-89.

<sup>91</sup> Susan Mitchell noted that Moore supporters picketing the homes of Clark supporters 'waved placards with such messages as 'It's Mike versus the Dyke', *The Scent of Power*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1996, p.49.

<sup>92</sup> Dianna Dekker, 'Political Partners', *Evening Post*, 11/12/93, p.17.

<sup>93</sup> Mike Moore, *Fighting for New Zealand: New Zealand in the 21st Century*, Wellington, MMS Ltd, 1993.

<sup>94</sup> Catriona MacLennan, 'Long, lonely hours as the PM's wife', *The Press*, 2/5/91.

<sup>95</sup> Jim Bolger, *A View From the Top: My Seven Years as Prime Minister*, Auckland, Viking, 1998, pp.172-173.

<sup>96</sup> Peter Luke, 'The cool, unruffled figure behind National's leader', *The Press*, 23/10/90

always the one who stood out, who showed leadership qualities.’<sup>97</sup>

When he gained the nomination for the safe National seat of King Country in 1972 Joan felt ‘overwhelmingly humbled’ at the responsibility placed on him. She found those first three years as a politician’s wife ‘very hard years, probably the most difficult years’. She had had to adjust to being mother and father. ‘There was nobody else to fix the dripping tap, the fuses and so on. One has to become much more independent—it’s a good experience in that respect’.<sup>98</sup> She said her views of what made a happy and successful marriage had to change. ‘Expectations of sharing the bringing-up of children have to be somewhat modified. It is just impractical for politicians, with the hours they work and the commitments they have, to play a great part in bringing up children... It certainly isn’t a time or a place to be selfish. The spouse has to be very generous in understanding the pressures on politicians and the politician has to remember that the spouse has carried the load for much of the week. You have to keep communicating.’<sup>99</sup> During this time her religion was very important to her, ‘It’s the basis of a good set of values to work by’.

The Bolgers had nine children in 17 years and for much of that time Joan managed two households; their Wellington home and the Te Kuiti farmhouse during the school holidays. She said it helped that her husband’s rise through the National Party was steady rather than meteoric, from cabinet minister in 1977, to leader in 1987 and Prime Minister in 1990. That election night victory was memorable, the celebrations went on until dawn at Te Kuiti, and Joan was relaxed enough to ‘belt out “Wild Thing” on a ukelele.’<sup>100</sup> Living at Premier House meant she was much more in the public gaze, ‘I would never have got myself into this situation. Not by choice. I don’t seek the limelight at all’. She tried to keep family life as little changed as possible, five of the children still lived with them, including four of school age, and at first Joan combined the usual family chores with politics, without recourse to nannies or full-time home-help. The one concession was a friend who came in during the campaign to help with washing and cleaning. Similarly ‘nobody

advised me on what to wear and what to do. I do it myself. I buy my own clothes. Nobody is there running me and telling me what to do. Nor are they Jim, surprise surprise.’<sup>101</sup>

Joan has learned to live with the public criticism of her husband. ‘It hurts a little, I guess, because I know my husband’s not ruthless, cynical and hard. He has no vendetta against unemployed people. He’s just doing what has to be done for the country.’ She said the benefit cuts that took effect in 1991 were necessary. ‘So it’s grim and it’s difficult. However, it has to be done and the sooner the whole population accepts the need for change and gets on with it, the better.’<sup>102</sup> During the 1993 general election people noticed the Prime Minister’s concern for his wife when she mixed with crowds. Later she revealed that she had to take three days off from the campaign to have a melanoma removed from her upper left arm, and then had to return to hospital to have more removed.<sup>103</sup>

In the seven years Premier House was home to the Bolgers, Joan hosted over 20,000 people. Later there were more staff, a secretary, Alwyn Black, and a housekeeper, Margaret Smith. Bolger wrote that it ‘never ceased to amaze me in terms of food how many people Joan, Alwyn and the Margaret could cater for.’<sup>104</sup> Joan did much voluntary work and on one occasion the parents of the children at Kimi Ora School for disabled children devised a ‘This is Your Life’ type of programme to honour her. Bolger noted, however, that while downstairs there had been thousands of visitors to host, upstairs there was homework to be done, exams to prepare for and transport to various sporting activities to be arranged.<sup>105</sup>

Summing up, Joan said she loved being a mother and ‘I’d like people to see us as a close, united family—we’re a happy, average Kiwi family getting on with life.’<sup>106</sup> The Bolgers are now living in Washington where Jim is New Zealand’s Ambassador to the United States.

### ***Burton Shipley***

Just as Joan Bolger seems the perfect spouse for a politician, so does Burton Shipley.

<sup>97</sup> Sian Robyns, ‘On the nice side of the fence’ *The Dominion*, 1/11/93.

<sup>98</sup> Robyns, ‘On the nice side of the fence’, 1/11/93.

<sup>99</sup> Robyns, ‘On the nice side of the fence’, 1/11/93.

<sup>100</sup> MacLennan, Long, lonely hours as the PM’s wife’, 2/5/1991.

<sup>101</sup> Luke, ‘The cool, unruffled figure behind National’s leader’, 23/10/90.

<sup>102</sup> MacLennan, ‘Long, lonely hours as the PM’s wife’, 2/5/91.

<sup>103</sup> Sarah Stuart, ‘Just call me Joan’, *Sunday Star Times*, 13/5/94.

<sup>104</sup> Bolger, *A View from the Top*, p.75.

<sup>105</sup> Bolger, *A View from the Top*, pp.75-77.

<sup>106</sup> Sarah Stuart, ‘Just call me Joan’, *Sunday Star Times*, 13/3/94.

Jenny Robson had been educated at Marlborough Girls' College and then attended Christchurch Teachers College, qualifying as a primary school teacher. During that time she met Burton Shipley, a fifth generation Darfield farmer who, at 6ft 4in, was a provincial basketball representative. While they were courting she taught at Greendale School near Darfield and boarded with Burton Shipley's grandmother.<sup>107</sup> She and Burton married when they were both 21.

The Shipleys worked hard on the family farm and soon were able to buy out Burton's sisters and make the farm their own. In 1976 Jenny had a daughter Anna, and in 1978 a son, Ben. Whether it was good planning or not, Shipley's choice of spouse greatly enhanced her prospect of becoming a National Party politician. As David Lange was to note in 1996:

She has, as we know from television, a husband, children and a large garden - necessary credentials for the woman in politics. She is also tougher than any man in the Cabinet...many rural and provincial people can identify with Mrs Shipley. Though she is a powerful woman she seems at heart still one of them, able to whip up a batch of pikelets and proud to be a farmer's wife...<sup>108</sup>

'Right' from the beginning, Burton Shipley was supportive. In fact, he described his wife as 'a real liberal compared with me. Economically, I'm so far to the right I think we should change the side of the road we drive on. Jenny is probably far more realistic than I am.'<sup>109</sup>

As Jenny Shipley explained, the purchase of a child's car seat helped change her life.<sup>110</sup> At the birth of her second child, Ben, Jenny had haemorrhaged badly and did not see him for the first four days. It was a bad start to a difficult time, during which she struggled to muster her physical and emotional strength. 'I can understand when women say, "I feel desperate and depressed",' she said. The breakthrough came when Burton, who was eager not to live with a 'compromised version' of the woman he married, scraped together enough money to buy a child's seat for the farm truck.<sup>111</sup> One-year-old

Anna would go off with her father, armed with a couple of wine biscuits and a packet of raisins. While Ben slept, Jenny at last found the space she needed to gather her resources. During that crucial time, she read, gardened, painted and slept. Most importantly, she managed to use that time to push out the parameters of her life to find the mental stimulation she needed.

I realised that the community, which was a conservative one, was now seeing me as Jenny the wife of Burton, and I was seeing myself as mother of the children and wife of Burton, and I lost myself. As I emerged from that appalling time - visibly, it wasn't appalling, but it was appalling in my head - I realised I had to make clear choices. If I was going to have a well future and be a useful mother and effective wife, then I had to look after myself and survive both intellectually and physically'.<sup>112</sup>

Jenny considered that if a woman wanted to go into politics, 'the whole logistics, particularly if you are a young family, is that you are asking that second person to take on roles that they possibly wouldn't normally have to do.' Burton was supportive and made a commitment to change his lifestyle until the children went to secondary school. Having a husband who already believed the children were equally his responsibility made the balancing act much easier than it was for many women, she said.

As promised, when she became the MP for Ashburton, Burton sold the family farm of 1200 acres and they bought a house with 20 acres just outside Ashburton. Jenny said, 'When I met Burton he could hardly boil water.. Now he's not only able to cook, but also to cook with great flair... He has no hang-ups over the roles of women and men in society, and I'm very lucky to have a husband and partner who believes what I do is important.'<sup>113</sup> By the next general election campaign in 1990, Anna was 13 and at boarding school and only Ben, then aged 11, remained at home. During that time Burton Shipley had studied from home and then became commercial manager of the Deerfarmers Association. The following year both children were at boarding school and Burton moved to Wellington becoming superannuation development manager for Westpac Life. He was the ideal political spouse, supporting Jenny when people made threats or burnt her effigy,

<sup>107</sup> Warren Gamble, 'Right-hand man about the House a new-age guy', *NZ Herald*, 13/12/97, p.A19.

<sup>108</sup> David Lange, 'Tough at the top for Shipley', *The Dominion*, 27/5/96, p.

<sup>109</sup> Jenny McLeod, 'Jenny & Ruth: The Story of an Enduring and Powerful Friendship', *North and South*, August 1991, pp.46-58.

<sup>110</sup> Rebecca Macfie, 'Child's car seat gave space to future Ashburton MP', *The Press*, 3/10/87, p.

<sup>111</sup> Macfie, 'Child's car seat gave space to future Ashburton MP', 3/10/87

<sup>112</sup> Macfie, 'Child's car seat gave space to future Ashburton MP', 3/10/87.

<sup>113</sup> Peter Corner, 'I know what it's like to do without', *NZ Women's Weekly*, 1/4/91, p.

because of the cutback in social welfare payments. He accompanied her on most engagements where they appeared a confident, and engaging couple.

Travelling with Jenny Shipley as Prime Minister, Warwick Roger noted that in interviews she mentioned her children in practically her first breath. 'That unprompted mention of the Shipley offspring so early in the conversation is interesting. Does it suggest, as many observers have already, that the Prime Minister will play the wife and mother card to show herself in sharp contrast to the childless Helen Clark?' Shipley responded that she wouldn't be making an issue of it, 'but having said that, I'm not going to pretend to be who I'm not. I'm Jenny Shipley and I happen to love my husband very dearly and I've got two wonderful children who're ambitious for their country...'<sup>114</sup>

Shortly after she became Prime Minister, Jenny was asked about her comment on TV that she and Burton had never argued. How did she achieve 'that remarkable state of affairs?' Shipley replied that they were very good friends. The interviewer responded that he was good friends with his wife too, but they still argued. 'Well, we don't.' Asked about a secret method she said she was not going to give marital advice to the nation but 'we simply talk a lot, because of this damned job we have to anticipate where the pressure points are likely to be, and we just plan ahead a lot and accommodate one another.'<sup>115</sup>

Don McKinnon agreed that the Shipley's were closer than most other couples. When Bolger travelled in a ministerial car he had always sat in the front seat and put Joan in the back seat: You'd probably find Jenny and Burton travelling together would get into the back seat. She's very close to Burton and if they sit together they are holding hands and touching each other... You couldn't find a better support than Burton. Gosh, he's just so solid and always there and has such a good sense of humour.'<sup>116</sup>

When it was realised that the National Party leader needed to have a greater presence in Auckland (because both Jenny and the deputy leader, Bill English, were from the South Island) Burton took a job in Auckland. The Shipleys

spent many weekends there, until Jenny was deposed in October 2001 by Bill English.

### **Peter Davis**

Peter Davis was born in England, he gained a masters degree at the London School of Economics and a PhD from Southampton University.<sup>117</sup> Davis came to New Zealand and took up an appointment at Canterbury University, but in Christchurch it was difficult for rather intellectual bachelors to meet women who shared their interests, so he moved to Auckland University. Helen Clark and Peter Davis met at a dinner with Labour Party friends in Freemans Bay in January 1977 and soon began living together. They would have been happy to continue in unwedded bliss but for Clark standing for parliament.<sup>118</sup> 'When the question of my standing for Mt Albert came up, I pointed out that it could be a thirty year commitment,' Clark recalled. 'But Peter still thought I should stand. He's always pushed me, always been supportive.'<sup>119</sup>

They married shortly before the 1981 election. Clark said that as a single woman she was really hammered: accused of being a lesbian, of living in a commune, of having friends who were Trotskyites and gays. 'I was fighting on all fronts. On top of all that I could do without the 'living in sin' label. That's the only reason I married the man I'd been living with for five years... When I married a lot of the personal criticism stopped. But I felt really compromised. I think legal marriage is unnecessary and I would not have formalised the relationship except for going into Parliament. . . But we're very compatible.'<sup>120</sup>

The rumours didn't go away, however. In 1993, Peter said that it was inevitable, because Clark did not have any scandals in her life, that her critics attacked her personally and attempted to link her to accusations that the leadership coup was the work of a 'lesbian clique'. 'They look for chinks in your armour,' he said. He recalled hearing unfounded rumours about Clark's personal life in the 1980s when she became the first woman to win an Auckland seat in a general election. 'There's no credence in any of it. They can't find any defects in her ideas so they try to discredit her. A woman in public

<sup>114</sup> Warwick Roger, 'On the Road Again', *North and South*, Nov. 1999, pp.53-60.

<sup>115</sup> Warwick Roger, 'Jenny Shipley: Face to Face', *North and South*, Feb. 1998, pp.

<sup>116</sup> Interview Don McKinnon, 11/12/98.

<sup>117</sup> Gilbert Wong, 'Modest men behind the throne of power', *NZ Herald*, 218/90, Section 2,p.1.

<sup>118</sup> Wong, 'Modest men behind the throne of power', 2:1.

<sup>119</sup> Virginia Myers, *Head & Shoulders*, Auckland Penguin Books, pp.159-60.

<sup>120</sup> Myers, *Head & Shoulder*, pp.158-59.

life who stands up for liberal views, like abortion and human rights, is an inevitable target for personal abuse.<sup>121</sup> While Clark has steered herself to handle public criticism, Peter said it still hurt him, especially when he feels something is totally unfair. He felt 'she has had to fight every step of the way and has had to suffer sneering criticism which would never be levelled at a male.'<sup>122</sup>

The couple do not wear rings, Clark has chosen not to have children ('It's inconceivable that I would become pregnant. I've taken the pill for years') and is known as Miss Clark rather than Mrs Davis.<sup>123</sup> But Peter said from the start he and Clark were on the same wavelength. Unlike the Shipleys they do not have an imposing presence and stand out in a crowd, but are more likely to become part of the crowd, both being of slight build and medium height. In 1990 when asked about children Peter said: 'While it is biologically possible, that does not mean it is socially mandatory. Most people who have children really take a non-decision.... In practical terms it is the woman who bears the burden so it is her decision.'<sup>124</sup> In 1994, to a journalist who pointed out that Ruth Richardson had managed to fit children into political life so why hadn't she, Clark responded that she thought Richardson's husband had made considerable sacrifices giving up a legal career and moving to a life that was compatible with spending a lot of time at home with the children. Clark said her husband was a career academic and while she had moved away from being a workaholic, he was still, and probably wouldn't give up his career. 'So, while he may moan from time to time that no one will look after us in our old age, I think it's really nostalgia.' And she has pointed out to him that he's 12,000 miles away from his own father.<sup>125</sup>

In 1983 Peter Davis had edited *Social Democracy In the Pacific*, which charted the emergence of social democratic principles in countries as diverse as Japan, Papua New Guinea and Canada, a far cry from his previous book *Health and Health Care in New Zealand*.<sup>126</sup> In 1989 he had the doubtful distinction of being

a member of a board which was dismissed by his wife, then the Minister of Health. The Auckland Area Health Board was in severe financial difficulty. Peter said, 'It had to be done. The board was in a terminal state', but ministerial propriety meant his wife could not tell him they were about to be sacked.<sup>127</sup>

Until he moved to Christchurch to become Professor of Public Health at the University of Otago's Christchurch Medical School in 1998 Peter did the shopping and most of the cooking at their Auckland home. In 2001 he was attacked in Parliament by a former Minister of Health, Wyatt Creech, who questioned Davis's ability to remain independent when some of his research would related to restructuring which took place while his wife was Minister of Health. In 2000 a research team headed by Peter had gained a Health Research Council grant of \$750,000 to study New Zealand's health reforms and hospital restructuring.<sup>128</sup> Earlier, in January 1999, Peter and his team had received about \$2 million in grants for research over the next few years. Peter responded that much of the grant went towards maintaining the libraries, computers and administration and part of his job was to bring in research funds. 'If we run out of money people are out of a job'.<sup>129</sup> From newspaper headlines, the perception was that Peter had got the money because he was the husband of the Prime Minister, although the majority was approved before Clark was Prime Minister and was for the research team at the Medical School.

Clark reacted strongly, accusing Creech of a 'scumbag attack'. The Medical School dean, Andrew Hornblow weighed in, saying Creech's concerns showed a lack of understanding of the scientific environment, and of Peter's international reputation.<sup>130</sup> 'Prof Davis has always kept his professional role quite separate from his role as husband of the Prime Minister. He is highly respected for both his academic credentials and his professional integrity'.<sup>131</sup> Trevor Mallard then made claims about government appointments awarded to the wives of two National party cabinet ministers and the argument escalated. Finally Clark called for

<sup>121</sup> Eileen O'Leary, 'Political Partners', *Evening Post*, 11/12/93, pp.16-18.

<sup>122</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Myers, *Head & Shoulders*, p.173.

<sup>124</sup> Wong, 'Modest Men Behind Throne of Power, 21/8/90.

<sup>125</sup> Bill Ralston, 'In From the Cold, The Slight Warming of Helen Clark', *North and South*, Feb. 1994, pp.60-67.

<sup>126</sup> Peters Davis (ed.) *Social Democracy In the Pacific*, Auckland, Ross Press, 1983.

<sup>127</sup> Wong, 'Modest men behind the throne of power', 21/8/90.

<sup>128</sup> 'PM's husband fears attacks will hurt his research', *Evening Post*, 20/3/01, p.13.

<sup>129</sup> Lindsey Birnie, '\$3m in research grants paid to PM's husband', *The Dominion*, 23/3/01, p.2.

<sup>130</sup> Christine Langdon, 'PM wants truce on 'scumbag' attacks', *The Dominion*, 20/3/01, pp.1-2.

<sup>131</sup> Prof Andrew Hornblow, Letter to the Editor, 'Reputation of PM's husband defended', *Evening Post*, 22/3/01, p.4.

closure, saying she regretted ‘that the petty filthy nature of politics in this country subjects someone to this sort of scurrilous attack which is designed to damage their professional reputation, simply because they have the fortune, or misfortune to be married to the woman who is the prime minister.’<sup>132</sup>

Peter Davis and Helen Clark both enjoy cross-country ski-ing and mountaineering, and their successful climb of Mt Kilimanjaro in 1999 gained considerable publicity.

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<sup>132</sup> Christine Langdon, ‘PM wants truce on “scrumbag” attacks’, *The Dominion*, 20/3/01, pp.1-2.

FOR BOX

### **EMILY's List - Supporting Labor Women in Politics**

Who is EMILY? EMILY is an acronym for Early Money is Like Yeast - it makes the dough rise. EMILY's List was established because women candidates can have difficulty in establishing the networks to fundraise and early campaign money is often the most important support for a new candidate. As well as providing financial help, EMILY's List provides a political and personal support network for progressive Labor women candidates. It is based on EMILY's List USA which identifies talented Democrat women and supports them for election with funding, campaign advice, skills and information. EMILY's List was established in the USA in 1985 and has helped elect seven senators, 49 congresswomen and three governors.

EMILY's List in Australia was established in 1996 and already has helped 58 new women MPs to be elected into Parliaments around Australia, assisted Carol Martin, an MP in the Western Australian parliament to become the first Aboriginal woman to be elected to any Australian parliament, and contributed over \$350,000 to Labor women's campaigns. The co-ordinators are Joan Kirner and Cheryl Davenport and the webpage is [www.emilylist.org.au](http://www.emilylist.org.au).

EMILY's List provides political mentoring programmes and workshops to develop candidate skills in campaigning, media interview techniques and time management. Once women are pre-selected by Labor, EMILY's List invites them to join. Candidates are interviewed by at least two members of the National Committee who decide which candidates will receive money and support. EMILY's List endorsed candidates must support in the community, and in parliament, the principles of equity, diversity, pro-choice, and the provision of equal pay and childcare. The ALP has agreed to an Affirmative Action target to ensure by 2002 that the ALP pre-selects women in 35 percent of the seats needed to form government in the Australian Parliaments. It was adopted as a rule at the 1994 Labor Party national Conference. Currently the Australian Parliament and a number of State Parliaments have reached a 30% target for Labor women.

In his message to EMILY's List the Labor party leader, Kim Beazley, noted that the Affirmative Action target has been achieved this year for the Federal elections with women in 27 of the 78 seats required to form a government in the expanded House of Representatives of 150 seats. He paid tribute to Labor's six women shadow ministers: Jenny Macklin, Carmen Lawrence, Cheryl Kernot, Kate Lundy and Sue Mackay. (He also mentioned that Labor had announced it will remove the GST from women's sanitary products!)