



Priscilla Blanchet – Merit award 2021

presented at the Athletics Canterbury Awards function – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021

This Merit award is for an Official who has spent nearly 40 years officiating at both Track and Field and Cross Country and Road events.

She first became involved with the Avon club when her children took up harriers. Originally her forte was as an organiser, and she held roles on the committee for the Avon club. She was involved with organising fundraising events for the Avon club where they collected and washed glasses at Riccarton Racecourse at several of their big race meetings.

Although it was as an official that she is recognised she is understood to have shall we say dabbled in running. I quote from a club article: “Some experiences are well remembered, such as the Governors Bay to Lyttelton, the Avon 15K , finishing a leg of the Timaru to Waimate Relay, running a half marathon, and the 6th and 7th laps of the Takahe to Akaroa Relay. On the downhill section of lap 7 of the Takahe to Akaroa race, she was called in as a replacement at the last moment and suffered for 3 weeks afterwards. As she put it, most events were a bit too long for the training she did, as other things had priority over running.”

She became a graded jumps official preferring High jump and Pole vault. A regular at QE II in the summer, she also officiated at South Island Secondary School meetings, including some out-of-town venues, Children’s Colgate Games in Christchurch, National track and field Championships and the Commonwealth Games in Auckland in 1990. She was always a regular timekeeper at Takahe to Akaroa Relays since 1998 or earlier, often seen officiating alongside her husband. She was also seen at many events over the winter season.

On the track, she was often a chief judge or worked on the Jumps team and was a wonderful mentor to new officials, she shared her knowledge freely and always gave instructions in a friendly manner. During the 2011 IPC World Championships she rostered all the officials into their roles. With an ever changing situation she was up late every night changing and organising the roster, which was an enormous task. She was always there ready to assist the officials in their roles.

She is a dedicated official and still comes to weekly track and field interclub as well as cross country and road events. She is one who does not like to be doing nothing, always ready to help. A story goes, that when her husband was doing the appointments for track & field events, he would sometimes appoint her as a Referee, but she did not like that role because it wasn't "busy enough". She was always incredibly supportive of her husband's role as an Athletics New Zealand Official.

She is a Life Member of the Christchurch Avon Athletic Club.

It gives me great pleasure in presenting an Athletics Canterbury Merit Award to Priscilla Blanchet