

Athletics Canterbury Merit Awards 2018:

Neville Reid

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Receiving a merit award is a way for us to acknowledge and honour members of the athletic community for their service to the sport. There are dozens of people out there who for years have been involved and worthy of this.

How do you decide who to honour without feeling like you have left someone out?

It is not easy.

Our recipient of this award started his running passion in Dunedin, where he ran for the Caversham Club.

It was romance that bought him to Canterbury.

He has been involved in athletics since the mid 1960's, first as an athlete, then later as a coach, official, administrator and now a volunteer.

He was:

1969 Marathon Champion in 2:25

he ran in excess of 10 sub 2:30 marathons

1990 Masters Champion at the Christchurch International Marathon

He is the current Lap 4 record holder of the Takahe to Akaroa Relay and beat the legendary Rod Dixon on that same lap in 1971.

As an administrator he was:

Canterbury Cross Country and Road selector for 20 years with Brent Rollo and Anne Kennedy. Canterbury Team Manager at numerous National Championships. He was a selector, Club Secretary and Club Captain at various times for the Olympic Club.

While this person was a well-respected athlete, he is probably better known as a coach. In terms of coaching he obtained great satisfaction from helping ordinary people achieve great things through hard structured work and commitment.

At times he would coach more than 20 athletes at a time, from top flight athletes to regular club runners. This was a time when there was no internet or email, athletes would get face to face time, and personalised individual phone calls, sometimes calling over ten athletes a night.

The list of athletes he has coached is extensive.

Arthur Gempton (here tonight) National 5000m Champion in 70s

Phillip Watson – 28:37 10k and ChCh Commonwealth Games finalist

John Sheddan (here tonight) Team member of the NZ Cross Country Team at the 1975 World Cross Country Championships – subsequently earned induction into the NZ Sports Hall of Fame.

Warren Sheddan – former NZ 1500m junior record holder

Tony McManus (here tonight) – he has coached for the last 25 years. Tony is a World record holder for Masters mile, with multi National and World titles

Anne Sisson (Here tonight) – a Christchurch Marathon winner as a Master, also running 2hr47.55 as a 42 year old.

He is a life member of the Olympic Club and received the BNZ Services to the Community Award. He recently competed in his 53rd Hagley Relay and his photo on our Facebook page received a lot of comments. He is in his 61st year of competition and still coaching and inspiring.

Some of you younger budding athletes may be interested in his favourite sayings:

Never ever give up, hard work is not easy, it's better to get to the start underdone, than over cooked and finally Recovery is important – sometimes you're better off for what you don't do.

Your peers thank you for what you have done for our sport – your time, effort, expertise, humbleness and selflessness has been incredible.

This year's recipient of a Merit Award is **Neville Reid**.