

ATHLETIC CANTERBURY – MERIT AWARD 2018

SAM (Seatoun) MCLEAN

Prepared by Daniel Reese

This person's interest at school was rugby, but he was smitten by the Lydiard running revolution in the 60's and the successes of the Lydiard athletes.

He was a Founding member of the St Martins Harrier Club. He was lured by the Lydiard emphasis, to run for them during the winter.

In the years 1970-1974, he added five more club titles to his 1966 one. No one was to win more club road championship titles.

He was also a foundation member of Toc H Harrier Club formed in 1962. The inaugural meeting of ToCH Harriers was held in the men's changing rooms at Rugby Park in November 1961, attended by distance runners from the sister Toc H Athletic Club.

He was to serve over many years, as a committee member and culminating in a Life Membership of Papanui Toc H.

He would continue to run for St Martins, for the harrier season only, returning to Toc H for the track season.

Never the less he was on the St Martins Club committee serving as their Club Captain from 1965-1966 as well as being a selector.

He represented Canterbury for 12 consecutive seasons, 1967-1978, recording performances of note over all distances from 880 yards through to the marathon. Among these performances was a 4:07:03 mile on the grass at Rugby Park, when winning the Canterbury mile title.

Although in Road, Cross Country and track, it was Track and Field which was his real passion.

He ran the very first official track race at QEII in a 3000m race finishing 2nd. Can't you just see him eyeing up the 1st Race at Nga Puna Wai.

By 1983, his energies were increasingly going into coaching. He admitted that he made mistakes in his own racing and training and regretted not having a coach himself. His advice to all athletes – find a coach.

Whilst a well performed athlete it was coaching where he really excelled. I believe it was the race where Mary O'Connor beat him that forced him to retire from competition

His no nonsense but empathetic approach produced outstanding results. He has been instrumental in the success of numerous NZ titles holders: The list of titles holders goes as such

Jeff Spillane NZ 10000 track title

Sue Bruce – still holds her 1985 Canterbury 3000m record 8 min 56.2 sec

Rowan Hooper – 2009 winner of the NZ 10000m track championships and also winner of the 2008 ChCh Marathon

Phil Costley – 30+ national titles although I know that this coach can't own up to all of them.

Matt Smith – 2011 NZ Senior Men's Cross Country title

Nicki McFadzien – 2013 NZ Senior Women's Cross Country title

Margot Gibson - Won the World Secondary Schools Cross Country title in 2012 and the NZ U20 Cross Country title in 2013

Steve Lett – 2011 NZ Half Marathon Championships

Jason Baillie one of his athletes was introduced by Buzz Jones to this person in 1986, at a time when the club was based at Mairehau High School. After chatting to him, Jason remembered thinking here is a good old bugger who knows his stuff. Jason's first night of training was a few 400s to be run around 72 seconds. He finished feeling damn good. He looked over to the coach who was shaking his head. "That was bloody 59sec and you obviously have no idea about pace judgement. Jason also tells the story of how under the coach, they trained hard and played hard. If you set a PB at QEII you found yourself shouting the standard 3 jugs at the Parklands Tavern.

Jeff Spillane another one of his athletes – says, the coach was a Lydiard man and prioritised conditioning the athletes. Simple principles were applied to average athletes for very good results. The coach was generous with his time. The coach took Jeff from an athlete who ran with his backside in a bucket and finished near last in the 1988 under 18 Canterbury 1500m to medals at junior Nationals, Senior Provincial and National Track and Field and Road titles and NZ representation. He gave you self-belief and goals that motivated you to do the work.

To finish Jeff said – I got not just a good coach but a great mate.

A comment he made to me once was, Daniel, I am not an administrator I am a coach. He now sits on the Athletics Canterbury Executive, and bring with him a vast knowledge of athletics of which athletics in Canterbury can only benefit.

I man who said 70 year olds aren't interested in coming to Award Dinners and why would you want to travel all the way from Oamaru.

Well Seaton Allan McLean they did it for you and the respect they have for you.

Come forward Sam McLean