



I've learnt that
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Marilyn Glover

Marilyn entered the world of volunteering when she was 14 and put up her hand to be the secretary of her Bible class. Since then she hasn't stopped—working for community groups and with diverse boards and committees on issues of governance and leadership. *I've learnt that some people you walk behind, some people you walk beside and with some people you walk in front.*

The middle child of three, Marilyn was born in Hamilton, but in 1946 when she was two years old, moved to Walter Street, Takapuna with her family. Apart from the nine years that she lived in Te Aroha after she was married, Marilyn has lived in Takapuna ever since.

She remembers when Hauraki Primary School was built in 1954—she attended briefly as a ten-year-old before going to Belmont Intermediate and then Takapuna Grammar School.

The family didn't have a car, and Marilyn didn't ride a bike so she walked everywhere. She has seen the growth and development of her community from the days before the Harbour Bridge was built, when across the road from Hauraki Primary School was a strawberry field, houses were on quarter-acre sections and people walked down the road to the beach.

Some of the people who lived on the Takapuna beach side of Lake Road didn't want their kids going to school down Jutland Road because they thought it would be unsafe.

Ingham's Hardware store gave its name to Ingham's Corner where the TSB Bank now stands. At the top of Hurstmere Road was Lane's Bakery, and the Gaiety Cinema was where Berkeley Cinema stands today. *We would go to the movies and on the way home for tuppence-half penny you could buy half a loaf of bread. And you'd get these wonderful smells that you don't get now, of course. We'd eat the middle first because it was lovely and soft and then the crust as we walked home.*

The 'bus barn' stood on the corner of Lake Road and Anzac Street where Potters Park, the car park and some shops are today. However, as there wasn't yet a regular bus service to the East Coast Bays, and Brown's Bay was considered the back of beyond, Takapuna was very much isolated from some parts of the Shore, and transport into the city was either by vehicular or passenger ferry from Devonport. Marilyn was 16 when the Harbour Bridge opened in 1959, and she joined the throngs of people who walked across before it was open to traffic. Within a few years extra lanes

had to be added as the four original lanes were insufficient to take the amount of traffic. *I remember looking over the harbour and watching it all happen and being quite amazed at how they did it! Walking over the bridge was quite unreal, really. I hardly ever went into the city though— everything I was involved in was here on the Shore.*

As a teenager Marilyn joined the Girl Guides and then Rangers. She attended Sunday school despite her family not being religious, and then Bible class. Marilyn enjoyed school but did not achieve School Certificate or University Entrance. Not one to be perturbed by this, she set out to be independent and find herself employment.

Marilyn first worked for the Commercial Bank of Australia, then Reid and Twiname car upholstery importers. Her third job was with the Methodist Church in the city where she worked as a secretary until her marriage in 1968. Marilyn's husband, Lew, was born and grew up in Te Aroha where the family plumbing business, Glover and Son, meant that Glover was a household name. The newly-weds returned to Te Aroha.

Marilyn found herself in another village and soon realised that she was going to be asked to volunteer for many community groups. Perhaps she was influenced by her mother's involvement with groups such as the IHC. (Marilyn's sister now lives in an IHC home.) *I can remember going into the bank one day to do some banking and the teller asking, 'Oh, would you like to join the choir?', and they were asking Lew, too: 'Would your wife like to join so and so?'*

She became a member of the local Plunket committee and after the first meeting was asked to be the secretary. She joined the local and district committees for the IHC, and also the kindergarten and Red Cross committees, all the while working part-time at the local stationers. Marilyn and Lew adopted two sons, and returned to Takapuna in time to enrol their eldest at Hauraki Primary School. Back 'home', Marilyn was a member of the local kindergarten

committee, the primary school PTA and school committee and the Belmont Intermediate School committee, and became secretary of each of them. She also worked part-time as a teacher aide at Belmont Intermediate School.

In 1989, under a Labour government, 'Tomorrow's Schools' were introduced. This required each state school to have a board of trustees whose responsibility was to govern the school. The boards were made up of the principal, parent trustees, a staff trustee and, in the case of secondary schools, a student trustee.

The new system completely changed parents' involvement in schools, especially primary and intermediate schools where previously staff, including the principal, had been appointed by the local Education Board.

Guidelines for the new boards of trustees emphasised the need for consensus decision making and the need for good governance training. Marilyn already had a good understanding of governance and experience as an office bearer. She had been on the Board of Governors at Takapuna Grammar School and had been the secretary of the Auckland School Committees Association. In 1989, Marilyn was asked to apply for the position of secretary (later the coordinator) of the Auckland School Trustees Association. This soon turned into a full-time position which she held from 1989 to 2004. She loved the job and enjoyed the opportunity to offer advice, guidance, support and training to the boards of trustees of around 530 state schools in Auckland.

One day a woman rang me and asked, 'What qualifications do you need to be on a school board of trustees?' I thought for a moment and said, 'Common sense and a sense of humour.' She said, 'I don't mean that. I mean doctors, lawyers and accountants.' I remembered thinking that, especially with the low-decile schools, it was about having a passion for the work and being committed to doing the best that they could for the students in their school. The parents in low-decile schools would be willing to turn up and give a hand for anything, whereas the higher-decile schools are more likely to be made





Marilyn with Sir Paul Reeves, October 1994

up of professional people, who in their working lives might have made major decisions as an individual rather than be part of a team making those major decisions. In the early years in particular, this sometimes caused strife. Boards require the whole team to be part of the decision-making process. Building team relationships does take time and commitment.

The role was very demanding, however, and meant she had to be available seven days a week, both day and night. Marilyn estimates that she often worked up to 70 hours a week in this role. *The office was at my house. At one stage actually in my bedroom. The Trustees telephone number was, except for two numbers being round the other way, the same as North Shore Taxis. So quite often the phone would go during late at night or in the early hours of the morning. I'd leap out of bed wondering, What trustee is ringing me at this hour of the night?, and it was someone looking for a taxi. One day a woman rang three times wanting to book a taxi. Three times I told her she had the wrong number and gave her the correct one. The third time she said, 'I'm trying to ring for a taxi and you keep answering. How dare you!'*

A key part of her job was building strong relationships with the Ministry of Education, and Marilyn represented the Trustees Association at a national level, often travelling to Wellington for meetings.

In 1993 the principal of Wilson School, a school for physically disabled students located on Lake Road between Takapuna and Devonport, rang Marilyn for advice on how to fill a vacancy on the school's board of trustees. Marilyn said that she would be interested herself. After her fourth meeting as a trustee, she was asked if she would take on the role of chairperson. She accepted and was re-elected to the position each year for the next 17 years. *Those were amazing years.*



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AWARDED TO:

MARILYN GLOVER

Awarded this 14th day of July, 2024



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In time, the Ministry of Education agreed that the needs of the students would be best met in a more formal, specifically designed school. All involved agreed the new school should remain on the Lake Road site. After interviewing a number of architectural firms, one was found that took the time to listen and understand what was required to ensure that the special needs of the students would be met. The architect who designed the new school and saw the building through to completion was Ego Leung. Marilyn attended an award ceremony where he received the inaugural New Zealand Architecture Award for his design. *It was awesome!* The school was officially opened in 2005 by the governor general, Sir Anand Satyanand.

Marilyn then had a short foray into local body politics. After the formation of North Shore City Council in 1989, she was nominated for the Takapuna Local Community Board to stand on mayoral candidate Ann Hartley's team. To her surprise, she was successful.

I learnt a huge amount about how the system worked, and I learnt who to see if there were particular issues that needed sorting out for the community. I also learnt that community groups need to tell their story. In the not-for-profit sector there are so many groups vying for the same dollar. So you need to tell us what you're trying to do and how well you do it.

Marilyn held only one three-year term, and at first was shocked and disappointed not to be re-elected. She resigned herself to the fact that she was not a political person and preferred to work at the grassroots level of community development, and wondered what she would do next. In 2000 Catherine McClintock approached Marilyn and asked if she would like to be on the board of North Shore Community and Social Services (NSCSS). Another chapter began.

I thought that it was important there was an umbrella group. I became very aware that [school] boards needed to be able to access expertise. At the time I thought, There seems to be nothing for community groups, who do they go to? So that's why I thought that NSCSS could be that point of referral. I've always believed that it's about empowering people where they are at, to make their own decisions. Today not-for-profits are having to be more professional, but they also don't want to lose the common touch.

Marilyn continued to be employed by the Auckland School Trustees Association until she resigned in 2004. She volunteered with NSCSS (now ANCAD) until 2010, was involved with Age Concern for many years, and assisted her daughter-in-law to establish the group, Adults in Motion (AIM) in Warkworth to work with young adults with physical disabilities.

Marilyn was the secretary for AIM until 2006 and was also a representative on the Disabled Persons Assembly for many years. She has been the president, secretary and treasurer at different times for the Rotary Club of Takapuna (chartered in 1953, it is the oldest Rotary Club on the North Shore) and has held the role of treasurer for the Friends of the Takapuna Library since 1997.

In 2014 at the 40th anniversary annual general meeting of ANCAD, Marilyn was given an honorary life membership.

I look back and think they were fantastic days because generally everybody worked together. I think unfortunately volunteering is going out the window. I think that is incredibly sad. But you don't have to give a lot of time and you gain so much from just being involved.

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