Counselling Today/Nga Korero Awhina Newsletter

NZAC Life Member - Whaea Tuti Aranui written by Alastair Crockett

Whaea Tuti with Allonsy Life Member, Carol White at the 2012 AGM

October 2012

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In July I was fortunate to join a large throng who assembled at Mariraro marae at Mekau to celebrate Whaea Tuti’s 80th birthday. The wharekai was packed for the pōwhiri and the wharekai was similarly packed for the hokori and speeches.

From the speeches it was obvious that Whaea Tuti had also had a significant role in the work of language restoration across a wide area and with this language restoration came restoration of mana for many whanau.

Speaker after speaker at her birthday spoke of their appreciation of Whaea Tuti’s positive influence on their wharenui. Some also spoke of her direct way of speaking!

Tuti Aranui was elected a Life Member of NZAC in 1992. At that time there were very few Māori active in NZAC and none who had the profile Tuti had. The Waikato members who nominated her valued her Invitational leadership of non-Māori towards partnership with Māori and their clear articulation of a Māori perspective in counselling.

Whaea Tuti had trained at Waikato University in the mid 1980s to take up a role as a Guidance Counsellor at Fio Fio College in the King Country. She made it clear in her lecture, Ted Vodsworth, that the programme had offered little of relevance to her in cultural terms. Chorescistically, she then offered to facilitate annual maori nights for the Waikato counselling students. She maintained this commitment over more than two decades. I attended the first of these nights as a student in the programme and have clear memories of the impact that her leadership had for me.

At the 1993 AGM, Tuti asked for and received NZAC’s support to establish an organization for Māori counsellors. It became known as Te Whareti Tautoko. This group still exists and is expanding to include people who follow principles that are founded on Te Araroa.

I have worked with Tuti on planning committees for three NZAC conferences. While the Waikato NZAC branch prides itself on the partnership between branch and local Māori at these conferences, it was Whaea Tuti who opened the door to that partnership work and insisted us to share in her world. The three of these conferences were held at Pare o te Āroha marae in Te Kao. The conference theme was chosen to mark the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty. Tuti had a central role as conference facilitator.

Rosemary Barret wrote:

‘My memory is of a woman who sat at the fall of the wharenui who seemed to be able to call us together, focus us, move us onwards through our conflicts, without apparent effort and with respect for our own protocols.” (2001, P.25)

The 1999 conference was run in partnership with Te Whareti Tautoko, the organisation Whaea Tuti had called into being six years earlier. With the 2009 conference Whaea Tuti handed the practical partnership responsibilities to another generation of Māori counsellors and remained as their consultant.

Whaea Tuti had also played significant roles within the Māori roopu of NZAC. Within the roopu she holds one of the Tumutumu roles, she is one of the senior supports for Te Ahi Kaa. She was instrumental in establishing the role of Te Ahi Kaa and the kaanga around this. I believe her for members of the roopu to write more of her contribution there.

The weekend immediately following her 80th birthday celebrations, Whaea Tuti invited to Whangai for the NZAC AGM because there was business on the agenda that she wanted to speak to.

Whaea Tuti has offered much to NZAC both locally and nationally for over 25 years. For twenty years she has been a very active Life Member.

http://www.nzac.org.nz/nga_korero_awhina_newsletter.cfm?articleID=188&page_obj... 30/01/2013
In 1990 she offered this whakataukī for our conference. It seems appropriate to close with it as it captures much of her philosophy.

‘Nau te noa te noa, e ha te noa, ke ora te iwi’
‘From my basket and your basket flows the wellspring for us all.’

Alastair Crockett

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