

TRIBUTE TO DON MILLER ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

Don - This is a salute to the version of you that I came to know over the 2016-19 years: the “I’ll-probably-retire-soon”, matured and multi-faceted Don who is a resounding presence in the memories of a multitude of people.

I remember you as a true Everyman – versatile, adaptable, a jack-of-all-trades, in motion here, there & everywhere in the Makoura and Masterton communities.

The Tangata Whenua Don: an enduring and honourable person of the land – a pioneer frontiersman with his eye gauging the tide and the cloud over the next ridge...

Courtly Don – Anne’s paramour and consort, companions roaming the landscape and sharing the permutations, agitations, and celebrations of life in The Organisation...

Don Quixote - the gallant knight in rugby shorts and gumboots, ranging with his trusty truck and chainsaw, foraging in the gullies for native firewood to mill(er) or raffle...

The Whakapapa Don with his venerable and hard-earned layers of connection to ancestral local generations, a backbone of the east-side, part of what defines this community...

Sportsman Don – the guiding coach, manager, mentor; the player with guile-intercepting fullback, dogged lock, canny sweeper, wicket-keeper; and the supporter - always game and always available to back those who are game...

The Educationist Don - the common room colleague ever-ready to don a capering costume or wig; the pondering lieutenant, with his ear to the ground and his gentlemanly advice; campus patroller-in-chief with formidable radar, anticipating teen misdemeanour two steps ahead of (almost) everyone else, camp quartermaster dishing out the harvested kaimoana, the demander of dutiful duty, the shameless custodian of *that* office in the ‘top’ corridor, with its insurmountable slew of paper, leather rugby balls, tarnished trophies, wardrobe of confiscations, and old school paraphernalia...

The One Don. Every college needs one. Servant master. Man for all seasons. Humble, determined, tireless, up for it, and always there. Go gently and well into that good night ahead.

