

E te wā pouritanga MORRIS, Beverley Jean (Beverley) (nee Williams), CNZM QSO.

Born October 12, 1923. Passed away on November 12, 2019.

On behalf of Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi o Aotearoa – Playcentre Aotearoa whānui, our sincere condolences to the whānau pani of Beverley.



Beverley was a passionate member of Playcentre since the early 1950s, when she opened a Playcentre in Newtown, Wellington.

She was responsible for the development of the original Playcentre Diploma and continued to actively support Playcentre and its philosophy – the importance of family, lifelong learning and the inherent value of play in children’s learning.

Beverley was a strong advocate for the right of children to play, believing “children don’t play to learn, they learn while they play”.

A prolific writer and National Life member of Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi o Aotearoa – Playcentre Aotearoa.

Here is a quick look at Beverley’s life (as told by former Playcentre trustee Gabrielle Martell-Turner in the *Playcentre Journal*, Spring 2013):

1920s: On October 12, 1923 in Wellington, Percy and Vera Williams welcome a baby girl to their family... Beverley Jean Williams.

1930s: between the ages of eight and 15, Beverley wrote many stories, that were published in the Children’s Page of the *Evening Post*. She attended Island Bay School in Wellington, Leifiifi School in Samoa, and Wellington East Girls’ College.

1940s: Beverley married Peter Gillard Morris in April, 1944. Between 1947 and 1955 the family welcomed Ginette, Roger, Derek and Leonie.

1950s: Beverley learned about Playcentre from Gwen Somerset, and in 1951 started the Newtown Playcentre in Wellington. Then followed a move to Lower Hutt where she started teaching child development courses for Playcentre supervisors throughout the Hutt Valley.

1960s: In 1966 Beverley set up the original Playcentre diploma.

1970s: Beverley travelled extensively and attended six overseas conferences held by the International Play Association, promoting a ‘child’s right

to play’. She was made a life member of the New Zealand Playcentre Federation in 1979.

1980s: In 1987 Beverley was awarded the Queen’s Service Medal for work in integrating family organisations in Wellington. From the 1960s to the 1980s she also lectured at Victoria University of Wellington, working her way to become senior lecturer for human development with the Department of Continuing Education.

1990s: After retirement, she and Peter moved to Auckland in 1992 to be closer to family. She volunteered at the Ponsonby Citizens Advice Bureau for a number of years.

2000s: Beverley was an active member of a writers group that met each week. She welcomed numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren throughout this time too. Her contribution to Playcentre was recorded for Wellington Playcentre Association’s oral history project.

2010s: Beverley celebrated her 90th birthday at the 93rd Playcentre National Executive, held in October 2013. The celebration took the form of a ‘Beverley Morris – This Is Your Life’ slideshow, presented by Playcentre members. She was accompanied by her daughters Ginette and Leonie.

Moe mai ra e te Māreikura Beverley
E kore rawa koe e warewaretia,
Ka tangi tonu nei mou,
Moe mai ra, moe mai ra