

Obituary

Dr Barbara Louise Ryan (1930-2012)

Louise Ryan, MSc (Hons), PhD, MNZM, made an outstanding contribution to the New Zealand Association of Scientists from her election to Council in 1978, to her resignation for health reasons in 2006.

Initially she served for 2-3 years as Hon Secretary, then in 1982 was elected Hon Treasurer, a position she held until 2005. In addition to managing the finances, Louise took responsibility for NZAS Membership and the distribution of *New Zealand Science Review*, the quarterly journal of NZAS. Louise's commitment to managing the finances of the Association over 24 years, as well as membership, journal distribution, and the postal box over most of this time was remarkable, with her contribution underpinning the operation of Council. Her reliability was legendary and her contributions to Council quiet and unassuming. Her living room and spare room, where penguin viewing took place through a window built into the floor above the nest, were library and storage for excess copies of *Science Review*, and her living room table often a mosaic of NZAS accounts alongside those of several other organisations she served. Despite this, Louise was always well-organised within each activity and contributed cheerfully and constructively to issues before NZAS Council, and in her work at the DSIR Central Library. She had a high sense of social justice, and was quietly radical over various issues, particularly women's issues, preparing submissions to Parliamentary select committees with scientific thoroughness.

Louise Stewart began studies for a science degree at Canterbury University in 1948, graduating with a BSc in Chemistry in 1951 and an MSc with Honours in 1953. She then travelled to Europe where she worked in medical research in London and then Norway, exploring amino acids in the plasma and urine of alkaptonuric and ulcer patients. In 1962, Louise gained a PhD in Pathology from the University of London for work on microradiography of the mineral content of bone tissue, with particular emphasis on skeletal diseases such as osteoporosis.

Louise returned to New Zealand in 1967, and with husband, Dermot Ryan, raised a family of five. In 1975 she joined DSIR's Science Information Division where she worked on the Department's database of rivers and lakes until 1990.

Several awards are worthwhile mentioning, not the least being her induction as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the New Year's Honours list, Jan 2001, for services to women and the community. Louise was also a recipient of the New Zealand 1990 Commemoration Medal for services to New Zealand and the Wallace Award of the Women's Electoral Lobby in 2004 in recognition of a significant contribution to public understanding of electoral matters.

