

# Brigitte Helen Nimmo

September 8 1970 - April 9 2015

Brigitte, a woman of many parts A tiny woman with a very big heart. A humble woman with a sense of pride in what she was achieving. A quiet woman who became a clear voice for other women. A peaceful woman who fought for justice for women within male-dominated systems. A private woman bravely carrying out a public role. A woman who put her own pain and fear aside to help reduce the pain and fear of others. Brigitte, a woman to thank and remember. (Jill Proudfoot, SHINE)

Brigitte has an honest nature and sets herself high standards, which she endeavours to achieve, sometimes at considerable personal suffering. Brigitte has shown herself to be a single minded in her efforts to achieve the things she considers important. (School report)

## 1982 - 1987

### Hutt Valley High School

Brigitte travelled to Cambodia to assist the United Nations to establish democratic elections. She worked at the old Phnom Penh High School teaching conversational English to Khmer students of varying ages and abilities.

## 1992

### United Nations Cambodia

Passion for the great outdoors - Brigitte was a free spirit and just adored great outdoor experiences. Her running causes an adrenalin rush which energized her for the day ahead. Running she said, was like 'wind beneath my wings'. There was never a moment to waste and her family and friends could not (did not) keep up her pace of life. (Dejan Kerbis)

## 1992

### Winner of Crazyman Multisport Endurance Event

## 1996

### New Zealand Triathlon team, competed in the World Triathlon team, Mexico

The triathlon was right in the middle of her law exams. Brigitte sat her criminal law exam in Mexico the night before the world champs as this was the same time they were sitting it in New Zealand.

## 1998

### Admitted as Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand

Brigitte graduated from wing 188 and received the Prime Ministers prize for first in the wing.

## 2000

### Police Recruit - Royal New Zealand Police College

Brigitte ran the 800 km Camino de Santiago pilgrimage. Brigitte was teasingly called the 'Camino Express' by the pilgrims. On the way home Brigitte cycled around Italy. From Italy, Brigitte flew to Kathmandu and climbed with a Sherpa to Base Camp on Mt Everest.

Brigitte drafted the charitable trust deed that established the Police Dog Section as a separate entity able to receive independent funding. This was a first for New Zealand (NZ) Police and a significant instrument for the betterment of police dogs and their handlers.

Brigitte was a highly ranked female officer in the New Zealand Police. Brigitte made rank of Inspector in 2003.

## 2001 - 2008

### Police National Headquarters - Legal Advisor

## 2009 - 2014

### Police National Headquarters Family Violence Manager

I have been working in this field for over 17 years and found Brigitte to be the most outstanding person to ever be the Police's National Family Violence Manager. During her time overseeing this work huge progress was made in the way Police respond to family violence, underpinned by a validated risk assessment tool and professional development for Police officers. Brigitte's approach was extremely collegial and she worked hard at encouraging ideas and support from NGO and other government agency stakeholders. Brigitte was a dynamic bundle of energy, full of passion and enthusiasm and huge desire to improve the safety of victims of family violence. She was delight to work with and became a very dear friend to me. I will miss her always. (Jane Drumm, SHINE)

It is our privilege to pay our respect and aroha to Brigitte. Many of our staff worked with her over many years. Brigitte had a genuine desire to make a difference. She was intelligent, innovative, dedicated and very hard working. She was always gracious towards Refuge staff and willingly gave her time and support to our organisation. We were deeply sad to hear of her passing. In peace. (Women's Refuge)

A tall woman in police uniform, she sat down comfortably in a chair by my desk and thanked me for what I was doing to bring New Zealand domestic violence survivors together. Initially I felt overwhelmed by her uniformed presence but I soon realised how much she genuinely cared and before long we were talking freely like old friends. She stayed by my side all morning as if nothing else was as important. I don't know how she knew how much I needed her at that moment in time. The idea that she had taken the time out to find me, humbled me and her support from that day forward was unwavering. Brigitte's assistance whenever I needed it helped me help so many other women without them even knowing. Occasionally in life you meet people who inspire you to continue to push on for what is right. Brigitte was one of those special people. (Lisa Close, ISNO)

It's important to know that words don't move mountains. Work. Danilo Dolci, Italian Social Activist, Sociologist & Poet. When we think of Brigitte and her work with Shakti, this is what reflects what she did with us. Her work on forced marriage has laid the foundations in New Zealand to deter and prevent such oppressive practices from happening within our communities. She did move that mountain for us! (Shila Nair, Shakti)

I will always remember you as a woman who demonstrated to me what integrity and passion looked like in action. You worked tirelessly towards our shared vision as a staunch advocate for woman and children. Your kindness and courage will be remembered and any achievements we make will be built on the platform you helped create. (Jessica Trask, Impact Collective)

Brigitte was a particularly trusted and supportive colleague during the time I was the Director Family Violence at Ministry of Social Development. She saw the enormity of the change that is required and tirelessly explored any opportunities to improve things within Police. Brigitte never sought the limelight or accolades for her contribution - but those of us who worked closely with her knew only too well how committed she was. Many of us working in the family violence sector treasured Brigitte as a person and for the work she did. Six months before she died I wrote Brigitte an email saying 'you are one of the small handful of people working in the family violence sector that I see as real treasures and we need all the treasures we can get if we are to make the change that is needed'. And now we have lost a treasure and our sector is all the poorer without her. Arohanui. (Ruth Herbert, Impact Collective)

The family violence scene in New Zealand is one which requires awareness, energy, insight and an ability to collaborate in an environment which can be challenging. Brigitte, with her sparkle, intelligence and passion for addressing family violence made, in a relatively short time, a substantial contribution. She led with enthusiasm and was a credit to New Zealand Police. I met her when I was Principal Family Court Judge and we were bound to have crossover points of interest including police safety orders, breaches of protection orders, operation of FVAIRS and then the development of the ODARA risk assessment tool. It is right and proper to recognise people for the contribution that they make and so, to honour Brigitte in this way, is a wonderful thing to do. (Judge Peter Boshier)

## 2010

### Pike River - Family Liaison

Brigitte's caring and friendly approach and her integrity were evident in her actions. It was obvious to all that Brigitte really cared about what she did and her intelligent, focused actions improved the response for those who are most vulnerable. Her tenacity of character and her ability to engage and inspire us led to meaningful change. She was courageous in her commitment to achieving the best outcome and her 'can do' approach meant that things that seemed insurmountable were quietly and conscientiously tackled. I feel privileged to have had an opportunity to work with her. (Miranda Ritchie, National Manager Violence Intervention Programme)

Brigitte had boundless energy and a real devotion to helping people whether they be her own family, friends or complete strangers. People were important to Brigitte and she was committed to helping in whatever way she could. In NZ Police she worked tirelessly to help people who found themselves in situations of family violence. We talked often about the importance of addressing family violence in New Zealand and Brigitte committed herself to real action to help the victims of family violence and to reduce the occurrence of family violence. I always admired her dedication, her caring and her intellect. A thoroughly nice young lady. (Lyn Provost)

We are very proud of Brigitte, particularly her involvement in setting up the family liaison response in the aftermath of the Pike River mine disaster. This was an incredibly trying time, which saw her dealing with a tragedy which had not led to that many victims and people affected, since the Mount Erebus disaster. (Brigitte's Family)

## 2011

### Christchurch Earthquake

Her value to the Police became clear to me as she was called away from attendance at the Family Violence Death Review Committee to help with the Pike River disaster, then later with the Christchurch Earthquake. I worried about her involvement with these traumatic events alongside her work on family violence deaths, which was hard enough for me, but Brigitte always appeared to take these difficult roles in her stride. (Alison Towns)

## 2012 - 2013

### Sophie Elliott Foundation - Loves Me Not programme

When the trials of Loves-Me-Not were being prepared I watched in amazement as Brigitte criss-crossed the country selling the concept to selected schools. Such was her passion and belief in what we were doing that no one turned her down. Brigitte was a true inspiration to us all. Having an effective education programme in secondary schools was my legacy to Sophie. That goal is now a reality. And fittingly Loves-Me-Not becomes a legacy to Brigitte as well. Brigitte most definitely made a difference in bringing the awareness of family violence to prominence. Many people devote their time and energies to grappling with the shameful levels of family violence in our beautiful country. But there is no one I know of that had a greater effect, or put in greater sacrifice, than Inspector Brigitte Nimmo. To me and my fellow trustees Brigitte was a beacon who shone her light on the issue of family violence. We were proud of Brigitte Proud to follow her example and proud to call her a friend. With Brigitte's sad passing the beacon might have gone out but the reflection of the light that surrounded her still shines brightly. Brigitte, you were so dedicated to what you did. You worked long and hard for the betterment of the vulnerable and led from the front when it came to doing something positive and tangible about family violence. I know Sophie would have loved you for your zest for life and your commitment to the cause that matters so much. Rest in peace Brigitte. (Lesley Elliott, Chair of the Sophie Elliott Foundation)

## 2009 - 2014

### Family Violence Death Review Committee

Brigitte brought a wealth of knowledge, expertise and dedication to her advisor role. She was instrumental in formalising the NZ Police family violence death review process and in assisting the first national Family Violence Death Review Committee establish their pilot family violence death reviews. Brigitte supported the second Committee in progressing recommendations to the New Zealand Police, which have facilitated organisational change. Brigitte was a caring, intelligent and courageous woman who took on huge challenges because they were the right thing to do. The Committee will not forget the hard work and care she invested into making New Zealand a better place to live for those who are the most vulnerable and the most easily overlooked. She is an inspiration to us all and lives on in all the work the Committee does. (Julia Tolmie Chair, Family Violence Death Review Committee)

I met Brigitte through the New Zealand Family Violence Death Review Committee, when I was an inaugural member of this Committee. I remember thinking that she was such a wonderful example for young women in the Police. She was always very professional, and was completely on top of her portfolio. Brigitte was responsible for setting up the process for the internal reviews by the NZ Police of all family violence deaths. As I got to know Brigitte I realised that her crisp and efficient exterior harboured a lovely warm personality. She was genuinely concerned about women's and children's well-being in the context of domestic violence. Her passion for family violence prevention was really clear. (Alison Towns)

## 2011 - 2014

### NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse Sector Advisory Member

Brigitte provided input into the work of the Clearinghouse and helped to ensure the Police received research and information on family and whānau violence. We are very grateful for Brigitte's contribution to and support of the Clearinghouse, and honour her commitment to strengthening the Police response and improving outcomes for people affected by family violence. (NZ Family Violence Clearinghouse)

## 2010 - 2013

### White Ribbon Campaign member

I was fortunate to have worked with Brigitte on policy issues to make women safer in New Zealand. She filled the room with integrity, sincere commitment and thoughtful understanding, but she also brought kindness and many laughs. We were very lucky to have her with us. (Alana Bowman, White Ribbon Campaign)

## 2012 - 2014

### ODARA project

I met Brigitte when she came to Penangushene for trainer training in the ODARA. She was a quiet and modest woman but her sharp mind, determination, and humour soon became apparent. When I had the chance to come to Wellington and work with the officers and other people, I fell in love with the country and its people, thanks to Brigitte and her team. I experienced her warmth, passion, and sheer hard work in action. Between meetings she showed me around the city and we shared our plans and hopes and challenges. I feel privileged that I had this time with Brigitte, and I considered her not only an incredible colleague but also a gentle friend. I am so sad that I will not be able to see her again. I share in the sorrow of those who worked with her in New Zealand, as you have lost a great countrywoman. (Dr. Zoe Hilton, Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care, Penangushene, Canada)

Brigitte was a very loved, treasured and talented member of our family. She will be forever deeply missed by her family and friends. We are immensely proud of her sporting achievements. Career wise she wanted to make a difference - making our world a safer place - this she did during her short life! Rest in Peace Beautiful Girl. Dejan Kirbis (Husband and Kirbis Family) Bruce & Audrey Nimmo (Parents) Fleur Gray (Sister and Gray Family)



If you would like to write your own message for Brigitte please go to <http://www.heavenaddress.com/Brigitte-Helen-Kerbis-nee-Nimmo-1022963/>