

GRADUATE WOMEN OTAGO

JUNE 2022 NEWSLETTER

Closing out GWO's Centenary Year | GWO Presidents' Board Unveiling

GWO Branch Meeting

When: Thursday, 23 June, 2022

Where: Benham Seminar Room,
Zoology Department, 2nd Floor
340 Great King Street (south of
Captain Cook)

Time: Arrive at 7.15pm for a
cuppa before the 7.30pm start

Speaker: Lena Mukdad, Arabic
Interpreter at Dunedin Hospital,
Cultural and Language Assistant
for Syrian Refugees.

Details: Members may use the
car park in the front of Zoology
Building and the elevator inside,
and will be welcomed by a
member 'personing' the locked
main entry door between
approximately 7.15 - 7.35 pm

Apologies: If you are unable to
attend a branch meeting, please
send your apology to:
info@nzfgwotago.org.nz



A message from GWO's President:

Thursday 26th May was the final event marking the centenary year of Graduate Women Otago (formerly the Federation of University Women Otago branch). A Presidents' Board with 47 different Presidents headed up by Professor Helen Rawson (MA Cant) was unveiled. Twelve Presidents were present at the unveiling. I was struck with awe being in the presence of this unique group and reflecting on how each of these Presidents strove to achieve their own goals along with carrying out their presidential duties. The board symbolises the Branch's amazing history including two presidents who were also Presidents of Graduate Women International; Dame Daphne Purves and Mrs Louise Croot. We decided on a more contemporary design with an acrylic base instead of the traditional wood, and the banner shows our current constitution logo. The board and evening were accompanied with a plaque signifying the date of the occasion.

The opportunity to be involved in the design of the board was a privilege and a lot of creative fun. As I said in my speech, I was the lucky one who, as current President, unveiled it with former chancellor, Royden Somerville. We should feel proud for hosting four celebratory events which included sharing of history and stories; lovely refreshments; and fellowship with branch members, the University, and the public.

- Dr Shirley Gillett, President

Town and Gown Event: Unveiling of the Presidents' Board

Thursday 26 May 2022 brought us almost to the end of our Centenary Year, and to the final 'big event' to celebrate the year (originally postponed due to Covid). We celebrated women's leadership in style with drinks and nibbles at the University of Otago Staff Club, in the company of Branch members, University staff, and members of local organisations. The evening was centered on the unveiling of our Presidents' Board listing the 47 Presidents across our first 100 years, five of whom have served in the role twice, and one who served three times.

We were warmly welcomed by Lorraine Isaacs who chaired the event for us. She delighted in being the Chair Mistress! The evening opened with our President, Dr Shirley Gillett, sharing what Graduate Women Otago means to her through its links to education, advocacy, women's rights, and human rights. She acknowledged our breadth of donations nationally and locally. She sees us as a strong branch, and as a board of hard-working volunteers.

Shirley was followed by the former University of Otago Chancellor, Dr Royden Somerville QC. He acknowledged that the Otago Branch and University are truly entwined, and academic dress hire is pivotal at very important times each year during University graduations. He recalled his interactions with Sue Cathro and Jules Gross in this process. He also highlighted the leadership role that we play in the funding of scholarships at the University of Otago, and also nationally for postgraduate study for women.

Faumuina Professor Fa'afetai Sopoaga (Tai) CNZOM, a distinguished medical academic at the University of Otago and the first Pasifika female medical doctor to be appointed a Professor in

Australasia also spoke. She shared with us her personal journey in education and three strong influences (the three Fs) that have underpinned and supported her through that process; namely her Family, Friends and Faith. She shared with us the challenges along the way, from growing up in a small village in Samoa, and how she overcame these with ongoing support from each of her three Fs. Tai completed her speech with the most beautiful singing of a song for Samoa, led by her two nieces whose voices and sensitive musicianship accompanied her as she performed a graceful Samoan dance.



Faumuina Professor Fa'afetai Sopoaga (Tai) dances for the gathering as her two nieces accompany her with beautiful singing and guitar.



Members and Guests mingle in the Staff Club

Town and Gown Event: Unveiling of the Presidents' Board (continued...)

Our longest serving Academic Dress Convenor, Sue Cathro, outlined the branch history in gown hiring referring to notable Convenors of the past: Mrs Longbottom, Mary McKellar, and Elizabeth Kerse. She also referenced Alma McCrae, who did a lot of fabric searching and purchasing for the branch, and also Pat Mark who was our first Wednesday Convenor. Our oldest Convenor, Ann Wylie, at 100 years old, received a special mention in addition to the earliest President who is still with us, Elaine Donaldson. Sue provided us with a full description of the range of donations made by the Branch for women's education at all levels of study, including second-chance education, and community awards. During her speech, she used four sets of academic dress on body forms to illustrate change, referencing one that was initiated by the Convenors – the evolution from a trencher to a John Knox cap for PhD graduands.

Our final speaker for the evening was unable to join us in person, so we did what happens now on such occasions and we heard from Dr Olivia Harrison, one of our Young Members, via Zoom. Olivia shared her journey from her home city of Christchurch, to the University of Otago as an undergraduate, to the United Kingdom and the University of Oxford for doctoral and postdoctoral study, then to further postdoctoral study at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. Olivia is currently a Rutherford Discovery Research Fellow in the Department of Psychology at the University of Otago where she is researching treatments for anxiety. She referenced challenges that she confronted on her journey, sharing those challenges must be overcome in order to learn from them.

The Presidents' Board honouring the leadership of our Past Presidents was unveiled by our President, Dr Shirley Gillett, and Dr Royden Somerville QC, former Chancellor of the University of Otago, to a round of applause. Accompanying the board is a plaque recording the date and occasion. Professor Emerita Jocelyn Harris then proposed a toast to past, present, and future Presidents of Graduate Women Otago, and to the former New Zealand Federation of University (Graduate) Women (Otago Branch). All who were present raised their glasses in support. Twelve Branch Presidents were in attendance at the evening, which finished with mingling, the enjoyment of more good food and wine, and a choice of three cakes for dessert!

- Barbara Benson



Presidents - Past and Present

Back Row: Marie Aubin, Martine Cashell-Smith, Sheila Williams, Elizabeth Hanan, Florence Stone, Claire Matthewson

Front Row: Sue Cathro, Dorothy Page, Louise Croot, Lorraine Isaacs, Barbara Benson, Shirley Gillett

Town and Gown Event: Unveiling of the Presidents' Board (continued...)



Unveiling

Shirley Gillett and Royden Somerville unveil the Presidents' Board. Lorraine Isaacs, our Mistress of Ceremonies, is on the right.

Acupuncture for Chronic Low Back Pain Study - seeking participants

One of our members, Huijuan Tan, is a PhD student in the School of Physiotherapy at the University of Otago. She is a registered acupuncturist with 5+ years of clinical experience.

She is currently recruiting participants for a clinical study entitled, "Acupuncture for chronic low back pain." The study aims to compare the effectiveness of two positive acupuncture schemes for people with chronic low back pain.

Treatments are free and will be delivered twice weekly for four weeks. A treatment session will take around 50 minutes and there is a weekly assessment to complete that takes around 30 minutes.

The study has full Health and Disability Ethics Committees approval (Ref: (HEDC) 2022 FULL 11076).

- ➔ If you are interested, please contact Huijuan at huijuan.tan@postgrad.otago.ac.nz or text/call her on 022 076 8652
- ➔ For more details. <https://www.otago.ac.nz/physio/research/about-charr/otago839426.html>

~ Barbara Benson

NCW Meetings: May - June 2022

The May AGM, Branch and June Branch meetings were held by Zoom. The 2022 NCWNZ Constitution passed at the Special General Meeting in March replaces the former Branch Executive with an Organising Committee. Regarding the election of members, it was agreed to continue with the status quo, and a new set of Branch By Laws will be prepared in due course.

In 1993, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Suffrage in New Zealand (19 September 1893), Dunedin Branch donated and presented a Kate Sheppard camellia to the City of Dunedin Botanic Gardens. Recently the Gardens staff advised that the camellia had died, and the Branch has now provided another Kate Sheppard camellia as a replacement. This will be planted in a new garden at present being prepared. The original bronze plaque will be polished, and discussion centered on when it would be appropriate to again present this gift to the Mayor.

The Dunedin City local elections will be held on 8 October 2022. The Branch is planning a candidates' meeting to which the mayoral candidates will be invited to speak. The 12th September was chosen, before the voting and special voting begins, and all arrangements will be confirmed in due course.

Arrangements for the annual Inspiring Young Women's Breakfast are underway. Six speakers have agreed to take part, which includes a lawyer, mechanic, CEO, dental lecturer, and a chef. Schools are enthusiastic and enquiring how many students are they able to send.

- Correen Rodger

International Happenings

- ★ *Board of Officers Internal Resolutions 1 and 2, and Constitution Resolution GWI request for voting for the following:*

GWNZ voted 'yes' to support the three proposals:

1. A commitment to work together with GWI Headquarters to renew and rebuild NFAs and GWI Headquarters.
2. That NFAs commit to work together to undertake this work.
3. That we support the proposed set of Constitutional amendments to enable GWI to expedite the work.

- ★ *A reminder re: call for papers and workshops for the Triennium conference in November. **Please contact Shirley if any interest.***

**Call for Proposals for Workshops to be held at the GWI 34th Triennial
General Assembly and Conference to be held virtually 11-13 November 2022**

Workshops will be held 100% virtually Sunday, 13 November 2022

Deadline for submitting Workshop Abstracts:

Tuesday, 5 July 2022 by 23:59 CEST (11:59 PM CEST)

- This is the **first and only Call for Workshop** proposals for the 2022 GWI Conference.
- The theme for the GWI 34th Triennial General Assembly and Conference **from Growth and Sustainably** and the related sub-themes for the workshops and seminar papers resulted from input by the NFAs during the GWI Organization Development process Phase I with a **focus on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Inclusive, Equal and Quality Education for all.**
- The COVID-19 pandemic has set women's and girl's rights to education back by 20 years. The United Nations has made a Call to Action to accelerate the accomplishments of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. GWI understands that graduate women have many resources to offer towards achieving SDG 4 – academic background, range of skills and competencies, analytical thinking, critical decision-making abilities, strong work ethics, relevant work experiences and personal commitment.
- Please submit questions to Louise McLeod or Shirley Gillett to email workshopsandseminars2022@gwi.graduatewomen.org

July Newsletter Deadline

The next committee meeting is **Thursday, July 7th**

The closing date for newsletter items is **Sunday, July 10th**

~ Angela Spontelli Gisselman, Newsletter Editor

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Contact Us

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