

Margaret Feist's quiet strength remembered

It has been a hard winter for Knox Church, with several prominent parish members dying in the course of 2015 and their passing was once again remembered on All Saints Day, Sunday, November 1. Here we remember once again the life of Margaret Feist, her time in our parish and in the church nationally.

Knox Minister **Kerry Enright** remembers Margaret like this: When I was AES, I worked very closely with Margaret in relation to changes at the Theological Hall over 15 years ago, I remember her assisting the principal of the School of Ministry to put in place some educational processes and to assist him in making decisions. She brought to this task good administrative and human resource skills and experience. She facilitated and contributed to some very difficult meetings. She had a superb sense of process. Margaret was a very good listener and so was a supervisor for ministers and others. She was my most valued go-to person when I came to Knox as she was an astute reader of systems and culture.

Former interim minister **Ken Irwin:** Margaret came to Knox Church 15 years ago with gifts as a teacher, leader and administrator of professionalism and integrity. She also brought her capacity for justice, compassion and for loving kindness. Margaret has been an understated person. She has preferred a background role in facilitating other people's strengths and skills. She has worked discreetly yet effectively in developing administrative systems that support ministry and service both at Knox in her capacity as administrator and as convener of pastoral care, and in the wider church. She has been patient and careful in writing guidelines and standards for the practice of pastoral care that are both user-friendly and professional. Regular clinical supervision for ministers and training in ethics are now standard practices.



The Presbyterian Church is now a much "safer" place for the people it serves. Margaret was a wise and kindly person. She has been a thinking disciple with an inquiring mind that encourages exploration of new insights and understandings. Margaret has been a true "liberal" who combats issues of ignorance and fear with the weapons of knowledge and information. She has contributed thoughtfully to our worship. Yet alongside her formidable mind — sharp as a tack — Margaret has been a gentle person among us with wit and fun as well as insight. We remember her with respect and with affection.

Former Knox minister **Sarah Mitchell:** When I first met Margaret, I was a very young high school teacher and I was in awe of this strong woman: wife, mother, woman of the manse and highly respected teacher. Awe and respect were later augmented as we became friends, colleagues and more lately sharing ministries together at Knox Church. Margaret became my go-to person when I sought expertise in ministry supervision, administration redevelopment and all things literary. She had a way of getting to the nub

of issues and enabled students to think carefully and critically about their ministry education; she agreed to participate in a restructuring review committee, even when she'd been disappointed on several previous attempts; she read the bible and poetry with exquisite depth and meaning; her prayers were eagerly awaited for their acuity and creativity; her active involvement in the editorial team brought a thoughtful dimension to the reshaped "Knox News". She did not hesitate to speak her mind, especially in matters of social justice and this was tempered by her compassion, kindness and vulnerability. Margaret (and Don too) were ideal parishioners. They knew what it was like to be in "the manse", they expected probing, questioning theology and they offered wise encouragement and affirmation. I grieve their passing ... and I celebrate their lives.

Former Knox interim minister and now minister at St Andrew's on the Terrace, Wellington, **Susan Jones:** I appreciated Margaret's calm demeanor, her sharp intellect mixed with a warmth of personality quietly expressed; her expectation of high standards, (also more implicit rather than noisily demanded). I found her very wise. She applied a careful rationality which brought clarity and yet was not unfeeling. She was trustworthy. You could have complete faith in her integrity. She was used many times by the national Church in reviews and consultations because she could get the job done impartially and without prejudice. I also appreciated her thoughtful approach to faith. With Donald, she formed a duo of supportive, discerning church members who were loyal yet questioning, faithful yet remaining true to themselves.

— *Compiled by Judy Breward*