



Bernie was born in Masterton, in 1925, the eldest of 4 children of Arthur & Olive Knowles. In 1939, the family shifted to Lyall Bay, where Bernie duly became dux of Rongotai College, and sharpened his surfing skills at the beach. After leaving school, he worked as an accountancy cadet, completing all the exams required to be a chartered accountant at the age of 17. But these were war years, so at the first opportunity, on his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, he joined the airforce, and trained as a pilot. Keen to serve overseas, he was deemed too young, and was made a navigation instructor instead. In this period, he survived 2 major plane crashes. At the end of the war, He briefly resumed his education, before joining J Force, the army occupying Japan. In 1947, at 22 years old, he retired as a Major. He then went back to Victoria University. As usual, he was the top Scholar, graduating in 1949, with a Masters in Commerce, with 1st class honours, as well as a BA in Philosophy, and a blue in swimming. At Victoria, he met

Christine Salmon. OE then beckoned the young pair, and they were married in London in 1950. Returning to New Zealand, he worked as an accountant in Wellington for Ernest Hunt & Co, and then in construction for Downer consortiums on the Rimutaka tunnel, and the Waitaki hydro scheme. With the first child, Andrew, arriving, a complete change was in order, so he and Christine moved to Kaitaia, to become Assistant Secretary of the local Dairy Company. Second son, Sam arrived in Kaitaia. In 1954, Downers asked him to sort out the Roxburgh hydro scheme, so the family moved to the South Island, and 3rd Son, Alex was born there. A return to Kaitaia, as the head of the Dairy Company was followed by return to Wellington, and Downers, in 1959. From Downers, there was a side trip into the meat industry. This job involved considerable travel, and Bernie was one of a very few who survived a horrific plane crash at Honolulu in 1962. He had always wanted to study law, but had failed School Certificate Latin, then a requirement. The Latin requirement was removed in the 60s, so he started a law degree, in his "spare" time, in addition to a full time job, 3 kids and rebuilding the house. He passed his law degree, with the largest number of A passes ever. He then worked at law firm, Buddle Anderson Kent, before joining the Dairy Board in 1968. That year also saw him survive the Wahine disaster. He progressed fast in the Board, becoming General Manager in 1976. He continued his hobby of building his own and other peoples houses during this time, completing a large family complex in Khandallah, and organising many other developments. In 1985, He shifted to a new challenge at the Wool Board, for 4 years, and also completed building a large block of flats in Oriental Bay. Retirement saw him cutting back, to 70 hours a week. He continued many directorships, including Tatua Dairy Company, Affco, and Ports of Wellington. He was a past president of the Rotary Club of Wellington, and Grand Master of his lodge He also found time to do all the accounts for numerous businesses of family and friends, and Circa Theatre trust.

A Service to Celebrate the Life Of

## **Bernard Keith Knowles** **' Bernie '**

10 January 1925 - 6 August 2000

