Betty Wignall 1927-2014

Betty Wignall, the former Administrative Secretary of the NZIC, died on 20 December 2014 at Archer Home, Christchurch. She was born Ngaire Elisabeth Barlow in Sumner on 27 March 1927. Betty studied medical intermediate in Christchurch in about 1945 before completing a home science degree at Otago University. Following this Betty taught science (plus clothing) at Waikato Diocesan School for Girls for three years (around 1948-51). After a year spent working at the Hammersmith Hospital laboratory in London, Betty returned to NZ where she continued with lab work, briefly for a private lab in Christchurch and then for four years with the DSIR (now ESR) in Wellington, working in the water lab. It was there that she met the late Denis Hogan, the NZIC Honorary General Secretary and Registrar. She returned to Christchurch to marry, but after her divorce, Betty started working for the NZIC in the newly created post of Administrative Secretary working with Denis in 1974. During that time the Institute's membership records were computerised with the assistance of Robert Maclagan. Membership invoices and membership lists were produced. The system that was created was considered superior to those of a number of other professional organisations. This was in the days of punched cards and before computer terminals. Betty's service to the Institute went well beyond the call of duty. She spent 15 years in this part-time role. Her hard work for the Institute was characterised by both loyalty and friendliness. While not a chemist she continued her association with chemistry. Her daughter Anne is a well-known chemical educator. More recently, Betty generously established a scholarship for a PhD student in chemistry at the University of Canterbury - the Betty Wignall Scholarship in Chemistry - something really appreciated in these days of low student funding , which is being used to contribute to the fees of a PhD student. She is survived by her children Trevor, Anne, and Keith.

Contributed by Robert Maclagan