



## Electra Kapiti Horowhenua Business Awards

# News Release

**4 November 2011**

### **Three Admitted to Business Hall of Fame**

A highly successful Horowhenua farmer and two founding fathers of the Kapiti District, all with strong community and charitable focus, have been added to the Kapiti Horowhenua Business Hall of Fame.

At a dinner presentation in Paraparaumu on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November, Collis Blake, Barry Hadfield and John "Jack" Leslie were inducted into the Hall of Fame, bringing the total of laureates now honoured that way to ten.

**Collis Blake's** family have lived and worked in the rural areas of Horowhenua for several generations after his forebears settled in New Zealand in the early 1840s. In early 1960s Collis' father bought farmland in Manakau. His mother's family operated a sawmill in Ohau.

Collis started his career farming in Manakau (Horowhenua) and over the years added to his farm with land in Ohau and Koputaroa. He is proud that over the years his returns from beef farming have been greater than the industry average. Collis gained a strong national profile for his leadership efforts to support stressed farmers in the days of forced mortgagee farm sales. He also turned his hand to commercial property investment.

A long term Rotarian, Collis has received a number of prestigious Rotary and other community awards.

Collis and his wife Helen are proud that they have been able to consistently and quietly support many community initiatives. Undoubtedly their finest achievement was the transformation of the former Levin School site on State Highway One into today's magnificent Adventure Park.

Collis and Helen focus their community involvement upon Children's needs. They know and are happy that not many people are aware of the scope of their support.

**Barry Hadfield** was a leading figure in laying the political, economic and social foundations of what has now evolved to become the Kapiti Coast District. His 12 years in local government, including his two mayoral terms from 1974 to 1980, had seen him deal with the challenges of rapid growth, infrastructure problems, rating

pressure, coastal erosion, a new swimming pool, the future of the airport and Sandhills Motorway.

His entry into a public career grew from his involvement in the Paraparaumu School Committee in 1961, where his children went to school. He was also on the Kapiti College Board of Governors and was the School Committee Representative for the District.

His vision for economic development saw the creation of the Kapiti Coast Promotion Council. It facilitated the growth of iconic businesses like Kapiti Cheese and New Zealand's first covered mall, Coastlands Shoppingtown. Southwards Car Museum also established itself after a tough planning challenge. The open saltwater pool at Raumati was upgraded to a covered freshwater heated pool.

Barry Hadfield developed the popular Lindale Farm complex on his family land and was the Deputy Chair of the Kapiti District Trust Board that developed Marire Home and Sevenoaks. He is a life member of the Paraparaumu Cricket Club.

**John "Jack" Leslie** is a 'founding father' of the Kapiti District in both a business sense, and a community sense.

Coming from a background as a textile cutter and designer, in 1962 Jack started Leslie Trading which was a significant early Kapiti business manufacturing and supplying a range of uniforms and apparel throughout New Zealand, mainly for nurses and other healthcare professionals. In its day, Leslie Trading employed 70 people across two sites in Otaki and Paraparaumu. The business still operates today at a smaller size and with niche products such as merino baby clothing.

Jack also has, or has had, several other business interests including a finance company, farming, commercial property and a holiday park. Like many entrepreneurs, he is as much an expert at what *not* to do, as he is at what *to do*.

But Jack's activities were not just restricted to business and in 2010 he and his wife Sue together were recognised with a Mayoral Award for their many contributions, since 1951 particularly in the area of education.

Jack was an appointed Councillor on the very first Kapiti Borough Council.

He is a distinguished Rotarian, having received among other awards the Four Avenues of Service Citation in 2006, one of Rotary's highest awards. Sue was recognised by Rotary at the same time for her work in the community, particularly with vision impaired people.

The other members of the Kapiti Horowhenua Business Hall of Fame are: Bill Crighton, Roger Halliwell, Selwyn Hide, Ray McKimm, David Pritchard, Jake Slykhuis, and John Turk.

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