

FROM: The New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists (Inc)

Subject: TRIBUTE TO FIRST OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR

Date: 27th August, 2009



The New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists (NZAOT) applauds member Dr Linda Wilson, Principal Lecturer of the School of Occupational Therapy at Otago Polytechnic who has become New Zealand's first ever occupational therapist to be awarded a prestigious Fulbright scholarship.

'Dr Linda Wilson is a shining example of the occupational therapy profession. Her active participation and contribution to the growth of her professional association and her ongoing pursuit of innovative practice is inspiring. She deserves this accolade,' says Elizabeth Rowland, President NZAOT..

Dr Wilson has represented New Zealand at the World Federation of Occupational Therapists council meeting, served as the educator representative on the Occupational Therapy Registration Board of New Zealand and has been instrumental in the setting up and development of the Otago Polytechnic School of Occupational Therapy. In 1996 she received the New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists' prestigious Frances Rutherford Lecture Award for her contribution to the profession through service, education and research.

Over her career Dr Wilson has worked in most areas of occupational therapy practice, either directly, in management, in education or in related community voluntary service. As a new graduate she worked with people with significant rheumatic diseases and was the first occupational therapist attached to the rheumatic diseases unit at Wakari Hospital, Dunedin.

Dr Wilson was involved with the management of the wheelchair services whilst working for the then Wellington Hospital Board. She has also been involved in a voluntary capacity both with Riding for the Disabled and with Corpac a community organisation providing budgetary advice and financial management support services to people with mental health problems living in the community. Whilst practising overseas she developed considerable expertise in the management of hand injuries, common at that time in Hong Kong.

Her doctoral thesis took an historical and organisational look at the development of occupational therapy in New Zealand. In the early days occupational therapists primarily worked with people in large governmental institutions whereas now they are increasingly working in private practice, primary health and not-for-profit and community organisations. As the health priorities have changed so has occupational therapy practice: Dr Wilson is now involved in supervising the third year students to undertake project placements with a diverse range of organisations in and around Dunedin.

Common to all of these is the underlying role of occupational therapists: assisting people to be involved in the range of occupations in their life that they want and need to do, and using involvement in occupations to help people develop or regain the skills of living necessary to participate in life's occupations.

Dr Wilson will be officially awarded her Fulbright New Zealand Senior Scholar Award in June 2010 at a Parliamentary awards ceremony. The ceremony will be hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and held at the Beehive in Wellington.

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Photo caption: Dr Linda Wilson

Note to editors: Fulbright media fact sheet attached

More about the New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists

- NZAOT is the leading representative for occupational therapists in Aotearoa/New Zealand.
- Supporting occupational therapists since 1949
- **Mission:** Promoting excellence in knowledge, standards, support and representation
- **Values:** The values that underpin NZAOT are:
 - Occupational Justice
 - Professionalism
 - Integrity
 - Collaboration and
 - Transparency
- Web: www.nzaot.com

Dr Wilson's qualifications

- State Examinations in Occupational Therapy
- New Zealand Registered Occupational Therapist (NZROT)
- MSc (Southampton University) Thesis topic: Managerial style and job satisfaction in occupational therapists
- Diploma in Health Administration (Massey University) (DHA)
- PhD (Otago) Role differentiation in a professionalising occupation: the case of occupational therapy, New Zealand.
- National Diploma in Adult Education and Training (Level 5)