



Charmaine Pountney



1955-1959

Charmaine Pountney is a former Epsom Girls Grammar School Head Girl, Dux and University Scholar. She trained as a secondary school teacher and was principal of Auckland Girls' Grammar School from 1978-88. During this time she became a passionate advocate for women, educational and social change and Treaty justice.

When Charmaine left AGGS she became Principal of Hamilton Teachers' College, then founding Principal and Dean of the School of Education at the University of Waikato. In 1992 she moved with her partner, Tanya Cumberland, to the Awhitu Peninsula, where they developed an organic farm and in consultation with mana whenua, planting organic gardens, orchards, and native bush. Charmaine also revived a dying South Auckland school, wrote NZ Herald columns, published a book - *Learning Our Living*, and chaired the Franklin Arts, Culture and Libraries Trust. Together, Tanya and Charmaine cared for children and aging family members, established the Awhitu Peninsula Landcare Group, won environmental awards, and provided learning opportunities and hospitality on their farm for up to a thousand visitors a year.

Charmaine was awarded a Nuffield Fellowship to study education in the UK and a NZ Suffrage Medal for services to women, and made a Companion of the NZ Order of Merit for services to education. Since moving to Ranui, West Auckland, in 2014, Charmaine has become involved in a range of community activities, including those involving migrant and refugee families.