



This Scroll commemorates the induction as a

***Laureate of the
Kapiti Horowhenua
Hall of Fame***

of

Graham & Letitia Montford

Inducted by
Business Kapiti Horowhenua Inc
in September 2022

In recognition of Graham & Letitia's
long standing contribution to:
Business excellence
Leadership and standing in business
Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and
Service to the community

Chair
BKH

Mayor
Horowhenua District

*-Business Kāpiti Horowhenua Incorporated-
-Horowhenua Hall of Fame Laureate-*

Graham & Letitia Montford

30th of September 2022

Graham & Letitia Montford will forever be credited with bringing the famed Golden Arches to Levin; demonstrating exceptional local business leadership; and for using McDonalds as a platform to serve up “Big Mac” sized community contributions that have left an indelible mark on the district. Often for the Hall of Fame we recognise individual recipients, but this is a remarkable team effort between Letitia and Graham who together have formed a powerful partnership that we are acknowledging this year.

Both had established promising careers in their late 20s, Graham a police constable and Letitia an interior designer. Graham was Levin born and bred, attended Horowhenua College and played representative sport in hockey and cricket in his youth. Fascinated by the McDonald’s franchise system, they approached the company in 1990. When the opportunity came to open a Levin restaurant, as one of the McDonald’s TV advertising campaigns tag lines touted, “Grab The Moment,” they did just that!

The Montford’s opened the doors of McDonald’s Levin in 1992 to massive queues down the street in anticipation. In the 26 years they ran the franchise, nearly 600 locals worked at their restaurant. That was a huge exercise in managing, training, and mentoring staff. Personal development and work ethic was a big part of their approach, and many of those staff, some spanning three generations in the same family, who got their start with them, went on to successful and thriving careers.

Their focus on staff welfare is reinforced that at one point, the Levin restaurant had the lowest staff turnover of any McDonald’s franchise in the entire country. Graham and Letitia expanded and at one point also operated McDonald’s Paraparaumu and Coastlands in addition to Levin.

While the McDonald’s corporation encourages their franchisees to be active in its community, Letitia and Graham made it part of their mission to be a business that embraced the Horowhenua community. They would regularly be hit up by sports teams, schools, and clubs to support them which they wholeheartedly responded. But they also proactively took on some meaningful projects. One such initiative was coordinating and packing buses of pupils from local schools to plant native trees along the districts parks and pathways that connect the park reserves. Nearly 10,000 trees were planted.

One unforgettable event was to bring out Jonah Lomu at the height of his fame to spend a couple days in Levin meeting and signing autographs for kids and fans at the AP & I show and being the star attraction in a parade down Oxford Street. To encourage young kid sports participation, they brought Olympians Sarah Ulmer and Hamish Carter to town to host kids in bike riding and mini marathons.

They also brought out winners of the McDonald’s Young Entertainers TV competition, built a stage, mounting speakers on cranes to enable them to perform an outdoor concert at the Levin domain. The event drew an astonishing 15,000 spectators. While these resources are associated with McDonald’s, what the public didn’t see is Letitia and Graham having to ‘pitch’ the case against the 180-odd other McDonald’s franchises in much bigger cities to secure their ambassadors limited time that McDonald’s NZ contract to come to the Horowhenua, often funding their expenses on top.

In 2009 Letitia and Graham began fundraising to build a ‘Horowhenua Room’ in the new Ronald McDonald House in Wellington. Their efforts resulted in \$130,000 raised from the Horowhenua community towards the build.

Our thanks to the incredible work and impact Graham and Letitia Montford have given to and given back to our district and demonstrating how good business can also be what’s good for the community.