

## **SCIASCIA: HORACE NOEL (SONNY)**

**Born: 23 December 1929, Levin, New Zealand**

**Married: 31 January 1953, Otaki, New Zealand**

**To: Arohaana Temoenga Kahurangi (Aroha) Jacob (1930 – 2000)**

**Married: 2004: Maude Mary Norman (Winiata) (1944 - )**

**Died: 20 May 2013, Levin, New Zealand**

**Buried: Raumatangi Urupa, Ngatokowaru Marae, Hokio Beach Rd, Levin, New Zealand**

### ***Sonny's parents were:***

John de Tomba (Jack) (1884 – 1960) & Alice May (nee Stonehouse) (1899 – 1954)

### ***Sonny had 4 brothers & 5 sisters:***

Leslie John (1919 – 1942)	Killed in Action, Egypt
Audrey May (1921 – 1986)	married Bruce Frederick Bennett
Hinemoa Joan (1923 – 1998)	married Albert Edward Watson
Geoffrey Charles de Tomba (1925 – 1980)	married June Lorraine Cooper
Gordon James (1928 – 2015)	married Judith Ellen Perigo
Margaret Elizabeth (1931 – 1996)	married Keith McCreedy
Roy (1933 – 2005)	married Audrey Alice Gardner
Ramona Pat (1936 – 1973)	married Donald Jenkins
Pauline Frances (1940 – 2009)	married Michael Karangaroa Atkins

### ***Sonny & Arohaana had 5 children:***

Leslie Martin (1956 – )	married Pauline Mary McCashin
Jillian Rae (1958 – )	partner John Corkill
Vivienne (1959 – )	married Michael Bould
Beverley Dianne (1961 – )	married John Clarke
Colin Noel (1966 - )	married Deborah Taylor

### ***Sonny's grandparents were:***

Nicola Sciascia (1840 – 1898) Born at Trani, Puglia, Italy and moved to NZ by at least 1875

Married 1882 at Foxton Riria Puaia McGregor (1857/63 – 1938)



**Education:**

Koputaroa Primary school (1936 - 1942)

Horowhenua College (1943 – 1946)

**Honours:**

Order of the British Empire (OBE) 1992

For services to sport & local government

Paul Harris Fellowship: Levin Rotary Club

1992

Justice of the Peace

from 1986

***Made Life member of:***

Horowhenua Rugby Football Union

1980

Horowhenua Rugby Referees Assn

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Levin Old Boys Cricket Club

?

Horowhenua Cricket Assn

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## **Associations:**

Councillor: Levin Borough Council	1980 - 1986
Mayor: Levin Borough Council	1986 - 1989
President: NZ Rugby Football Union	1985
Vice President: NZ Rugby Football Union	1983 - 1984
Chairman: Horowhenua College Bd of Governors	1978 - 1984
Member: Horowhenua Rugby Union Committee	1955 - 1981
Chairman: Horowhenua Rugby Union	1968 - 1981
President: Horowhenua Rugby Union	1993 - 1994
Refereed 29 1 <sup>st</sup> class rugby fixtures including 6 Ranfurly Shield Challenges between 1953 - 1965	

Chairman: Kereru Marae Committee & Trustee

Chairman: Committee for restoration of the 28<sup>th</sup> Maori Battalion Hall in Palmerston Nth

Co-ordinator: For the rebuilding of Rangiatea Maori Church at Otaki

Steward: Otaki Maori Racing Club

President: Horowhenua Master Builders Assn

Member: Advisory Bd of the Levin Periodic Detention Centre

Member: Ikaroa District Marae Council

Member: Raukawa District Maori Council

## **Sonny's life and career:**

He was born at Levin in 1929, the sixth child of Jack & Alice Sciascia.

He was educated at Koputaroa school and Horowhenua College.

He married Aroha Jacob in 1953 & they had five children. Aroha died in 2000 and Sonny married his second wife, Maude in 2004.

In 1953 Sonny went into the building business with brothers Geoff, Gordon and Roy. He was the Managing Director of Sciascia Brothers Ltd, and was very proud of the number of local buildings they built from 1953 to 1981.

They created a business that provided a lot of jobs in the community. Being progressive meant putting through a lot of apprentices and running a predominantly Maori staff.

He stated, "We were very enthusiastic to get as many of these young men in to work as possible. We encouraged them to build their own homes and many are still living in their own homes because of that."

Among the buildings he was especially proud of was the Levin Domain grandstand – he chaired the Horowhenua Rugby Union committee that financed the project, and completed it in the early 1960's.

Some other major projects were: Horowhenua Hospital, Levin War Veterans Home, Levin Shopping Mall, Coastlands Shopping Mall, Waiopahu College, Levin Post Office, Otaki Maori Racing Club grandstand, Horticulture Research Station, Waitohu School, Raumati School.

Sonny loved his sport.

He was involved in Rugby, Cricket, Badminton and Basketball as a player, referee and long term administrator.

He was recognised for his services to two sports with Life Memberships by the Horowhenua Rugby Union; Horowhenua Rugby Referees Assn; Levin Old Boys Cricket club; and the Horowhenua Cricket Assn.

From 1971 until 1980, Sonny stayed out of local politics, with good friend Laurie Roberts the Mayor at the time, but became involved in 1980 when he became a Councillor.

He became Mayor in 1986. At this stage he gave up the building trade to avoid conflict of interest.

He and Aroha started Sciascia Books and Souvenirs in Oxford St, Levin.

He was the last Borough Mayor and became known for standing his ground and doing what is best for the community.

He was instrumental in establishing the 'Adopt and Anzac' research project by challenging people to remember the district's fallen soldiers and having the Levin cenotaph upgraded, by challenging people in the community to fix it.

His term was notable for the public opposition to the building of the Levin Aquatic Centre.

*At the time the Council wished to replace the 76 year old Levin Coronations Baths but faced opposition from the community. A ratepayer poll rejected the Council taking out a loan to pay for the facility, so Sonny opted to sell Council assets, land and surplus to fund the \$1 million pool.*

He probably lost the Mayoralty at the next election because of this one project. However today many people, on a daily basis, use this great community amenity, thanks to his fortitude and determination to complete the project.

In 2006, on the Borough centenary, the Mayor of the time, Brendan Duffy, placed the Borough chains over Sonny's shoulders, as recognition of his contribution to his community. Mayor Duffy also stated, "His life has been a magnificent achievement".

The search for Sonny's Italian whakapapa actually began with a trip to Europe back in 1978. Sonny, Aroha, Vivienne and Colin went on a 3 month trip to Europe where they followed the NZ cricket team and Grand Slam All Blacks.

It was during this trip that they first visited Trani to see if Sonny could find any living relatives. Unfortunately no contact was made on this trip but this was where the journey to find a living relative began. And it was actually Aroha who pushed Sonny to pursue his Italian whakapapa.

The first major whanau hikoi to Italy was in 1996. Sonny and Aroha led this trip with about 60 whanau in total on this hikoi.

Sonny was known as being an all round gentleman, kind and humble, yet he presented himself well in all company, respected administrator and a fantastic servant to the people of the Horowhenua.



