

SUE: George

Born: 25 September 1940, Otaki, New Zealand

Married: 2 January 1965, Levin, New Zealand

To: Shirley Gin (1942 -)

Died: 29 March 2017, Paraparaumu, New Zealand

Buried: Whenua Tapu Cemetery, Porirua, New Zealand

George's parents were:

Bing (1890 - 1967) & Sue Jer Law (nee Gum) (1901 - 1973)

George has 1 brother & 1 sister:

Tom (1927 - 2020)

married 3 times

Mary (1930 -)

married Rossano Fan



George & Shirley have 4 children:

Education:

Levin Central School	1945 – 1952
Levin East School	1953 – 1954
Horowhenua College	1955 – 1957
Hong Kong School of Commerce	1959 - 1960
Hong Kong University	1961

Honours:

Queens Service Medal (QSM)	2013	For Services to the Community
Paul Harris Fellowship	1989, 2004	Levin Rotary Club
Horowhenua District Council – Civic Honours Award	2003	
Kapiti Horowhenua Business Hall of Fame	2012	

Associations:

Justice of the Peace (JP)	1990 - 2016
Member: Electra Trust	2006 - 2016
Member: Poll Tax Heritage Trust	1998 - 2011
President: Levin Rotary Club	1982 - 1983
Member: Kapiti Horowhenua Business Development Board	1986 - 1996
Member: NZ Chinese Association, Kapiti branch	1977 - 2015
President: NZ Chinese Association, Kapiti branch	1994 - 2016
Secretary: Horowhenua Chinese Commercial Growers Assn	1977 – 2016
President: Horowhenua Growers Assn	1987 - 2000
Secretary: Tararua Growers Assn	2000 - 2016
President: Central Districts Justice of the Peace (JP) Assn	2009 – 2011
Member: Horowhenua Library Trust	1998 - 2007
Bd Member: Horowhenua Children’s Board	1970 - 1979
Bd Member: Horowhenua Kindergarten Assn	1969 - 1976
Bd Member: Waiopahu College Board of Governors	1979 – 1988

George's life:

George's father, Bing Sue, was the first generation of the family to come to New Zealand. He travelled alone in 1908 at the age of 18. He landed in Wellington, then travelled around the North Island and chose to remain in New Zealand.

By the time George was born his parents were living in Otaki. Following his birth they moved to Ohau for a year before finally settling in Levin, where his father purchased a piece of land in Bartholomew Rd.

George was educated at Levin Central school and then went on to Levin East school, where he was an early pupil. He then attended Horowhenua College. His transport to school consisted of walking to the bus stop at 7.30 am every morning and catching the bus in order to arrive for a 9.00 am start to the day.

There was no pressure on him to achieve at school. He felt that he wasn't one of those students who could achieve academically. He was very interested in animals and land and studied agriculture at college.

Looking back on his college years he felt that he received a good education, although the college did not have all the teaching aids that it has now and did not offer the opportunities that students have today. He felt that students were not as inquisitive back then and the subjects were not so specialised.

His fondest memories of primary school were the days when there were big frosts and they would be given nice, hot cocoa to warm them up. He looked forward to holidays.

After school his time was spent helping around the home like many of his peers.

George left school at age 17 and travelled to Hong Kong with his older sister and parents.

His parents retired from growing in 1958 and leased out their land for grazing.

George did not find it easy adjusting to life in Hong Kong. It was overwhelming as it was so much bigger and the streets were so crowded. Upon arrival his first thought was to hop on a plane back to New Zealand.

While in Hong Kong he attended the Hong Kong School of Commerce and the Hong Kong University as a law student.

His first job, in Hong Kong, was working as an inspector for the RSPCA. He was one of 80 people to apply for the position and enjoyed it very much. He continued with them for a year and a half, at one time working (temporarily) as a Chief Inspector.

George returned to New Zealand when he was 22. His first job back was market gardening, which had been carried out by his family for many years.

He married Shirley from Auckland and had four children. They all attended Fairfield school and Waiopahu College and all have successful careers.

In 1967 George left Sue Wah Lee Ltd (the partnership with brother Tom) and started his own business, George Sue & Co. He owned a 37 acre market garden in Arapaepae Rd. He grew potatoes as his main crop with cabbages and cauliflowers being his winter crop.

He cropped 70 acres and up to 110 acres in the peak periods. Carrots, pumpkins and squash were added as the acreage grew. Crops of barley were grown to rest the land.

Products from the market garden went to wholesalers all over the North island.

He also owned a dairy/herbal shop with Shirley called, "Fours Seasons" which turned out to be very successful.



George was also very community minded, and contributed to a range of business, community, cultural and agricultural organisations throughout the district.

George's words:

"Like many other boys I was drawn to machinery such as cars, trucks and tractors, determined to be able to operate them all – anything on tracks or wheels.

Coming back to Levin and living in the old family homestead felt like home. Upon returning to New Zealand, I was offered a position to work for a national travel company – I had looked after some of their clients in Hong Kong. My brother, Tom, also offered me a partnership with him in the market garden business he had established. The call of the land was stronger, although I had enjoyed my time travelling many miles overseas and meeting many people. I was now ready to settle in one place.

Life was work seven days a week, with never having enough hours in the day. However we did manage to get two trips a year with the children to visit their grandparents in Auckland. I was fortunate in being able to interact with my children every day, at meal times and having them helping in the garden or joining me from time to time when I took the vegetables to market.

As we became more established, I was able to leave the staff in charge and have more time to participate in projects with the kindergartens, Jaycees and Rotary.”

Reflections:

George retired as a grower in 2005.

“The joy in planting a seed and maturing it day by day, week by week, and then to reap the reward at maturity, gives you satisfaction that is hard to repeat. I do not have any regrets in choosing this occupation.”





Excerpts from an article written by 4MC Horowhenua College students, Tania Campbell & Kelly Tucker

Excerpts from the book "Sons of The Soil" by Lily lee & Ruth Lam