



Interview Abstract

Interviewee: Eric Schusser
Interviewer: Suzanne MacKenzie
Date recorded: 17 December 2024
Abstractor: Sue MacKenzie and Margaret Bennie.

File 01

00:19	Born in Wellington. Parents Rachel Henderson McAllister SCHUSSER and Franz SCHUSSER. Only child.
00:39	Mother Scottish. Father Sudeten or Bohemian. Member of Social Democratic Party – anti Nazi – on the Gestapo wanted list. Fled to Scotland before WW11.
05:37	Met future wife in Alloway. Parents came to New Zealand.
06:55	Describes relationship with father. Conversed in German.
08:39	Describes childhood in Wellington at Houghton Bay. Mother's family moved to New Zealand, lived nearby. Scottish culture.
09:45	Attended Houghton Valley School Wellington South Intermediate.
10:39	Rongotai School. Violent practices, canings and beatings.
13:34	Decided to be a teacher. Praises German teacher and English Drama teacher.
14:38	Describes his teaching philosophy.
14:41	Attended Victoria University. BA in German & Linguistics. Masters with Honours in German. At 21 went to Germany for a year. Skiing and 12-week Goethe Institute course. Returned to N.Z. Describes working at Lake Ohau Lodge.
16:49	Christchurch Teachers College. Describes inspirational man John MOFFAT. Found out about Outdoor Education Course from Arthur SAVON. Spent weekends climbing, skiing etc.

20:44	Describes Outdoor Education experiences with various schools.
21:27	Came to Dunstan High School in Alexandra.
30:06	Describes trips to Mt. Aspiring with school camp.
30:07	Praises Principal of Dunstan High. Went overseas and studied Adventure Based counselling in the United States. Set up Project NZ.
30:28	Dunstan High Ropes Course, second one in NZ. Is of international standard.
31:06	Describes First Aid training and starting 30 years of front line ambulance work. Qualified as EMT (Emergency Technical Technician).
33:40	Still working at Search & Rescue (voluntary) has done 15 years. Describes LANSAR rescue of people on Old Man Range in 2016.
34:44	Meets his future wife Annemarie Hope-Cross (now deceased). His mother moved from Wellington to Alexandra.
41:03	Talks about childhood interests and hobby of photography. Helped build a dark room with his dad. Describes Annemarie's interest in photography.
44:17	Annemarie's course in England at Leacock Abbey and development of her work. Te Papa bought some of her work.
45:32	Annemarie struggles with cancer.
47:10	Annemarie and Eric wrote two books together. Friendship with Greg O'Brien and Jenny Bornholt resident in Henderson House. Jenny and Annemarie wrote "A Garden is a Long Time". Published by Victoria University Press.
51:10	Describes love of photography. Skiing with father on Tasman Glacier as a 14 year old. Black and white his favourite medium. Exhibitions in Hullabaloo. Artists collective in Cromwell.
57:00	Love of cross-country skiing. Talks about bequest to Dunstan High in memory of Marguerita Pessione. The money went to outdoor education, namely Telemark ski gear used for trips to snow farm in the Cardrona Valley. Eric became a Telemark Instructor which is cross country skiing.
1:06:07	Describes Telemark skiing technique. Talks about Skills Active – now called Te Maki Ako. Trained as a senior assessor and mentor (SAM). Two loves teaching and skiing in winter and photography and Search & Rescue all year round.

1:07:27	Describes learning new aspects of photography. Talks about love of Alexandra and its people and how much he enjoyed his work at Dunstan High School.
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End of File 01