

# A LIFE WELL LIVED

**SALLY MARKHAM MNZM**  
**31 AUGUST 1943 – 9 APRIL 2013**

**Youth Engagement was Sally's "big idea" and she has had such an influence on hundreds of young people so engaged and participating in theatre, dance and music that it changed their lives for good.**

Sally grew up in a family heavily involved in amateur theatre in Palmerston North. Her mother was an English teacher and incorporated drama into her classes long before the specialist role of drama teacher existed. She followed in her mother's footsteps and taught English and drama at secondary school level, eventually becoming a lecturer in drama at Auckland College of Education. A decade later she was invited to join the staff at the Aotea Centre (now The Edge) to revitalise the Community Outreach Programme. This is where her work really came to fruition as she knitted together her education expertise and excellence in the arts with the right of every child and young person to have access to and experience in high quality art.

When Sue Paterson was General Manager of the Royal New Zealand Ballet (1999-2006), Sally revolutionised their dance in education programme in Auckland. She took the themes of ballets such as *Coppelia* and *Swan Lake* and adapted them for relevant dance and theatre participation programmes in lower decile schools throughout Auckland. The students devised their own in-depth, culturally relevant interpretations and then attended the rehearsals and ballets as audience members. These programmes significantly contributed to the growth of new ballet audiences in Auckland as well as the understanding and interpretation of dance in a culturally meaningful way.

Ann Dewey worked with Sally for 15 years delivering and designing programmes for dance education. Through all of this time Sally constantly surprised Ann with her insight and passion for the art form. Ann feels that her gift for finding ingenious new ways to present ideas to those who held the purse strings was extraordinary. "Sally's powers to convince everyone that art experiences are fundamental to educating the whole person were second to none!"

While at the Aotea Centre, Sally helped develop the Aotea Youth Theatre which grew into Massive Company and also encouraged major hirers to incorporate youth and community programmes into their strategic plans. She was instrumental in the inception of youth programmes for NZ's major arts companies and came to understand the strength that dance had to communicate especially to youth.

In 2002 Sally invited Aotearoa Hip Hop Summit to take over The Edge venues for three days of celebration. The Summit brought together all the various aspects of Hip Hop culture including dance, music and aerosol art in mainstream venues. Despite political opposition to the inclusion of Aerosol Art, Sally's partnership with the Summit continued for a number of years.

When Sally left The Edge she established Markham Arts, so her passionate work continued especially in developing dance programmes in association with TelstraClear Pacific, now Vodafone Event Centre. Moss Patterson and Atamira Dance Company worked closely with Sally in *Dancing with Mythology*, *Project Light Bulb* and the recent major dance works *Rite of Spring* (2011) and *Fireworks* (2012) where he had the great opportunity to work with Royston Maldoom, the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra and some very



talented young people. Moss says: "Her great legacy is the way that she guided and empowered children, teachers, adults, youth leaders and professional artists. Individual empowerment and the delicate nature of allowing someone to unfold and to then realize their own potential was and is still the goal for the many projects she helped me and others to lead."



Sally worked with The New Zealand Dance Company to develop their Youth Engagement Strategy which Shona McCullagh says they are "delivering with great joy. Her work will live on with our company, as it will with so many organisations and companies she worked with. Her firm opinions, and great passion for young people's right to have access to high quality arts experiences has touched me personally, and many of my colleagues in dance, music and theatre."

Our hearts go out to her three adult children – Justin, Michael and Natasha. Natasha worked with Sally in Markham Arts and will continue the good work especially with *Project Light Bulb* in partnership with Vodafone Event Centre.

Sally served two terms on the Board of DANZ and became a friend and mentor to many in the dance world. She was ahead of her time as an arts educator and lived her life vibrantly and determinedly. Her work will live on and we will remember her in many ways, among them being the CNZ June Conference "Arts, By, With, For Young People" – these are exactly Sally's words.

"In world terms, Sally was a unique and visionary arts educator and she was a great mentor to many of us in the dance world." Sue Paterson

"I greatly miss the kindness and wisdom that Sally showed me. Her passing has left a big hole in our world." Ann Dewey

"We will miss her greatly, but know she lived such a fantastically exceptional life. She touched so many, many people in such a positive way. What an inspirational impact one woman can have." Shona McCullagh

"I found with Sally there was no holding back, there was always love and compassion and she noticed people and she noticed if someone wasn't OK and she found out why, and she cared." Moss Patterson

Rest in peace Sally. ■