

# Jon Finlay Dey

## 1955 to 2014

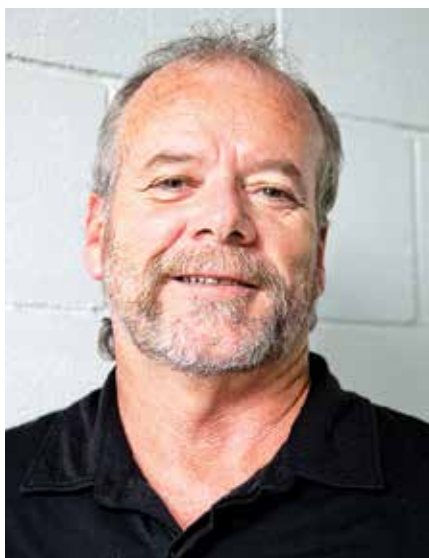
Prepared by John Schrider

Jon was a Southlander, born into a family of three children and educated at Wyndham District High School. He is survived by his wife Jenny, who he married in 1975, and three children (Leanna, Richard and Rosemary) and two grandchildren.

Jon's interest in forestry began in 1972 when he worked as a junior labourer for the NZ Forest Service in Southland undertaking beech cruising, indigenous forest harvesting, as well as exotic establishment and silviculture. After a break working as a soil testing technician at the Invermay Agricultural Research Centre he joined the NZ Forest Service ranger trainee programme in early 1974. In those days this was a four-year programme where the first year was spent at a forest station to experience the physical demands of forestry practice and cookhouse food.

In Jon's case this was at Ashley Forest. This was followed by a year at the Forestry Training Centre in Rotorua to attend lectures and learn about the more technical aspects of forestry, and two years back on station. The ranger training programme in those days was designed to prepare them for the management tasks associated with station officer-in-charge positions and it is here where he learnt and honed his skills. By all accounts he arrived at ranger school with a Humber 80, a future wife, and some maturity from his years of working in the forests, and he was a stable mentor among the other 24 young and wild trainees. Nonetheless, ranger school in those days was a lot of fun, more often than not requiring discipline from Forestry Training Centre principals. Jon was a friend and colleague to all the trainees that year, had an easy and balanced personality, and was always a good listener.

In 1977, he graduated as a forest ranger based in the North Canterbury forests of Ashley, Mount Thomas and Hanmer Springs. Here he spent time supervising and managing silviculture, recreation, harvesting, roading, and fire prevention operations for the next six years. In 1983, he joined the South Island work study team which in those days provided an accelerated progression through the forest ranger occupational class hierarchy due to these positions being banded over



two to three levels. His work study training and experience provided the grounding for his success in later years as a forestry consultant with expertise over wide-ranging areas of forestry practice. It is here where he developed his skills covering work methods and measurement, creating systemised procedures, management services, operations research, job costing and other industrial engineering techniques. The NZ Forest Service provided additional training for Work Study officers, and in 1984 he attained his award in management science from the Central Institute of Technology in Wellington.

Later in 1984 he was appointed as team leader of the South Island Work Study Unit, a notable achievement for one so young. He led a team of six to eight professionals responsible for improving organisational and operational performance and the delivery of operation training programmes for all NZ Forest Service forests throughout the South Island. Jon's ability to use his analytical mind and to research and apply new techniques to resolving problems and challenges, as well as to sell those solutions to users, was again key to his success later as a well-respected and successful forestry consultant. His interest in marketing led to him applying for and becoming a senior marketing manager for the NZ Forest Service in Head Office, Wellington where he remained until restructuring and corporatisation in 1987.

With me in 1987 he created a new forestry consulting company, Forme Consulting Group Ltd, initially to promote and provide industrial engineering services to the forestry sector in New Zealand where he remained until his untimely death. Jon's personal qualities, including a strong communications, networking and marketing focus as well as his solid background in forestry practice, have been a core component of Forme's gradual establishment as an important forestry consulting business in New Zealand. His broad range of skills contributed to the completion of many engagements and projects for a wide range of clients including major forest companies, manufacturers, government agencies, financial institutions, investors, wood processors and small woodlot farmers.

His diverse client base and the types of projects, including harvesting best practices, costing and escalation

indices, quality and management system development, forest operations and management auditing, feasibility and investment advice, operational benchmarking, forest valuations, provision of expert advice and information services, clearly demonstrate his wide knowledge and versatility.

Throughout the last 26 to 27 years, Jon was also sought after as a forestry consultant by overseas clients and resulted in engagements in Australia, Asia, North and South America, Europe and Africa, as well as a presenter at numerous forestry sector conferences both in New Zealand and offshore. Just prior to his death in May this year he spent three months in Kenya working with the Miti Mingi Maisha Bora (More Trees Better lives) project. Here he reviewed contracting approaches using work measurement and method study methodology. Jon's work stood high and will carry positively into the future there. He introduced new technology and systems and built the capacity in staff to manage these. He was genuinely interested in the Kenyan forest landscape and all the people he met there, irrespective of ranking or station in life, and made many new friends.

Jon adored his family and was a loving and caring husband and father and, more recently, an extremely popular grandad. There were two things he enjoyed the most when relaxing – fishing in the rivers near Hari Hari in South Westland and riding his Harley Softtail. He loved to share a good whiskey with mates, managing most times to keep himself under control in the process.

Jon contributed widely to the profession of forestry in New Zealand. He respected and valued the advice, guidance and reputations of foresters before him and he strongly supported the existence and objectives of the NZ Institute of Forestry, including the maintenance of the Institute's registration scheme. He was a Registered Member since 1990 and he contributed to the Southern North Island section, including the organisation of Institute conferences in that region. He loved forestry with a passion, was widely respected, unflappable, and good fun to be around. Jon is sorely missed by family, friends, and work and industry colleagues alike.

*Contributors: the Dey family and Sheldon Drummond*

## Lewis Arthur Skudder

Born Kawakawa 1927, died Rotorua 2014

Prepared by Dave Field

Lew Skudder was born in 1927, the year that the New Zealand Institute of Foresters was established. He became a keen and active member and was pleased to see it renamed the Institute of Forestry, acknowledging a wider accommodation of the various professionals and practitioners now involved in the business of forestry.

When he retired on his 60th birthday on 31 March 1987, the same day that the New Zealand Forest Service was disestablished, Lew was the acting conservator of forests for the Rotorua Conservancy, the most senior state field forester in the country. This day must have had mixed blessings for a man devoted to his work and his state employer. He would not have enjoyed this final year of his work because of his loyalty to the Forest Service, his pride in its achievements, his commitment to his field staff, and his concern for their welfare. He was justly awarded an MBE for his services to forestry.



Lew was not the sort to mince words or suppress his opinions. He wasn't renowned for long-winded reports or flowery letters, but his verbal expressions were clear and measured. He surprised his family and colleagues by writing some 37 pages on his life in forestry and he had strong views on the politics of state forestry and the conservation movement which hastened the demise of the Forest Service. His notes and a page on his membership of the Institute were a valuable resource for this obituary.

Lew's maternal grandfather worked with the Kauri Timber Company in Northland and his father in sawmills in the King Country, clearing bush for Taihape farms and in several sawmills in Northland. Lew thought his own move into forestry was 'a bit of a fluke' when he was invited to become a technical trainee in the State Forest Service, having missed out as a rural field cadet. His first posting was on