



CLASS OF
1954

Late Sir Terepai Tuamure Maoate (1934 - 2012)

Central Medical School

Qualifications

- 1954 - Graduated Central Medical School, Fiji
- 1955 - Graduated with Diploma in Obstetrics, Auckland University, New Zealand
- 1976 - Graduated with MA in Public Health, Amsterdam University, Netherlands.
- 1983 - Member of Parliament for Ngatangia
- 1983 - 1989 - Minister of Health and Agriculture
- 1985 - 1989 - Deputy Prime Minister
- 1998 - Leader of the Opposition
- 1999 - Prime Minister of the Cook Islands
- 2000 - Leader of the Opposition
- 2003 - Deputy Prime Minister
- 2004 - Leader of the Opposition
- 2005 - Deputy Prime Minister

A devoted Christian, community worker, traditional leader, and career politician, who for his deeds, was recognised with a knighthood by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The late Sir Terepai Tuamure Maoate was described as a fearsome politician yet a principled man who would stand his ground for what he believed in.

The former Deputy Prime Minister of Cook Islands was passionate about work and managed to also make presentations at conferences and seminars locally and overseas despite his busy schedule. He also had a passion for the outdoors and loved getting his hands soiled as he indulged in his favourite leisure activity - gardening, which he found relaxation in while connecting with nature.

He set up the Cook Island Golden Oldies Rugby, which he presided over until his last breath. And it has become a tradition to hold that an annual commemoration event held in Sir Terepai's memory.

Sir Terepai graduated from the Central Medical School in 1954 and he furthered his expertise in Obstetrics in New Zealand and Mastered Public Health in Netherlands.

Born in Rarotonga, Sir Terepai worked as a medical doctor on a number of islands in the Cook Islands before becoming the General Surgeon at the Rarotonga Hospital. He also ventured as a businessman and in 1976 became the Director of Clinical Services for the Ministry of Health until 1983 when he entered politics.

Sir Terepai was a traditional leader in the district of Takitumu under paramount chief Pa Ariki and held the chiefly title 'Maoate Mataiapo'.

THE KNIGHT OF THE PACIFIC

Following the success of general elections, Sir Terepai was elected to the Cook Islands Parliament as MP for Ngatangia in 1983. Subsequently, he served as Minister of Health and Agriculture, and between 1985 and 1989 was also Deputy Prime Minister.

In 1998, Sir Terepai became Leader of the Democratic Party and Leader of the Opposition. A year later he became Prime Minister of the Cook Islands. In 2003, he rejoined the Cabinet as Deputy Prime Minister and in 2009 he was handed an additional portfolio of Foreign Minister.

Sir Terepai served on many Parliamentary Select Committees since entering Parliament. In 2005, he was a member of the Special Electoral Select Committee, Special Select Committee on the Units Titles Bill, and the Chairman for the Property Law Special Select Committee.

Sir Terepai was also a recipient of one of the highest honours as he got his name engraved as one of the first few Pacific Islanders to be awarded the title of Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE) in recognition of his services to health and the public sector.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II bestowed the knighthood upon Sir Terepai at Buckingham Palace,

London in May 2007.

During his last year of life and having undergone diagnosis of prostate cancer, Sir Terepai set up the Prostate Cancer Foundation for the Cooks Islands.

Sir Terepai lost his mother when he was 10 years of age. Elder of two, he felt responsible to fill in his mother's shoes towards the care of his younger brother. Sir Terepai was married to Lady Marito (Mapu) Maoate and they had six children.

His third eldest son Teariki remembers his father as a man who was regally respectful and helpful to anyone who asked for his assistance as an individual, tribe, country or internationally.

"His philosophy was to 'do the right thing' and this was the guiding principle of his existence. He carried a *mana*¹ with him yet always such a humble man," Teariki says.

Teariki describes Sir Terepai as a strategist and at times to the detriment of his own position in office but always looking at what was good for the people.

"He had tales that none can comprehend. He coped with difficult circumstances with limited resources in his treatment of his people."

Nonetheless, nothing seemed to faze Sir Terepai, adds Teariki.

"I remember an incident when a loose tuna hook accidentally got hooked onto his (Sir Terepai's) foot. He calmly filed the barb off and pulled the hook through the other end and continued hauling his catch," Teariki ends with a laugh.

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¹In Maori it means integrity, charisma, prestige