

The Marie Clay Literacy Trust

11 Belvedere St
Epsom
Auckland

April 13 2007

Marie Clay

It is with immense sadness that I am writing to tell you that Marie Clay died in the Mercy Hospice Auckland just before 8am this morning after a short illness. Marie and her family chose to keep her illness private, and true to character, Marie continued to actively work, write and plan until very recently. Marie was 81 years but with such tremendous spirit, curiosity and energy she has never been old. She has accomplished so much.

For three decades Marie has been acknowledged as a world leader in research on literacy learning, child development and the prevention of learning disorders. Her early academic work as a child psychologist involved the observation and study of children as they acquire literacy. An outcome of this research was the development of reliable tools for assessing progress with literacy learning and these instruments are widely used around the world today. Marie's decision to focus on struggling learners and the resulting development of the Reading Recovery early intervention changed how the education community worldwide viewed these children's chances of becoming literate. There have been many other accomplishments in the areas of writing, oral language and classroom learning.

Marie is a great New Zealander who has left this world a better place. She exemplified the finest qualities of a scholar, teacher, writer and researcher.

In awarding Marie the first 'New Zealander of the Year' award in 1994 the judges described her as 'a person who had a dream of improving the lives of others, although never seeking personal reward or recognition'.

Graham McEwan
Chair