

MEET JILL WHITE:

My name is Jill White and I have been part of the amputee family for 58 years. I lost my left leg above the knee when I was knocked off my bicycle in December 1964. My parents Trish and Bill White lived in Bexley and raised 12 children. They were the best parents one could have ever hoped for. Dad owned his own butchers shop, grew a huge veggie garden and Mum was busy taking care of us.

I had five sisters and six brothers & when asked where I came in the family, I would say "5th from the bottom". We lived on 5 acres in Bexley Road in the house that was once owned by Leonard Cockayne who was known as New Zealand's greatest botanist. Our house was over 100 years old, had fireplaces in

every room, huge bedrooms, coal range & an outside loo. Mum did the washing in the huge copper. I spent my childhood along with my siblings climbing trees, building huts & playing back yard cricket. Our next-door neighbours had 10 children so you can imagine how we loved the outdoors. I come from a family who were so sporty and I spent many a Saturday watching rugby, cricket & netball. We also had a key to the school swimming pool so summer included lots of swimming. After my accident I was not able to play netball so I took up umpiring on a Saturday down at Hagley Courts. I was President of the New Brighton Netball Club and also took on the roles as Treasurer & Secretary when we were struggling to get a committee and also help coach their younger teams. I was also Assistant Treasurer of the New Brighton Rugby Club and was President of the Canterbury/Westland Amputees Society as well as helping with a swimming for the disabled group at Burwood Hospital.

In the summer I would go along with my eldest sister Nanette and my younger sister Lyn to watch Plunket Shield Cricket and to watch the New Zealand Men's cricket down at Lancaster Park. Not to mention in the winter I watched club rugby, Provincial rugby and the All Blacks play on the park. I think back on my life and realise I spend many, many hours of my time at Lancaster Park (I looked upon Lancaster Park as my second home)

I started school at 5 and attended Wainoni Primary School. We lived in Bexley Road right over the road from the school so as you can imagine there were lots of "Whites" at the school and to add to that, my oldest sister was a teacher there for some 40 years. I would regularly get asked by my Mum if I had homework and I



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would say no. However, as I was in my sister's class, (the teacher) she would also do me in and tell my Mum that yes in fact I did have homework. Couldn't get away with anything. After primary school, I went on to Aranui High School and at the age of 16, I left mid-term and went to Digby's Commercial College for six months to learn typing and shorthand. (It was what girls did then) After Commercial College, I then joined the BNZ as a typist. Over the years, I progressed up the ladder as a teller, telephonist & then supervisor. I also worked for the Bank as a Work Study Analyst and travelled to various branches throughout NZ studying processes and staffing. I was relieving in Retail Banking when I decided to take redundancy in 1995 and move on to something else.

I then started work at Signature Security as the Contact Centre Manager in their 24-hour Call Centre, then moved on to their sales area. When Signature was taken over by ADT, I decided that I didn't want to work for a company that was Global and the culture was not what I wanted to be part of. So, it was a time to reassess my life again. I applied to NZ Red Cross as their Meals on Wheels Co-Ordinator. Amazing job, managing & arranging drivers to deliver meals & with wonderful people who were always willing to help others. I still work for Red Cross now in their Contact Centre and love working for an organisation that makes a difference.

I think when I look back, being an amputee never held me back. My amazing parents never singled me out as being different. My friends also tell me that they never viewed me as an amputee. I remember I was on crutches with a peg leg playing backyard cricket with my sibling 6 weeks after I left hospital. No special treatment for me except that I batted more often than I fielded. The one constant in my life was the support of the Artificial Limb Centre, their wonderful staff and the encouragement they gave me when I was an 11 year old who had had a traumatic accident and had no idea what the future held for me. The Limb Centre continued to support not only me but also my parents who had never experienced anything like this before and my Mum always remembered Mrs Wyse (Amputee Society) for her kindness and support. So, I will finish this by saying how lucky I am to have such a great family, lots of friends and there is support out there.....**you just need to ask for it.**