



Kahurangi Iritana Niwaniwa Pukepuke Te Rangi Tawhiwhirangi

Iritana, born in Wharekahika 21 March 1929, eldest child of Matu and Winirangi Thatcher. Her iwi are Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāpuhi, Te Aitanga a Hauiti and Ngāi Tāmanuhiri. Educated at Wharekahika, Hukarere College and Wellington Teachers College. She married Porourangi Tawhiwhirangi in 1949.

Iritana began teaching at Waiomatatini School, and became a Māori Affairs Welfare Officer, Ruatoria in 1965. 1972 a move to Lower Hutt later led to the development of Te Kohanga Reo in 1982.

(From a Mokopuna):

“Nan epitomises the word matriarch, her accomplishments are many and she is held in high regard.

She inspired people to push themselves and is equally eloquent in English and Te Reo Māori. She dedicated her life to serving our people. Nan was always a loving and caring soul with a huge personality. I remember encouragement and positivity with reasoned advice and a sprinkling of her life experiences.

Nan has that magical gift to captivate you with stories and take you on a magic carpet ride as you hear her tales of triumph and despair.

As years passed that flame, the love and pride our whānau have for her, has grown and flourished. I feel privileged to have an audience with her, at whānau gatherings or alone. Money can't buy time like that.

We are blessed to be descendants of a power house of Māoridom, an icon in the resurgence of Te Reo Māori.”

(From a daughter):

“Iritana is stubborn, resilient and hugely philosophical in times of great sadness and pain. She lost her father and son within 2 weeks of each other. I overheard someone expressing their deep sympathy. Her response was; “Well, while I am suffering someone is being spared” This attitude enabled her to go on and make a difference in the world.

In all 'jobs' she has challenged the norm, pushed outside the square and gone against the tide.

Her 'achievements'- six children, mokopuna, doctorate, damehood, CEO.

More importantly she is someone's daughter, sister, mother, kōkā, nanny, and aunty to everyone. For her 'it's all about whānau – first, last and everything.”

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I whānau mai a Dame Iritana Te Rangi Tāwhiwhirangi i Wharekahika, Hicks Bay, i te rua tekau mā tahi o Maehe i te tau kotahi mano, iwa rau, rua tekau mā iwa. (21 March 1929)

Ko ia te mātāmua o ngā tamariki tokowhitu a Matu Thatcher rāua ko Winirangi Chesley.

He uri takiaho aia nō Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngā Puhi, Te Aitanga a Hauiti me Ngāi Tāmanuhiri.

Nōna e tamariki ana ka kuraina ki Wharekahika – Hicks Bay. Rangatahi ana ka wehe i te kāinga ki te kāreti kōhinehine o Hukarere ki reira noho ai mai i te tau kotahi mano, iwa rau, whā tekau mā toru (1943) ki te tau kotahi mano, iwa rau, whā tekau mā ono (1946). I tōna tau whakamutunga i Hukarere ka whakawhiwhia e Iritana ki te tohu mātauranga tiketike o te kura, arā ko te tohu Dux.

Nō te tau kotahi mano, iwa rau, whā tekau mā whitu (1947) me te tau kotahi mano, iwa rau, whitu tekau mā waru (1978) ka kuraina a Iritana i te kāreti takiura o Pōneke, arā ki Wellington Teachers College.

Nō te tau kotahi mano, iwa rau, whā tekau mā iwa (1949) ka moe a Iritana i a Porourangi Tāwhiwhirangi. Tokoono ā rāua tamariki i whānau mai i te tau kotahi mano, iwa rau, whā tekau mā iwa (1949) ki te tau kotahi mano, iwa rau, ono tekau mā rua (1962).

He kaiako a Iritana i te kura o Waiomatatini Native School. I whakaako tahi i te taha o Sylvia Ashton Warner.

Mutu ana ki reira ka hono atu a Iritana ki Te Tari Māori (Māori Affairs) ki Ruatōria i te tau kotahi mano, iwa rau, ono tekau mā rima (1965) hei kaiwhakahaere toko i te ora o te hapori (Community Welfare Officer).

Ka mutu, nō te tau kotahi mano, iwa rau, whitu tekau mā rua (1972) ka hūnuku a Iritana me tana whānau ki Pōneke, ki Te Awakairangi ki te pīkau i ngā mahi tumu whakarae o te tari matua o te Kōhanga Reo.

Kahurangi Iritana Niwaniwa Pukepuke Te Rangi Tawhiwhirangi is a worthy entry into Te Whare Pūkenga