

Michael Francis O'Neill
Life Membership Citation August 3 2013

In 1969, while attending St Peters College Michael was told, "you should play basketball because you are so tall!" This was the start of an outstanding contribution to basketball in Eastern Southland.

Initially playing for St Peters on Friday nights at the Baths, Michael then joined The All Stars Basketball Club under the leadership of Noel Kennedy.

Selection in the Eastern Southland under18 team quickly followed in 1971.

Michael continued to represent Eastern Basketball earning his position in the Eastern Southland Senior Men's team from the late '70s and through the busy '80s when the Association competed in the DB Southern League and entered senior teams in the NZBB 3rd Division tournaments.

During this time Michael's playing ability won him selection in the 1982 New Zealand Fire Brigade Team, and Most Valuable Player of the 1988 Dalgety Invitational Tournament.

Dedicated and committed to basketball Michael turned his attention to refereeing, gaining his New Zealand Badge in 1989. He officiated on NZ second division games, NZ age group tournaments and still continued to control local representative games and club ball.

When not refereeing, Michael's passion and knowledge of the game was evident when he undertook coaching roles for both junior and senior teams.

An energetic and enthusiastic worker, Michael served on the Eastern Southland Association Committee from 1980 to 1987. He returned as the Referees Delegate in 1992 until 1995. Ever the gentleman, Michael's sense of humour and thoughtfulness has endeared him to the basketball and wider community. Over the past forty plus years he has willingly supported untold fundraising activities, working bees and numerous projects for the betterment of basketball. Latterly, Michael was a vital member of the organising team for the Association's successful 50th Jubilee celebrations.

A loyal and inspirational member of both the All Stars Club and Eastern Southland Association, Michael's unquestionable evidence of merit is acknowledged by awarding him with 'Life Membership.'