

DID YOU
KNOW?

SIR HOWARD MORRISON



ROTORUA
museum
Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa
ART | CULTURE | HERITAGE

Famous Rotorua son - Sir Howard Leslie Morrison, was born on the 18 August, in 1935. He grew up with his family in Ohinemutu as well as Ruatahuna when his father took them all to Ruatāhuna, near Waikaremoana. He spent the majority of his secondary school years at Te Aute College in the Hawkes Bay and in his final year, he attended Rotorua Boys' High School.

After leaving school, he went to work in Hastings at the Whakatū Freezing Works. By day he processed meat, and at night, he sang as a member of the Clive Trio.

In 1954, Morrison moved back in Rotorua where he played rugby and entertained at social gatherings with his brother and cousins. As the group's popularity increased, Morrison moved full-time into an entertainment career alongside Wi Wharekura, Gerry Merito, and Noel Kingi. The Howard Morrison Quartet grew to be very famous entertainment icons. They performed to packed houses in New Zealand and Australia and released 13 chart-topping singles.

When the Quartet split in 1965, Morrison began

his solo career touring around NZ and overseas. In December 1981, his bi-lingual cover of the song How Great Thou Art (Whakaaria Mai) at the Royal Variety Concert before Queen Elizabeth II was released and hit the number one spot on NZ singles chart for a total of eight weeks. Royalties from the single, didn't go to Morrison. Instead, Morrison approached his neighbour and mentor – John Rangihau, and the royalties went to the 'Tū Tangata' youth development programme run by the Department of Māori Affairs. A relationship that was formalised with Morrison becoming the National Youth Director with the department.

Morrison supported many charitable causes such as the Ride for Life in 1990, a 45-day horse trek from Invercargill to Cape Reinga to raise awareness for the work of Life Education. Along the way he helped raise in excess of \$1.2 million.

In 1990 he was knighted at his home marae in Ōhinemutu for his service to entertainment.

He remained active in the local in the Rotorua community until his death on 24 September 2009, he was 74 years old.

FACTS

- In 1978 he took a break from entertainment and became a director at the Department of Maori Affairs so he could help young Maori people and encourage their education
- He established the Sir Howard Morrison Education Foundation which over the years gave out \$500,000 in tertiary student scholarships.
- At 1990 Commonwealth Games in Auckland Morrison opened up the event with a song called Tuka Ahau
- In 1989 'This Is Your life' television programme was filmed to celebrate Morrison's life
- The Civic Theatre in Rotorua was renamed the Sir Howard Morrison Performing Arts Centre

CHALLENGE

To become familiar with the special music of Sir Howard Morrison please listen carefully to his song "Tukua Ahau". Follow the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxTgGSIkQig>

Tukua Ahau

Tukua ahau
Kia haere noa
Nga puke i mamao
E hotu nei
E tangi nei
Te manawa aroha

Haere ra
Haere ra
Kia tuturu au.
He kupu haria e
Kia mau te aroha.

Let me be borne
On the four winds
Let my heart know the way
And never forget
The voice of my land
Or one moment of yesterday -
And my love, oh my love
It runs deep from within
the soul of the land
I'll always remember
It's here we belong
I'll never forget my love
Kia mo te aroha!



ROTORUA
LAKES COUNCIL

Lyrics in Te Reo Māori Hoani Tuhimata Keepa (Ngati Awa)
and English Mike Farell

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YOUR LEARNING!

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