

2022 WFRS World Rose Award is awarded to Fran Rawling QSM



Doug Grant, NZ Vice President of the World Federation of Roses presents Fran with her World Rose award certificate and medal. Photo credit: Liz Greenwood

Citation for Fran Rawling

The New Zealand Rose Society (Inc) has much pleasure in nominating Mrs Fran Rawling of Dunedin for the World Rose Award.

Fran became involved with heritage roses in 1997 after retiring from the teaching profession. Along with her husband Mike, they created their 5-acre garden 'Wylde Willow'. This has since become a mecca for rose lovers from around the world. It was here that Fran hosted, and convened the World Federation of Rose Societies (WFRS) 10th International Heritage Rose Conference in 2005 and the 1st National Heritage Rose New Zealand Inc (HRNZI) Conference and NZGT Conference in 2012. The Rawling's 'Wylde Willow' garden has often featured in newspaper articles and magazines, both locally and internationally.

Fran was the National President of HRNZI between 2001 to 2007 and again from 2010 to 2013. She was Regional Convenor for Heritage Roses Otago (HRO) from 2001 to 2005 and again from 2017 to current. Under Fran Rawling's guidance and leadership, The New Zealand National Register of Heritage Roses (Conservation) was formed in 2011. At that time there was concern for the steadily decreasing number of heritage roses being offered for sale by New Zealand nurseries and the danger of them being lost. The aim of the group was to record all old roses in NZ and to locate and propagate lost and rare roses that were no longer commercially available in this country. It was a mammoth task to compile the list from current nursery catalogues, old publications, public gardens and private gardens. The focus was on old rose families and species with a cut-off date of 1945. This work is still ongoing.

The New Zealand National Rose Register of Heritage Roses, led by Fran, was instrumental in the world for conservation of heritage roses. It has gone on to become the model for international conservation for heritage roses. Fran became the New Zealand representative to the WFRS Conservation and Heritage Committee in 2016 and still is in 2022.

Fran Rawling was the driving force behind the ambitious project for restoring the Dunedin Northern Cemetery.

In 2000, HRO as a millennium gift to the City of Dunedin, began this restoration project. Being the only Victorian Garden Cemetery in the Southern Hemisphere it was important to save the memorial roses planted by the early pioneer families on their loved one's graves as part of our history and heritage. Over 1500 heritage roses representing every family of heritage roses have now been planted by OHR to beautify the Cemetery and educate the visiting public. This is an ongoing project with more plantings happening every year. Over 50 have been added this year alone. After 22 years, Fran is still organising regular working bees, keeping accurate records of all plantings and coordinating many tours of the cemetery. This cemetery has become a must-see place to visit while in Dunedin. Fran also initiated the heritage rose plantings at the Dunedin Railway Station.

In 2012 Fran organized the exhibit at the Ellerslie International Flower Show in Christchurch. This exhibit showcased heritage roses to the public and resulted in a Merit Award for HRNZI.

Under Fran's guidance the Otago Heritage Rose Trail was formed. OHR members donate heritage rose plants and do the maintenance and hands on care of these roses. This not only beautifies the historic sites but also helps preserve these old roses and educate the public. This trail takes in the Dunedin Northern Cemetery, Dunedin Railway Station, Dunedin Botanic Gardens, Otago University, Glenfalloch, Columba College 'Nancy Steen Memorial Garden, Otago Community Hospice, Waihouaiti Public Garden, and Oamaru Goal Stables.

In 2019 Fran Rawling organised and convened the first ever NZ Curators Seminar with support of the National Executive of HRNZI. This brought together in Dunedin the curators of our Botanic Gardens, large public gardens and the National Rose Register Team. The purpose of this very successful seminar was to bring awareness to the Curators for conserving and showcasing our heritage roses in our public gardens. Also, it was to protect these historic roses from yesteryear for future generations to appreciate their beauty, form and scent.

Fran was made a Life Member of HRNZI in 2010 for outstanding services to Heritage Roses. The Rawling's 'Wylde Willow' garden was recognized as a NZ Garden of National Significance in 2012. Fran received The Nancy Steen Heritage Rose New Zealand Award for outstanding contribution to the promotion of Heritage Roses and in 2021 she received The Queen Service Medal (QSM) for her work for promoting and conserving heritage rose.

Over the years Fran Rawling has attended Conferences as a speaker and has submitted articles for overseas publications. She has travelled the country speaking

to groups about the need to conserve heritage rose. She has initiated speakers both nationally and internationally to share knowledge and plant exchange to help preserve this early NZ history of heritage roses.

Fran's gift and ability to bring people together make her an exceptional leader who has a vision for the future and the ability to carry these ideas out to fruition. Her driven passion for conservation of old roses takes those around her, under her guidance, to places giving them the ability to achieve the impossible. Francis (Fran) Joan Rawling is a highly respected and valuable New Zealand Rosarian who is deserving of the World Rose Award.

Written by Olga Yuretich Convenor of Heritage Roses Northland and past President Heritage Roses New Zealand 2016-2019