OBITUARY

Dr Joe Williams MBChB, MPH, QSM, QSO

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Te mānakonako nei mātou ite tukēkē ite ‘au ‘atinga taau i’akaruke mai
Mei te tiare taau i tanu tei tupu ruperupe ite akama’ara kia mātou ite akeikei ite oraanga
Te ketaketa ote taura tei tāpeka ia tātou, te ua manga e i ‘akamāro’iro’i ite kōpapa
Toou rima ‘akaora kia toro nā roto ite iti tangata ite au tuātau ki mua
Te vaerua maru, ‘inangaro, ‘ōrongo, aroa ete ‘akamāro’iro’i ite tauturu, ka vai tei a taonga e tuatau uatau
Te mamae nei te puku’atu e te tae nei te roimata ite aakoi atuanga i teia tamaiti Aitutaki kite ‘enua ānau
Kia ‘akatere atu ite kauinga o toou vaka kite pae motu ite rangi teitei, kia ‘akameitaki’ia taau I orōnga e I ‘akaruke mai kia mātou kātoatoa
E no’o mate maru ite Metua tāne Papa Joe Williams ki roto i rima o to tātou Atua a Lehova i roto ite rangiteitei

It is with the deepest sadness that the Pasifika Medical Association announces the passing of their respected and much-loved Patron Dr Joseph Williams.

Dr Williams has served his country, the Cook Islands, his community in New Zealand and his many patients for more than 60 years. He spent 25 years in the Cook Islands and served as Minister of Health and Education in 1974 to 1978, Minister of Health, Tourism, Transport and State-Owned Enterprises from 1994 to 1996 and Prime Minister in 1999.

Dr Williams was born in Aitutaki, went to Northland College, graduated from Otago Medical School in 1960 and later completed a Master in Public Health at the University of Hawai. He returned to the Cook Islands in 1964 and was the Medical Superintendent, Surgeon, Physician and Director of Health and Social Services.

He was involved in the World Health Organisation, serving as a member of the Executive Board from 1995 to 1997. In 2016 he received the World Health Organisation Award of Appreciation for his role in the elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis. He was recognised as a world leading researcher in eczema, prostate cancer and diabetes. He was a prolific writer and publisher. He most recently attended the WHO Western Pacific Region meeting in August 2019 as a member of the Cook Island delegation.

His political career started in 1964 when he was first elected to parliament. He held the Overseas seat for the Cook Islands representing Cook Islands people living in New Zealand from 1994-2003 and remained active in politics.

He held many senior roles in the health sector in New Zealand, served on many advisory
committees and led the establishment of many organisations including the Cook Islands Health Network. He established Mt Wellington Integrated Family Health Care Clinic which served over 15,000 patients who travelled from all over New Zealand to see him and continued to practice medicine up until his recent short illness.

He received the Queen’s Service medal in 1974 and was invested with the Companion Queens Service Order in 2011 for services to the Cook Islands community. He was recognised by the Pasifika Medical Association for his services to Pacific Health in 2004, was awarded a Life membership. He was appointed as Patron of Pasifika Medical Association in 2015.

Dr Williams was a statesman, leader, mentor, wise advisor to many, passionate advocate and strategist. He was generous, kind and led by example, living a life of service. We have been privileged to serve him as our patron and thank Mrs Jill Williams and family for sharing him with us and the community.

“Heis love, generosity and kindness has touched so many families, friends and colleagues. He has left us all with the gifts of his journey, and for that we are forever grateful.” Dr Kiki Maoate ONZM, nephew and President Pasifika Medical Association

Rest well on your voyage to the heavens.

“Akangaroi ete Rangatira i toou teretere atuanga kite nagai i akapapa ia ae e to tatou Atua”

REFERENCES