

# Community crusader deserving of award

By **PETER BINGHAM**

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THERE are no other George Fullers, according to Friends of the Park president David Medway.

“What George did to deserve the award is pretty different to the norm,” he said. “It shows a real concern for our community and environment. He is unique. I wouldn’t have done what he did and I can’t think of any others who would.”

Mr Fuller worked for 25 years as curator of the park and 20 years after retirement he was still putting his heart and soul into it.

“George has been a respected member of the Friends of the Park since its inception and we were more than happy to let him do his personal vigil. We supported him 100 per cent and some members were down there every day, but it was really his campaign.”

The vigil at the 400-year-old puriri tree was pivotal.

“Thankfully the need for campaigns like this don’t arise very often. He has always been to the fore with issues involving the park. This is the first time we have had to undergo a campaign of this magnitude in order to sort out what we considered an inappropriate development.”

Friends, with 400 members, was a

watchdog group ensuring the integrity of the park as a botanic garden and recreation ground was maintained.

“Modesty is the right word when it comes to George. He doesn’t seek the limelight, he is dedicated to his causes to the extent that it is not always beneficial to his health.”

The Friends of the Park formerly took up the issue against the closed mind of the racecourse bowl road.

“We know the story of that as a result of what the Friends did, what George did, what the engineers did and what the public did by way of supporting us. We got the district council, unusually, to change its mind and we’ve ended up with a road that is much better than it would have been,”

Mr Medway said.

New Plymouth Mayor Peter Tennent said it was most appropriate Mr Fuller received the award.

“George has made a huge contribution over decades to this community, particularly the park. I don’t think it was ever about taking on the council. It was about this community and what he believes what was best for this community. That is what George is all about.

“It’s a wonderful selection. There are 105,000 good folk here [in Taranaki] and you picked six beauties and it is most appropriate George is recognised,” Mr Tennent said.



**David Medway**