

## **The Giving Back of Giving: The Donors' Perspectives of the Caroline Plummer Fellowship in Community Dance—20 Years On**

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### **Abstract**

The Caroline Plummer Community Dance Fellowship was launched by the University of Otago on International Dance Day on April the 29th, 2004. The fellowship was made possible by an endowment to the University from the Caroline Plummer Memorial Trust which was set up by Caroline's family after her death on April 28th, 2003. It was under a Partnership in Excellence scheme that the University of Otago secured government funding to support the endowment and secure the future of a once-a-year six-month appointment of a community dance practitioner/artist/writer/person. This article examines the legacy of the fellowship from the point of view of Caroline Plummer's parents, Bibby and Tony, as they negotiated their lives following the death of their dearly loved daughter, as they sought to keep her memory alive through the fellowship.

## **Introduction**

The Caroline Plummer Fellowship in Community Dance honours Caroline Plummer (1978 – 2003), a young woman who died from a rare lung cancer. During her childhood Caroline danced, and when she began her physiotherapy degree at the University of Otago, she sought special permission to take dance courses as part of her degree. She quickly realised that her heart was in dance and in people, and she shifted her studies to anthropology and dance. Caroline studied community dance, dance education and somatic dance with Alison East, Sylvie Fortin and Ralph Buck. She taught and danced at a local school with her friend Davina Holmes, who then helped choreograph the dance that was performed at Caroline’s funeral. Caroline knew she was dying and before she died, she, her family and Ralph Buck began to create the Caroline Plummer Fellowship to maintain Caroline’s aspiration that, “dance be utilised in more and more positive ways to help us embrace the diversity and difference that makes our world so fantastic” (Plummer, 2003). Our article describes this unique fellowship and documents the specific journey of two people, the philanthropists, Caroline’s parents, who made it possible. Tony and Bibby Plummer were originally farmers who became viticulturists and then, after the death of their daughter added philanthropy to their list of accomplishments.

Tony has died since the completion of this article. His passion and drive to keep the fellowship alive is acknowledged here. Bibby continues her association with the fellowship. The authors acknowledge that this article serves to document the history of the fellowship. To respect Tony’s voice, the text remains in the present tense.

The research question underpinning this article asks, how have two philanthropic donors of the Caroline Plummer Fellowship (CPF) perceived the success/benefits of their gift to the University of Otago? In an economic era when universities are increasingly relying on philanthropic funding, and as Governments fund tertiary education less and less (Rowe-William, 2018; Sav, 2016 ), it is relevant to examine donors’ perspectives of what it means to gift money to Universities. Without an appreciation of donors’ meanings of giving, or an understanding of the process of negotiating personal and institutional needs and the outcomes/impact of that gift, it is to a degree, unethical for institutions to keep asking for donations. This article values Tony and Bibby’s voices and reflects on how they saw their gift.

## **The Fellowship**

Dance Fellowships or residencies are usually for short stays with remuneration often in the form of accommodation and/or financial remuneration to cover costs. In many instances the opportunities are for artists to develop professional dances, although residencies are offered where the artists are engaged to work within communities through participatory dance. The Caroline Plummer Fellowship in Community Dance is different, in that it offers a secure six-

month tenure with the salary of a full-time university lecturer. The successful Fellow may pursue their project according to their personal creative ideas for the fellowship.

The University of Otago has a long association with Arts Fellows. The Burns Fellow was established in 1958 as a premier literacy residency and has hosted such writers as Janet Frame and James K Baxter. The Mozart Fellowship was established in 1969 to aid and encourage composers of music in the practice and advancement of their art, and the Frances Hodgkins Fellowship was first offered in 1962 to offer the same opportunities for painters, sculptors and multi-media artists. The university also awards an annual College of Education Writer in Residence Fellowship, and this has been in place since 1992. With such a rich history in arts fellowships it was a natural progression for the university to embrace the idea of offering the Caroline Plummer Fellowship in Community Dance.

“Plummer fellows are expected to engage community members in their project” (Nwankpa & Bevill, 2019, p. 294). The fellow, however, may achieve this engagement in any way they choose. The very first Fellow, Petra Koppers, (2009) a disabled artist, wrote about her work in a Dunedin hospice, stating, “Together we created personal landscapes through movement, storytelling, photography and video” (p. 274). Georgina White spent her tenure researching and writing a book, ‘Light Fantastic: Dance floor courtship in New Zealand’ and Caroline Sutton Clark also documented community dance, recording oral histories of as many different dance styles and dancers as she could find in the city of Dunedin. These interviews are held in a collection in the Hocken library in Dunedin. Other fellows worked with specific community groups, such as people with cancer (Butler, Snook, Buck, 2015). There have also been integrated and mixed ability dancers, a project titled, more men dancing more, dancing with mothers and babies and working with visually impaired participants as examples. During the Covid lockdown period, Kristie Mortimer found herself stuck in Dunedin, unable to proceed. Her project titled ‘Dance with offenders, at-risk youth and children of offenders’ was to bring dance to the region’s correction facility. While she did manage to work within the system toward the end of her tenure, she changed the direction of her project to write a resource that could be used by staff within the facility. (Buck, Mortimer, Snook, 2022). Each project had its own particular focus While the limit of this article does not allow a full description of each Fellow’s project, everyone brought something different to the Ōtepoti (Dunedin) community. Community dance is not limited by technique, and (Buck, 2015) suggests, “Community dance may seem as an attitude; it is learning how to re-examine and value both the intrinsic and instrumental roles of dance, which are always connected and ever present” (p. 63).

### ***Community Dance***

Community dance is built around a set of values that should continue Caroline’s legacy without any need for those who were there at the start. Rather than developing technical

dancers, community dance, as suggested by the title, reaches into all areas of the community where people come together to participate in dance. A recent meta-analysis of the outcomes and pedagogies of community dance (Snook, Buck, Koff & Jones, in press) identified the following benefits for those engaged in community dance,

- Physical health and wellbeing
- Mental health and cognitive improvement
- Expression, imagination, creativity and inspiration
- Social engagement, collaboration, connection, friendship, caring for and valuing others
- Diversity and inclusion
- Personal development and self esteem
- Empowerment and identity (pp. 5-6).

Depending on the fellowship project, not all outcomes and benefits would apply in every case, however the findings in this study revealed that none of the benefits existed alone and they each affected other outcomes (Snook, Buck, Koff and Jones, in press). Further to these outcomes and of more importance was the pedagogical approach to community dance where certain values emerged that drive community dance.

*It's about creating an atmosphere where people feel comfortable. It sits within a framework that is designed to meet the needs and/or limitations of the participants, with an element of challenge. There is an awareness when conducting sessions that people need to enjoy what they are doing*  
(Snook, Buck, Koff and Jones, in press).

Traditional notions of dance narrow the vision of a dancer. Cheesman (2011) cites Albright, (1997) who states that, "Often the narrow vision of a dancer as a white female, thin, long limbed, flexible, and able-bodied privileges this type of body, reinforcing the notion of equating physical ability with aesthetic quality" (p. 17). Community dance is for everyone. Cheesman (2011) indicates the importance of social interaction as being a dominant feature of her community dance classes, "In this class we dance, play, and laugh a lot, and much of what happens comes from within as opposed to being imposed" (p. 39).

### **Methodology**

This qualitative study employs a constructivist philosophical framework (Fosnot, 2013) while employing ethnographic techniques (Williamson, 2006). Our research focuses on the parents of Caroline Plummer and for this reason we were concerned with their meanings and experiences; their hopes and dreams for the fellowship and how these had been realised, or not. A semi-structured interview process was used to collect data "to learn about human beliefs that are not accessible to observation" (Luhmann, 2021, p.245). Our study focuses

upon Tony and Bibby Plummer's narratives, the donors who made the fellowship possible. The narratives evolved as a story and as Mitchell & Egudo (2003), state, "the story becomes an object of study, focussing on how individuals in groups make sense of events or actions in their lives" (p. iii).

"Perspective is especially significant in qualitative interviewing where meaning-making is centre stage in the interpretive process" (Warren, 2001, p. 84). Our perspectives as researchers are grounded in an intimate knowledge of the Caroline Plummer Fellowship; for Ralph with the setting up of the fellowship and for Barb as the 2008 fellow. According to McConnell-Henry et.al. (2014) "To allow a richness or depth of data to be uncovered through qualitative interviews, a positive relationship between interviewer and interviewee is required" (p. 2). Bibby and Tony Plummer are known to us, and we have built considerable trust and rapport over many years. Ralph has attended annual meetings with the Plummers and other members of the fellowship committee to select the following year's fellow. He was the person that the Plummers turned to with any questions they may have had regarding the fellowship. They have shared a close bond. Barb shares the experience of losing two of her children with the Plummers and this provides a unique understanding between them.

We acknowledge that our 'insider research' (Asselin, 2003) could present problems related to objectivity. We have avoided making assumptions and have consciously reviewed the data from the interviews ensuring that we were not projecting our own meanings and assumptions onto it (McConnell-Henry et. al., 2010). However, our own voices are important in this study. We are 'involved' in this research and with the objectives of the research question we acknowledge that our critical voices will reflect our own moral systems (Carbaugh, 2009). We used a self-reflexive lens to create balance between the tensions and contradictions that may have arisen (Luttrell, 2000). To avoid any conflict of role, as the interviewer, Barb attempted to separate herself from conversations, speaking only to prompt, support, or answer questions. The interview questions were sent ahead of the interview and both Bibby and Tony were able to reflect on the questions and discuss them during the interview. They were also sent a copy of the completed article to which they added comments.

The method of storytelling has been used to document the experiences of Tony and Bibby Plummer, as they negotiated 20 years of the Caroline Plummer fellowship. Gallagher (2011) cites Arendt (1982) who describes storytelling as the way one trains the imagination to go visiting, arguing that it is neither a vehicle for 'authentic critical voice,' as some humanists might argue, nor a means by which one can postpone the authoritative moment necessary to criticism and action (p. 50). Within the narratives, contextual information supports the story. In this way the reader may piece together their own understanding of the unique outcomes of a philanthropic gift.

### ***The Philanthropic Context***

Greenfield (2013) states, “Donors have rights, beginning with respect for their generous actions” (p.35). The University of Otago is not a charity, and without the generous donation from the Plummers that was matched by the New Zealand government at the time, they would not be hosting a dance fellowship. Bibby and Tony are grateful for the ongoing legacy that the fellowship has provided in sustaining their daughter’s memory, just as they are grateful for what it has given them. Their involvement added a whole new dimension not just to the fellows and those whose lives their projects touched, but to the Plummers own lives. They appreciate the respect in which the fellowship is held both locally and internationally. “Philanthropy can be both a potent vehicle through which public needs are met and an instrument for the expression of private beliefs and commitments” (Franklin, 2006, p. ix). The Ōtepoti Dunedin community are having their needs met and with their private beliefs and commitments to their daughter being met each year through each new fellow, Bibby and Tony find enrichment through their giving.

“Philanthropy shares some of the features of political speech. Giving, in many ways is a statement about what is important and what matters” (Frumkin, 2006, p. 38). When the University of Otago values the importance of adding a dance fellow to their established and respected arts fellowships, the community in turn, value community dance. The Plummers gift to the University of Otago could be, as described by Duncan (2003) ‘impact philanthropy.’ “An impact philanthropist is someone who personally wants to make a difference.” (p. 2159). Bibby and Tony certainly wanted Caroline’s legacy to ‘make a difference,’ as Caroline herself wished it to be before she died. While not intentional, the Plummers have benefitted personally from their involvement in the ongoing fellowship administration and being able to assist in decision making processes. They have learned about each fellow’s project and in many cases, they have met individual fellows. Philanthropic actions such as theirs are uncommon (Cobb, 2002), in this instance simply because university fellowships in dance such as this one are uncommon. This type of giving can be considered as impact philanthropy in its purest form because both the recipients and the philanthropist benefit from each other (Duncan, 2003). It can also be considered as ‘New Philanthropy’ where the grant was made to support a fellowship. Cobb (2002) describes this type of giving as “grants that were made to achieve longer term financial goals – the generation of revenue streams” (p.133).

A focus group from the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (2022) researching U.S. donor participation since Covid, recognised that, “many participants described making decisions about charitable giving based on factors such as perception of need and knowledge of a cause, and as one participant stated, “So we just go by community-wise, we just go by personal level-wise” (p.11). This argument is supported by Breeze (2014) where 60 committed donors demonstrated that charitable giving is essentially taste-based, not

needs-based. Donors use their wealth, which sometimes can be modest and sometimes immense, to project their values, commitments and beliefs into the public sphere. In many cases the link between impulse and action is very personal and individualistic in character (Frumkin, 2006, p.2).

Philanthropic givers care about the cause (Commission's inquiry into philanthropic giving in Australia, 2023). The ability to make a difference rates highly and that the donors "feel good in return for their donations" (p. 3). While the givers care about the cause and making a difference, Anik et. al. (2009) suggest that "happier people give more, and giving makes people happier, such that happiness and giving may operate in a positive feedback loop (with happier people giving more, getting happier, and giving even more)" (p. 17). Bibby and Tony Plummer were not happy people at the time of their daughter's death, however they set about achieving a level of happiness by paying tribute to their daughter and in doing so have kept her memory alive. Through their gesture they would appear to have initiated a happiness loop. Hunter and Rowles (2005) discuss three overlapping categories of legacy "biological legacy, material legacy and a legacy of values" (p. 327). In the case of the Plummers philanthropic gesture, the legacy covered all three categories. Caroline's name and life story would continue, a material legacy was given to the university and the values that Caroline shared regarding community dance would continue. This legacy served a public purpose within the community of Ōtepoti Dunedin, a self-governing entity through the University of Otago (Anheier and Leat, 2006).

The Plummers commitments and beliefs were painfully personal as documented above. While they did not seek recognition for themselves, the fellowship's naming in their daughter's memory to support her passions and beliefs brought them recognition. While this was not actively sought, it provided some joy and comfort as they recognised their daughter's dreams being realised as they worked alongside others on the committee. They had hoped to initiate a targeted societal change where many people annually would experience dance in its many forms through community dance. This has been realised through the fellowship and its place within the University of Otago's arts fellows' profile. Ridzi (2012) writes of dissatisfaction around different expectations between board members, donors, staff and participants when accessing philanthropic grants to serve community needs. In the case of the Caroline Plummer fellowship, expectations were clear at the start, and all members of the committee have worked collaboratively together. This positivity has flowed on to each respective fellow where a freedom exists to pursue their project in their own way.

### ***Discussion and Analysis***

Bibby and Tony's words reflect on how the fellowship came about and how they felt about it

at the time. They go on to analyse what was lacking and what more could be done.

**Bibby** *I remember so well the day that Ralph came and talked to us about his idea of doing something. We didn't know it would be a fellowship, but the feeling we had was that this would be a wonderful way of keeping Caroline's memory alive, and we wouldn't lose her sense of vision and her enthusiasm. It also gave us a positive feeling that we'd be keeping in touch with Otago University and the people that she was close to, who we'd become close to, particularly Ralph and Ali. It was the dance department really.*

**Tony** *That first day Ralph came into Caroline's bedroom at the place in Heriot Row where we were renting and he just said he wanted us all to think about an idea he had. Instead of something like flowers, would we, (he was very delicate about how he raised the subject as he would be) and would we just think about his idea for a fellowship. I think he probably even used the word scholarship rather than fellowship as he had not developed his thinking at that point. But my memory is that when Ralph left, Caroline herself, at that moment, that very afternoon actually, sat down, and it was as if she'd been waiting for it to happen. She scoped something of her thoughts. Caroline would never have envisaged a fellowship. I don't think that word was ever mentioned. She was anti prizes, though she had won many. Caroline always thought it was the 'also rans' that worked the hardest so often, and I think that she was searching for some way to enthuse people to dance. She felt so strongly about dance being for everyone. And somewhere along the line, Ralph picked those themes up and developed them through to the fellowship, which is wonderful because the fellows are obliged to give, not just to take.*

Some important points have been made here. Caroline had a vision about the value of dance for everyone. Dance is so often viewed as something that only technical practitioners can do, and Caroline could see the importance of dance in a different context. As Payton & Moody (2008) state, "Philanthropy is about ideas and values as well as about action" (p.4). Caroline was passionate about community dance being appreciated and understood, and it made her happy to know that a fellowship would open doors for understanding and growth. Her values were clear. She wasn't concerned with the training of dancers to be outstanding entertainers, she knew what community dance could do for everyone who engaged. Ralph and Caroline's parents in turn understood the importance of her dream and followed through to create the fellowship in her memory. It was a way of keeping Caroline's vision and enthusiasm alive. This was important and in the early days, there was a great deal of enthusiasm. The Plummers valued their relationships with everyone involved.

**Bibby** *Those early years had a fantastic vibrancy for us. I think it was because we were working with familiar people and we all had clear memories of what Caroline is about.*

The current home page for the Caroline Plummer Fellowship in Community Dance (University of Otago, 2024) begins, “The Caroline Plummer Fellowship in Community Dance was established in 2003 and honours Caroline Plummer (1978 – 2003). Following an explanation of what is offered in the fellowship, there is a link to click on; ‘Learn more about Caroline Plummer’ (University of Otago, 2024). This takes the reader to a page where there are further links to The Person; Her Writings; Her Passions; Her Dance and Tributes. These links paint a picture of who Caroline was, and provide a clear set of values so that those applying for the fellowship may address them in their application. Marcela Giesche as the 2024 fellow stated on the University web-page that announced the current fellows, “I was very touched to get to know about Caroline Plummer’s work and her lasting legacy and support for the continuous development of dance in the community of Ōtepoti Dunedin” (University of Otago, 2024). This is unlike the other arts fellowships at Otago University where the names, Mozart, Frances Hodgkins and Robert Burns honour famous people of the distant past.

At the start of the fellowship, there was a considerable amount of ‘behind the scenes’ work that happened to ensure that the fellowship got off the ground and was sustainable. Tony reflects back on that time.

**Tony** *Clive Matheson who led the Leading Thinkers Project at that time really wanted this, really drove the idea. His enthusiasm moved the fellowship forward, in fact, he was the one who said, “Come on, Tony, get as much as you can, because I can match it dollar for dollar.” So for that initial gift we managed \$325,000 and the government doubled that up to \$650,000. It has accumulated with the CPI, to sit well above what is paid out. That fund is now 1.1 million.*

*Thinking back that first year, hot on the heels of Caroline dying, I spent an awful lot of time raising money from our friends and relations and people who really loved her, to add to Caroline’s life insurance. I guess we were the biggest single donors in that respect. But there were other very generous donations from people that I least expected. One I remember in particular that was totally amazing. I think the biggest share of anyone’s wealth that they gave was the wife of a guy who used to help us in the garden. He worked on the farm and had died before Caroline. His wife, this little old lady in Dannevirke, gave me \$5 and I believe that she probably gave a greater*

*percentage of her wealth than anyone else. Yes I was absolutely touched by that.*

A selection committee was set up with approximately 10 people including the Plummers, and the Dean of Physical Education, who was originally the chair of the advisory board. However, because of Ralph's close association with the initiation and ongoing management of the Fellowship, he was invited to informally chair the committee, until he moved to head the University of Auckland Dance Studies programme. He was the person able to maintain links with Caroline's philosophy the university aims and the dance community. Together they developed a business plan and devised selection criteria that represented Caroline's vision. Tony reflected on the first selection meeting.

**Tony** *It was late 2004 and really critical. Ralph actually scoped the fellowship. He said "Now look, I think we need to get the criteria of our selection right, our thinking right." We'd all read the applications and Ralph continued, "I think that over time we should aim for a balance of international and domestic fellows, established and emerging, gender, research and practice. Not that we've necessarily stuck to it like a religion. I don't think that any applicant has been measured against this. I think that there's been a natural balance which is great – but we had that in the back of our minds. He also asked Bibby to think of five adjectives that would describe Caroline and straight off, like that, Bibby did. And they've stuck.*

The other arts fellows at the University of Otago are generally accomplished writers or artists upon been awarded their fellowship. While this is sometimes the case with the Caroline Plummer Fellowship, the selection panel have also awarded it to emerging artists/dancers/choreographers/writers. This sets the fellowship apart as does the fact that it is open to international applications.

The Plummers were asked about their personal feelings, whether their expectations had been met. Tony replied,

*It's added an extra dimension to our lives post Caroline's death without a doubt. I would never have met you or the range of other people. Had you suggested that I'd be taking Antonio, a Ugandan dancer to dinner in Dunedin, who would have believed it? A Ugandan wanting an Italian dinner in Dunedin? We had such a lot of fun together.*

**Bibby** *We had no idea that this would happen for Caroline or any of our children, and the calibre of the applicants has been amazing.*

This remark refers to not only the death of their daughter and the setting up of a fellowship in her memory, but also the untimely death of their son James, whose area of interest has also been supported by the Plummers.

*What we must say is that while the fellowship has been set up as a legacy for Caroline, it has become our legacy too.*

The conversation went on to reflect on how community dance has served the community's needs. Both Tony and Bibby joked that that was a question for the academics, but they agreed to answer it from their own perspectives.

**Bibby** *Well, it's getting like-minded people together in a non-threatening situation. And that's huge. Well, I'm thinking of your project Barb, there'd be such big needs of anyone going through cancer treatment and to find other people going through the same thing is doing a huge service. You're meeting people who share the same problems through gentle movement. Gentle, yes. It was very beneficial.*

**Tony** *There are two types of community dance that we're talking about here. One is where fellows like you take a dance project to a group of individuals who may not normally get together and certainly don't get together in dance. Then there's the broader concept of how community dance serves a community. Surely community dance in the way I think of it reflects a culture, in that it's a natural expression of a community's culture.*

The conversation went on to discuss community dance in other countries where dance is often regarded as an aspect of everyday life and the fact that New Zealand has the haka and poi dances, embraced by New Zealanders. We discussed the recreational, social and artistic roles of dance and the places people dance, be that in a pub, in a hall, or in a theatre. We agreed however that there needs to be more dance in our communities. Tony commented,

*You could say that each of the fellowships has worked within a different part of the community, and those people have all been touched by their experience. There's been a spotlight on that little group, and people read about it or learned that it was going on. They might not have otherwise even known about it. Those people have friends and family that they talk to, so there is an awareness spread within the larger community.*

During a discussion about how well received the Plummers believed the fellowship had been in the Dunedin community they raised an issue that had been niggling away at them both. Although they knew that the press in Dunedin had been very positive in supporting the fellow,

they didn't ever receive copies.

**Tony** *It's quite an important issue in a way for us to get feedback. I think so, well it would have been then, but now that the dance department is just one person who doesn't have a secretary.....*

**Bibby** *Going right back to the beginning, we didn't see the press, we didn't see what was in the paper. But I don't know who would have been responsible for that - the people in the office?*

It is important to note that the Plummers do not live in Dunedin, they live in Blenheim at the top of the South Island of New Zealand. It would seem fair that they might expect an informal sharing of information related to the current fellowship each year. As Bosa (2020) noted, social accountability is important, and such follow up and sharing of press is personally meaningful. This could possibly be solved by bringing the issue up at a meeting, although this is possibly not on their minds when they are engaging with other committee members during annual meetings.

While the impact of Covid may have been managed by the fellowship panel through online meetings, for Bibby and Tony, they felt that this lack of face-to-face communication left many people feeling out of the loop. The cessation of the dance programme at Otago University in 2019 had also affected the Plummers, as their association with Ali East from the dance programme was lost when she was made redundant (Wood, 2020). While they were able to maintain a personal relationship, they no longer had the easy relationship within the fellowship knowledge. Ralph had moved to Auckland to head the dance program at the University of Auckland in 2005. He would sometimes be invited to sit on the committee to represent DANZ (an organisation to support dance in New Zealand) or to act as the Plummers proxy if they were out of the country and unable to attend. The Plummers; however, found that Ralph was the one person that they chose to discuss the Fellowship with, as he was there in the beginning and had an intimate knowledge and understanding of Caroline's and their wishes for the fellowship. The loss of the dance programme was a blow to the Plummers. This was due to a restructuring of the Physical Education programme from where dance was transferred to sit within a Performing Arts degree. It is from there that a current fellow accesses office space and support. Tony and Bibby appreciated the role that the dance programme served in 'holding' the fellowship. They share an underlying concern that the place of dance at the University of Otago may mean that the previous enthusiasm and institutional capacity may not be there. They would like to see Ralph have more of a role within the fellowship.

**Bibby** *We've lost contact with people post Covid. The zoom meetings are not quite the same, but its exposed us to a wider range of people and issues that we'd ever have expected.*

Tony brought up an idea he'd been thinking about since speaking with one of the fellows who spent the first month in Dunedin looking for a suitable place to rent.

**Tony** *I've always felt that we should have pre-arranged accommodation, the provision of accommodation, because it can be very hard for some people to find any.*

His idea is to have a place available within one of the University Halls of Residence that the current fellow could take advantage of. If they chose not to live on campus, then the accommodation could go back into the general pool for that year, but he'd like to have it available in case it was needed. The 2025 Fellow, Professor Carol Brown's home city is Dunedin, and she stayed with her mother who lives there. Tony is planning to go to Dunedin to speak about this idea regarding accommodation and generally discuss ways in which to inject some of the original energy and enthusiasm back into fellowship. He will also ask a question regarding what will happen to the fellowship when the university funding is diminished. Both he and Bibby reflected however that,

*None of us are around forever, it's got to learn to swim on its own and inevitably it might get a little less personal. Yes it probably will, which in reality is what the other fellowships are.*

### **Conclusion**

The overall conclusions that can be drawn from the Plummers' story is that they have been personally enriched by the fellowship that they initiated through their philanthropic gift to keep their daughter's memory alive. The name of the fellowship and the information available about Caroline on the University of Otago's website ensures that anyone applying is very aware of her hopes and dreams for the fellowship. All applicants address how they might reflect these wishes through their project application.

Both Bibby and Tony reminisced about the energy and vitality that was evident within the organising committee at the start, and how time, university changes, personnel changes and Covid have affected that energy. This has not changed the impact that different fellows are able to have on the community of Dunedin however, and for that they are grateful.

Since losing face to face contact during Covid and zoom meetings continuing since that time, Tony has vowed to go to Dunedin and speak personally with key people in order to share his ideas about accommodation and possibly discuss how to bring some of the old energy back

that was so evident at the start. There was also the matter of receiving information about each fellow's project, which will be able to be addressed within this context.

In 'The Power of just doing stuff' Hopkins (2013) states that "local action can change the world" (p. 11). If people are in a safe space and comfortable with each other, then perhaps at a Caroline Plummer Fellowship meeting, these concerns of Tony and Bibby could be tabled. While it is too late for Tony, Bibby would appreciate being kept in the loop. Discussions could take place concerning Tony's idea about accommodation, and although it is not possible to go back to the early days of the fellowship, discussions could focus on how to bring some of the old energy back.

The main feeling that emerged through the Plummers' story was the deep appreciation of all that they had gained since the commencement of the fellowship. They have enjoyed their participation on the fellowship committee and have formed deep relationships. This also applies to their experiences where they have met most of the fellows, often being present at a culminating performance. They have created a wonderful legacy for their daughter's memory and in doing so, have enriched their own lives.

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