

FORMER MAYOR OF NEW PLYMOUTH

DEATH OF MR. H. V. S. GRIFFITHS

The death occurred in the New Plymouth Hospital last evening of Mr. H. V. S. Griffiths, a former New Plymouth councillor, deputy-mayor and mayor. He was in his 70th year.

Mr. Griffiths was born in Thames, educated in Auckland and came to New Plymouth with his parents at the age of 13. He began his professional career as an architect with the Public Works Department and worked on the drawings of New Plymouth's present chief post office.

Mr. Griffiths began private practice as a partner in Sanderson and Griffiths and in 1917, after Mr. F. Sanderson died, joined in partnership with Mr. F. Messenger. In 1920, the partnership became Messenger, Griffiths and Taylor with the addition of Mr. W. Taylor. In 1930, Mr. Griffiths left to form a new partnership with Mr. W. N. Stephenson and later again with Mr. R. W. Syme.

During his professional career in New Plymouth Mr. Griffiths designed, and more particularly supervised the erection of a number of major commercial buildings. He also supervised the construction of the Pukekura Park gates.

Mr. Griffiths was first elected to the New Plymouth Borough Council in April, 1919. He remained a councillor and toward the end the deputy-mayor until the election of December, 1927, when he became mayor.

Mr. Griffiths was mayor of New Plymouth during the difficult depression period from December 1927 to May, 1933. He took an important part in the negotiations which led to the renewal in April, 1932, of more than £500,000 in city council loans which had fallen due. To have renewed loans of this amount under adverse financial conditions represented a major achievement.

WORK FOR RED CROSS

In addition to his professional and public responsibilities Mr. Griffiths also found time for an enthusiastic interest in Red Cross work. He joined the society as mayor in 1927 and became president of the New Plymouth sub-centre and the Taranaki centre in 1933. He held these offices for 14 years until ill-health forced his retirement from the society's activities in 1947.

In recognition of his work the New Zealand Red Cross Society in September, 1948, conferred on Mr. Griffiths the highest honour in its power, and appointed him a Counsellor of Honour.

He was an original member of the joint standing committee of the Red Cross and St. John which watched the welfare of returned servicemen of the First World War and when this committee was reformed during the Second World War he took his place on it again, serving his term as chairman. He made it his personal responsibility to welcome back servicemen returning to New Zealand, meeting them regardless of their time of arrival in New Plymouth.

Mr. Griffiths was also active in the Methodist Church in Taranaki. At various times he was a circuit steward and a Whiteley Church trustee.

Mr. Griffiths, who had been in retirement for some years, is survived by his second wife and by a daughter, Mrs. Olwyn Kidd (Auckland). His only son died on his sixth birthday as the result of an accident.

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