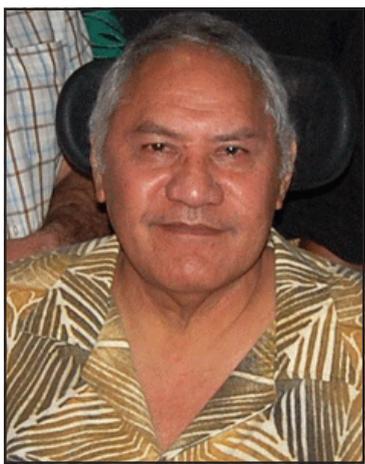




Newington College

Discover
what's possible

Newington Medallist 2011 (International) Mr Sitiveni (Steve) Finau (ON '66)



Sitiveni (Steve) Finau travelled to Newington College for the first time in 1956 by boat from Tonga with fellow student Kelepi (Gus) Tupou. Although initially unable to speak English he soon developed firm friendships in the classroom, the playground and on the sporting field due to his generous yet unassuming nature. He was welcomed, at weekends and holidays, in the family homes of fellow boarders, only travelling home to Tonga every couple of years.

In the Senior School Steve honed both his academic and sporting prowess and also passed the initiation of the senior boarding house. His warm and affable nature and genuine love for Newington won him admiration and respect. He inspired his fellow students with strong adherence to fellowship and the values that Newington espoused. He completed school in 1966 with an impressive sports record and significant academic achievements to matriculate to The University of Sydney, where he played representative rugby, his passion. He later completed his degree at the University of California, Berkeley, USA, majoring in International Economics.

On returning to Tonga in the mid 70s, Steve quickly became interested in local issues and government, business development, sports program development and education. He followed in the footsteps of his father, Lupeti Finau (ON '36) in becoming Chief of his village, a position he held with responsibility and pride. In 20 years of public service for the Government of Tonga he held the positions of Deputy Taxation Commissioner, Head of Customs Department and later, Postmaster General. He is currently the Executive Officer for Tourism Tonga.

At the community level he became involved in assisting Tongan athletes and was CEO for both the Tongan National Olympic Committee and Tongan Commonwealth Games Association and, in this capacity, was advisor to Michele Ford, South Pacific delegate on the Olympic Committee.

In recent years, Steve's passion for Newington reignited the Newington/Tongan relationship. With great support from the Old Newingtonians' Union, the Headmaster and staff at the College, the international relationship is flourishing once again as evidenced by the increase in the number of Tongan students currently attending the College through the ONU Tongan Bursary Program. To this end Steve is a mentor at Tupou College (Newington's brother school in Tonga) and is the ONU Regional (International) Council Member in Tonga. He chairs the selection panel for the ONU Tongan Bursary Program.

Sitiveni Takaetali Finau embodies internationalism and citizenship. His personal commitment to his homeland Tonga, Newington and the relationship between the two is of great benefit to the future of both. He understands Newington's capacity to offer extraordinary opportunities through mentoring and educating outstanding young Tongan boys; he recognises the potential for young men, like himself, to discover what's possible for themselves, their school and their country and return the investment many fold. In awarding the Newington Medal (International) we celebrate Steve Finau's outstanding contribution.