

OBITUARY

KEVIN SPRING (JUNE 1933 – NOVEMBER 2016)

Dave Brunsdon¹ and Peter Clark²

Kevin Spring was a widely respected structural engineer who specialised in the seismic design and assessment of steel structures. He passed away in Waikanae in November 2016 aged 83 after a short illness.

Kevin joined the New Zealand Ministry of Works in 1952 as an engineering cadet before ultimately gaining qualification as a professional engineer. He continued on to become a member of the UK Institution of Structural Engineers in the United Kingdom and of the Institution of Engineers Australia. He worked in London from 1958 to 1961 before returning to Wellington to join Struton Group, where he first worked with the well-known architect Ian Athfield and developed a lasting friendship. In 1968 he moved to Sydney to join Rankine & Hill, and moved back to Wellington in 1971 to join Brickell Moss and Partners, which subsequently became Brickell Moss Rankine and Hill. He was responsible for establishing smaller provincial offices in Paraparaumu, Levin and Palmerston North during the late 70's and 80's. This company became Connell Wagner in 1992, and he was appointed regional manager. Kevin retired from Connell Wagner in 1999 and joined Silvester Clark, establishing that company's presence in Wellington.

Kevin spent a total of 64 years actively involved in professional engineering practice in New Zealand and overseas. During these years, he was responsible for a wide range of structural projects and activities, including:-

- Bank of New Zealand tower, Wellington – he was the principal design engineer for the 30 storey structural steel framed building in Wellington and responsible for the steel fabrication and erection procedures. At the time this was New Zealand's tallest building and one of the first in a new era of steel-framed buildings, and presented several unique challenges.
- Newcastle Earthquake, 1989 – he had a significant involvement in the post-earthquake assessment of damage to buildings, and was specifically engaged by the New South Wales Coroner to report on the failure of the Newcastle Workingmen's Club. He was also a member of the NZSEE reconnaissance team to California in 1994 to study the effects of the Northridge Earthquake.
- National Bank Centre, Auckland – he was the principal responsible for the conceptual design of this prominent twin tower development on Queen Street.
- New Zealand Steel Sponge Iron Plant, Auckland – he was the principal responsible for conceptual design and structure verification. His involvement as the adviser to Mitsubishi on seismic requirements for the proposed New Zealand Steel Mill Extension saw him resident in Hiroshima for six weeks.



These experiences led to Kevin playing a leading role in NZSEE working groups that formulated seismic design procedures for reinforced concrete and structural steel buildings, and for the assessment of existing buildings. In recognition of his work in chairing the Committee for the seismic design of structural steel, he was made a Fellow of NZSEE, in addition to being made a Fellow of the New Zealand Institution of Professional Engineers. Kevin was also a long-serving member of the Heavy Engineering Research Association Executive, and retained his interest in steel research by being involved in the HERA steel research panel until very recently.

He took great interest in being involved with younger engineers, and this was very important to him. Not only was this the case within the offices in which he worked, he also volunteered his time to run night school classes for young engineers on steel design.

Kevin was well respected within the consulting engineering community, and was regarded by many as a true gentleman and a fine engineer with a remarkable passion for engineering. He will be remembered for his commitment to the training of young engineers, willingness to assist others and also for his particular interest, knowledge and enthusiasm for steel structures.

Kevin is survived by his wife Anne, children Sarah, Christine, Emma, Kevin, Nicola and Matthew, and seven grandchildren.

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