

# Maths dunce found his financial feet

## Old boy honoured

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The world of high finance was far from Sir Roderick Deane's mind when he was a young boy struggling with maths at New Plymouth Boys' High School.

The former Reserve Bank of New Zealand deputy governor told the Taranaki Daily News he was "well behind academically" and his teachers had to step in to "pull him up by the bootstraps".

However, Deane overcame that slow start to become deputy governor of the bank from 1982 to 1986. He is presently the chairman of the IHC Foundation, one of many positions he holds.

Yesterday, he was awarded the school's highest honour, the Alumni Merita Award, given in recognition of its old boys' achievements.

"It's super to be back. My memories of this school are very warm," the 73-year-old said.

Deane, who is also a former chief executive of Telecom and a former State Services commissioner, said his teachers were "just marvellous" at bringing him up to speed with his studies and preparing him for tertiary education.

He said he could barely score 20 per cent on his mathematics tests during his student years.

"The headmaster [John Webster] actually came up to the playground one day and said to me 'are you Deane?', and I said 'yes', and he said 'you're not doing very well'," Deane said.

So Deane was taken under Webster's wing and given extra maths tuition in the evening.

"I had two lots of homework - my regular homework from the class and my special homework assigned to me by the headmaster," he said.

The extra workload meant Deane had to stay up until the early hours of the morning completing it.

"But I loved it. It was nothing but pleasure. I adore mathematics. I was never really very good at it but I loved it. I loved it at university as well."

When he was at the Reserve Bank he was in charge of constructing the first mathematical economic model of the New Zealand economy.

"The mathematics that I learned served me very well in that respect," Deane said.

He said Boys' High had undergone a few changes to its buildings since his time but it still had the "same feeling" as when he was at school.

"I love the old assembly hall. In my day, we used to assemble in the old hall. It was crowded, you could barely move. The singing was just fantastic," he said.

Deane said it was important students did not underestimate their own abilities and must also set high standards for themselves.

"Don't be afraid of stretching your boundaries," he said.

Deane said he had always told his younger employees to concentrate on doing a "great job now" and to work on "building their talents".

"Don't be so worried about what your next promotion is going to be. Always be willing to take on new things," he said.

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