

## ***Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society Award***

### **Susan Parkinson**

Suva, Fiji



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Susan Parkinson was born in Masterton, New Zealand on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1920 and undertook her tertiary education in Nutrition and Dietetics at Otago University, Dunedin, New Zealand, followed by post-graduate studies in the School of Nutrition at Cornell University in the USA. These were war-time and post World War II years when food security was a key issue and the definition of nutritional needs high on the agenda. After working in the New Zealand and United Kingdom hospital sectors, she joined the UK Ministry of Food in 1946. In 1951 she began her long and illustrious career in the South Pacific, based in Suva, Fiji, as the Nutritionist for the South Pacific Health Service, with responsibility for 8 countries. When the Fiji School of Medicine opened in 1955 she developed dietetic and public health nutrition training and continued in this academic role until 1972. She then played an increasingly important role in Food and Nutrition Policy formulation in the South Pacific, with the formation of the Fijian National Food and Nutrition Committee in 1976. National Nutrition Surveys, compilation of traditional food technologies and habits, and Pacific Island cookery books made her an indispensable figure in Pacific Food and Nutrition and Home Economic circles, with an impact on health services, education, agriculture, tourism and economic development. She was involved in the establishment of the Fijian Home Economic and Nutrition Association in 1968 and the Fiji Dietetic Association in 1975. Her research on preservation of staple crops through fermentation attracted great interest at the 1989 Seventh World Congress of Food Science and Technology.

Her classic books “A Handbook of Pacific Island Nutrition”, first published in 1964 and now co-authored with Julian Lambert; and “A Taste of Tropics”, co-authored with Peggy Stacy and Adrian Mattinson, keep appearing in new edition. She has received various awards, notably from the Commonwealth Foundation. The Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society Award for 2005 is richly deserved.

With more than 50 years of her life dedicated to the peoples of the South Pacific (and 2 grandchildren!), she should be proud and fulfilled.

**Professor Mark L. Wahlqvist AO, MD, FRACP, FAFPHM, FTSE**  
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Immediate Past-President, Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society

