

## **Cop still getting a kick after 35 years**

STILL ENJOYING IT: Wayne Lendrum looks back over 35 years of service to the New Zealand Police.

Like any good detective sergeant, 35-year police veteran Wayne Lendrum prefers to be the one asking the questions.

And getting a straight answer about why he's lasted more than three decades in the Counties Manukau police is a tough interview.

Anyone who doesn't click to his dry sense of humour might think the 52-year-old is beginning to feel out of place at the Papakura CIB.

"I've always said I would retire at 55," he reckons.

"I don't want to hamstring the younger staff by having some dodderly old codger sitting at a desk half asleep.

"Half of my staff weren't born when the 1981 Springbok tour was on or the anti-nuke protests – I reminisce about that and they look at you with a vacant look and think, 'What's the old codger on about?'"

Mr Lendrum will soon celebrate 35 years of service with 12 of his January 1974 graduating class who are still in the police.

But he gives the impression he could keep doing the job for many years yet, and "still gets a kick out of it".

He says his young team is brilliant, enthusiastic and "easy to lead".

And besides, there's not much else he could do.

"I was going to be in the air force but I didn't have the 99 percent in physics, maths and English, so nothing apart from police work bit me.

"But I don't actually know what I'm going to do after that – I'll probably have to get a real job."

Working for the police has let him do "lots of stuff" he'd never have done otherwise.

"But a lot of it is good for the police but useless for anything else," he says.

"I know how to investigate a homicide and go to post-mortems, but there's not many lines of work in which you can do that sort of thing."

Mr Lendrum says police work has always appealed to him since visiting his uncle who was a sole-charge officer at Woodville in the Manawatu.

But the community atmosphere of a small rural town was quite different from Otahuhu where he spent his first year walking the beat.

"You didn't get into a car when you were junior back then," he notes.

Walking the beat was a good way to get to know your town.

"You had to know all the backstreets, the nooks and crannies and you knew who was supposed to be around in the neighbourhood.

"You could just about get from one end of Otahuhu to the other on the roofs.

"You could see everything and hear everything."

He says his job took a different turn in the 1980s with protests stretching police resources and new laws making it tougher to deal with drunk and disorderly behaviour.

But his work now is mostly combating the drug trade in his native Papakura.

His family life hasn't suffered. He's been an active member of his two daughters' school life as board of trustees member at both Papakura Central School and Red Hill School.

Policing is a Lendrum family affair. His younger brother Gary is a

detective senior sergeant with the Manurewa CIB.

Although Gary holds a higher rank, Wayne says their mother still sorts out any disputes between them.

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