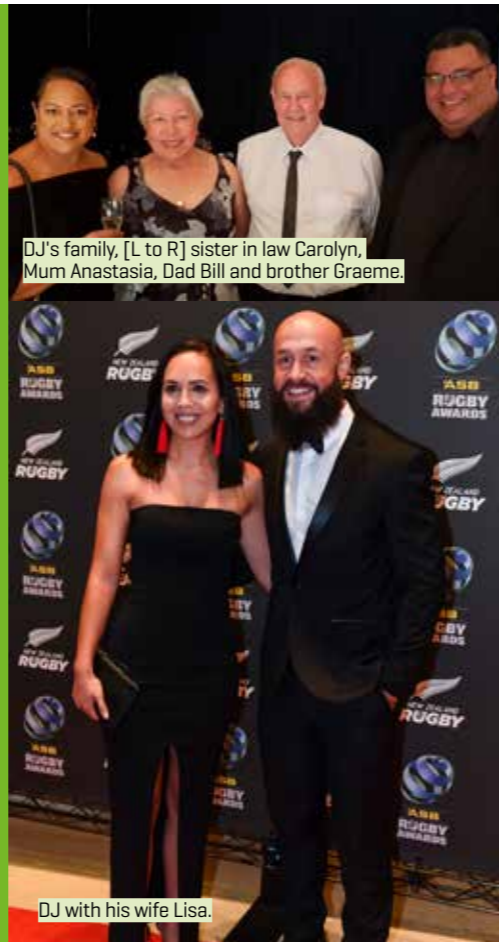


PLAYER RECOGNITION



SEVENS ICON DJ FORBES WAS HONoured BY HIS PEERS WHEN HE WAS AWARDED THE PRESTIGIOUS KIRK AWARD FOR RECOGNITION OF HIS OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO HIS FELLOW PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS AT THE 2017 ASB RUGBY AWARDS IN AUCKLAND.

When presented the award by New Zealand Rugby Players' Board Member Tammi Wilson Uluinayau, a quadruple New Zealand sporting international herself, Forbes said: "It was definitely a surprise, I wasn't expecting that. It is an honour for people to know what I am trying to achieve off the field, and I would like to thank Rob and the Players' Association and my family, friends and those who I have played with for all of their support."

His mother, Anastasia Forbes, shed tears of joy as her son received the first of two awards for the evening, with the second being the Richard Crawshaw Memorial All Blacks Sevens Player of the Year award. "I am so proud of him

"DJ signifies what true leadership is, on and off the field. I have admired his contribution for many years and truly appreciate the desire and drive he has for the welfare of players and the game." DAVID KIRK MBE

because he has been a good son. He tries hard and doesn't say much. I was so touched to be a part of tonight and thank the Lord for our blessings."

DJ's brother Graeme echoed his mother's comments: "DJ is a quiet achiever, he just goes about things. He is a good man and a good family man so we are very proud of him."

Forbes not only led the team on the field but took a lead role off the field during a period of significant evolution in the Sevens game. He achieved legendary status in the game for his on-field leadership, world record tournament appearances and consistently high level of performance. However, it is his off-field leadership contribution that was predominantly recognised through the

Players' Association award.

NZRPA Chairman David Kirk MBE, whom the award is named after, said: "DJ signifies what true leadership is, on and off the field. I have admired his contribution for many years and truly appreciate the desire and drive he has for the welfare of players and the game."

The highly respected and iconic player has been an extremely valuable conduit and voice for the players throughout his career. He has been a strong advocate for the development of the women's Sevens game, the sport's inclusion in the Olympics, the significantly improved player welfare standards on the Sevens World Series and athletes' wellbeing on a global scale.

A player who has had a long and close

association with Forbes, former Sevens team mate and close friend Tim Mikkelson said "DJ is a great man on and off the field. He led by example for over 10 years, influencing others by being a role model and always showing his passion for the jersey."

Forbes' incredible on-field career has seen him become the most-capped player in world Sevens rugby history, playing in a record 89 World Series games, and scoring 153 tries. He captained his side to gold at the Commonwealth Games and the World Rugby Sevens World Cup and has won multiple awards including the International Sevens Player of the Year and the Richard Crawshaw Memorial Trophy for New Zealand Sevens player of the year a record three times.

He also captained the Counties Manukau Steelers and led them to promotion into the Premiership competition.

Tim Nanai-Williams who played with Forbes in the Steelers and recently made a presentation on behalf of the team to their former captain said: "DJ is a very special person. He is selfless and epitomises what, as players, we aspire to. He is a class act all round and his legacy extends so much further than what he did on the field."

New Zealand Rugby Players' Association CEO Rob Nichol has greatly valued Forbes' input into player representation and stated: "DJ's support and passion for athlete wellbeing has seen him contribute as part of the New Zealand Rugby Players' Association Board and as part of the International Rugby Players' Association Player Advisory Group. He has constantly strived to create positive environments and platforms, through the Collective Agreement negotiations and the players' Personal Development Programme. He wants to see players thrive, on and



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importantly off the field. His deep thinking and intellect has been appreciated by all those who have had the privilege of working with him."

Forbes is currently completing a Master's degree, which will see him working across multiple sports to examine the attributes and behaviours elite athletes value most highly in coaches, a piece of work that will once again provide valuable insight that will advance player welfare and, potentially, coach performance and understanding.

DJ is a proud family man, a man of faith committed to his community who also happens to be one of the world's most well-known and respected Sevens players.

DJ's wife Lisa, who attended the ASB Rugby Awards with him said "It is very special that he is getting recognised for this achievements from his peers. He is very humble and would never expect anything like this from the players. He has always wanted to contribute and improve circumstances for players. He always wants to give back to the game and has a strong desire to continue to do this moving forward with a view to coaching Sevens.

"We have built life-long friendships through our rugby family and for this and the

opportunities we have had through the game we are extremely grateful. As a family we are so proud of him, he is a wonderful father, husband and role model but after so many years of travelling it is lovely to have him home."

AWARD HISTORY

The NZRPA Kirk Award was established in 2005 and named after NZRPA founding chairman and former All Black captain David Kirk MBE. Kirk, a medical doctor, Rhodes Scholar and former parliamentary advisor, led the All Blacks to their first Rugby World Cup title in 1987.

Previous recipients include Conrad Smith, Richie McCaw and Tana Umaga for their off-field roles in helping establish the commercial and employment partnership between the players and the game's administrators that has underpinned the professional rugby environment and achievements ever since. The 2016 recipient was former long-serving NZRPA Board Member, Super Rugby centurion and Northland stalwart Justin Collins.