

Having held a wealth of positions in coaching, administration, umpiring and High Performance in New Zealand, it is not surprising that Leigh Gibbs has been recognised for her contribution to the sport.

Her “people-first” approach has always been to the fore, no matter the netball role she is filling, and Leigh has focussed on creating and contributing to positive cultures in whichever organisation she has worked for.

Those who have crossed paths with Leigh – whether on or off the netball court – speak highly about her love of the sport and desire to foster the game at all levels. From the pinnacles of growing the game at the elite level, Leigh has more recently returned to nurturing the game at a community level.

She was known as a hard-working midcourter with a demanding fitness regime and strong work ethic during her playing years, and she continued the work ethic off court where she has always looked to upskill and challenge herself in various environments – often to the benefit of netball.

Leigh’s long association with World Netball stretches back to the 1979 World Tournament where she was a member of the Silver Ferns team who were joint winners. Gibbs played at three World Cups, 1979 (Trinidad & Tobago), 1983 (Singapore) and 1987 (Glasgow) and is a two-time World Cup Gold Medallist winning jointly in 1979 with Australia and Trinidad & Tobago and then captaining the Silver Ferns as outright Gold Medallists in Glasgow in 1987.

Gibbs also coached the Silver Ferns at the 1995 Birmingham World Cup (Bronze Medal) and then as Silver Ferns Assistant Coach in 2003 (Gold Medal) and in 2007 (Silver Medal). Gibbs was Silver Ferns Assistant Coach at the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester (Silver Medal) and 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne (Gold Medal).

Gibbs served on the World Netball Rules Panel between 2009 and 2017 and also the WN Coaching Panel between 2009 and 2011.

She has been involved in most facets of the game, but Leigh’s focus has always been to add value and improve the sport whilst empowering women and enriching lives across Netball in New Zealand and across all her World Netball roles.

In 2001, her services to netball were awarded when she was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) and she has also been inducted into the New Zealand Sports Hall of Fame alongside her New Zealand team-mates who won the World Tournament in Scotland in 1987.

In 2011, Leigh was given a Netball New Zealand Service Award and six years later she was made the 32nd honorary Life Member of Netball New Zealand in 2017.

She is highly regarded in netball – as a player, coach, and administrator who always has the best interest of the sport in mind.