

# Nuke fighter bows out with victory

By YVONNE MARTIN

**H**AROLD EVANS, the 80-year-old retired magistrate credited with initiating the drive for a World Court ruling on nuclear weapons, has had enough.

He resigned from the Bench in April, 1977 due to deafness, but life in the last two decades has not come remotely close to retirement.

In 1987, Mr Evans drafted a 100-page letter firstly to the Labour Government, then the members of the United Nations, calling for the International Court of Justice to rule on the legality of nuclear weapons.

Nearly a decade of global lobbying later, the World Court has returned a non-binding ruling that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be unlawful.

However, it stopped short on ruling whether a state could lawfully use them in self-defence.

A world away in Christchurch, Mr Evans and 30 of his peace movement friends crammed around a television set to hear the ruling.

They were euphoric when the news arrived in the early hours of Tuesday morning.

"I never dreamed that it would be a short job. Once I started I realised it was a very good cause and I didn't want to let up."

"I think everyone felt, just listening to the words that had come from the court, we had made a step forward. And it really is a great step forward on the basis of what we know at the present time."

Mr Evans said he will wait until he reads the opinions of the judges before he analyses the value of the court's decision and its implications for world peace.

Reflecting on the victory in his Cashmere home, Mr Evans said

one of the best pieces of advice given to people in the peace movement is "think globally, act locally".

And it was the encouragement from other peace workers that kept him going — from writing letters to representing New Zealand in international forums.

His initiative was picked up by the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and the International Peace Bureau.

The movement became known as the World Court Project.

But now retirement is top of Mr Evans' agenda. He won't be taking on any fresh campaigns to solve the globe's problems. He is feeling the symptoms of battle fatigue.

The last campaign had its personal costs, he said. Among them were the joys he had hoped for in retirement, like playing the piano, long walks and tending the garden.

He feels he neglected his family of four along the way. His wife, Jutta, died four years ago.

## Sadness

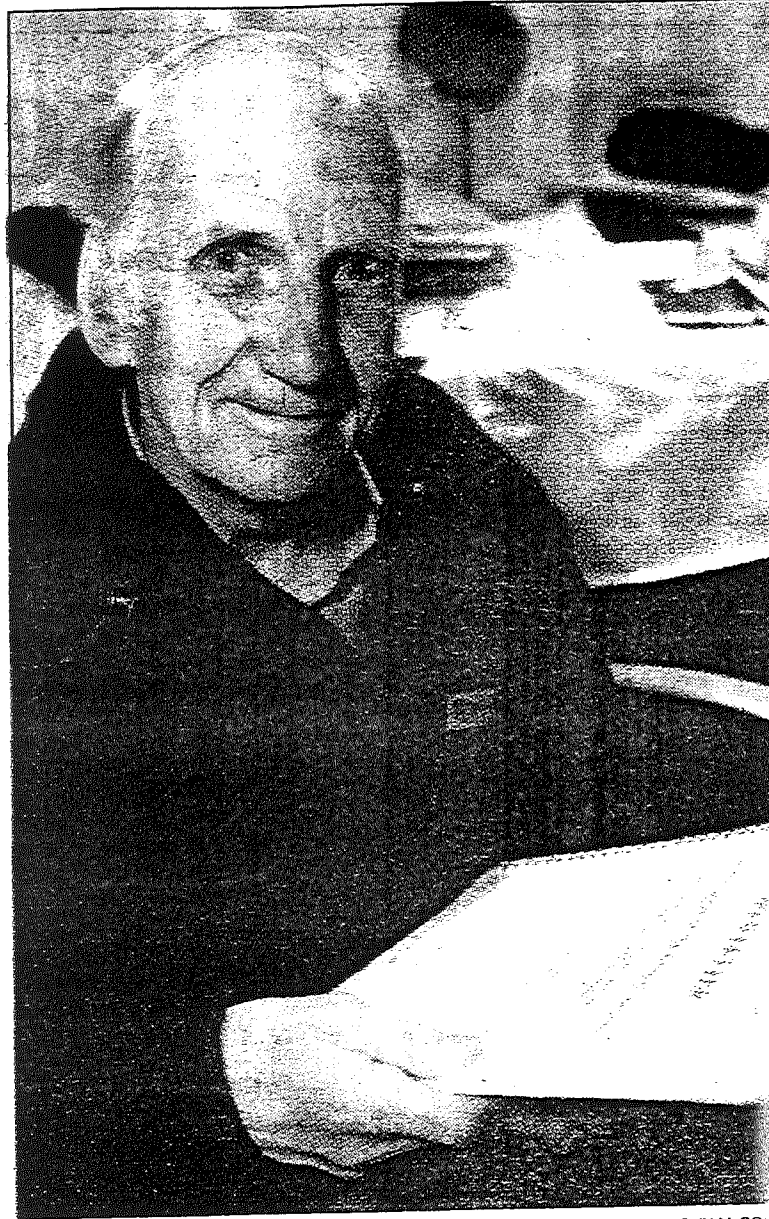
The World Court triumph was also tinged with sadness for other reasons. From the outset, the project had been a group effort involving six international jurists he called his "six wise men".

Of them, three never lived to hear the outcome.

Two of them, former Ombudsman Sir Guy Powles and former Australian judge Edward St John, both died on October 24, 1994.

And a third, Niall McDermot, the former secretary-general of the International Commission of Jurists, died last February.

And it was these men he was thinking about most when listening to the words of the World Court.



JOHN MCCOY

## EUPHORIC . . . years of fighting paid off for Harold Evans

If he does not get distracted by another good cause, Mr Evans will be bowing out from a long and often controversial career.

He served in the Air Force in Scotland and England during World War II, then as a legal associate at the Tokyo war criminal trials in 1946-48.

The experiences put him off war for life.

As a magistrate in Christchurch in 1967 he discharged without conviction two men on homosexuality charges because he considered the law behind the times. At that stage the offence was usually punished by imprisonment or a hefty fine.

The Supreme Court disagreed with him and reversed his decision.