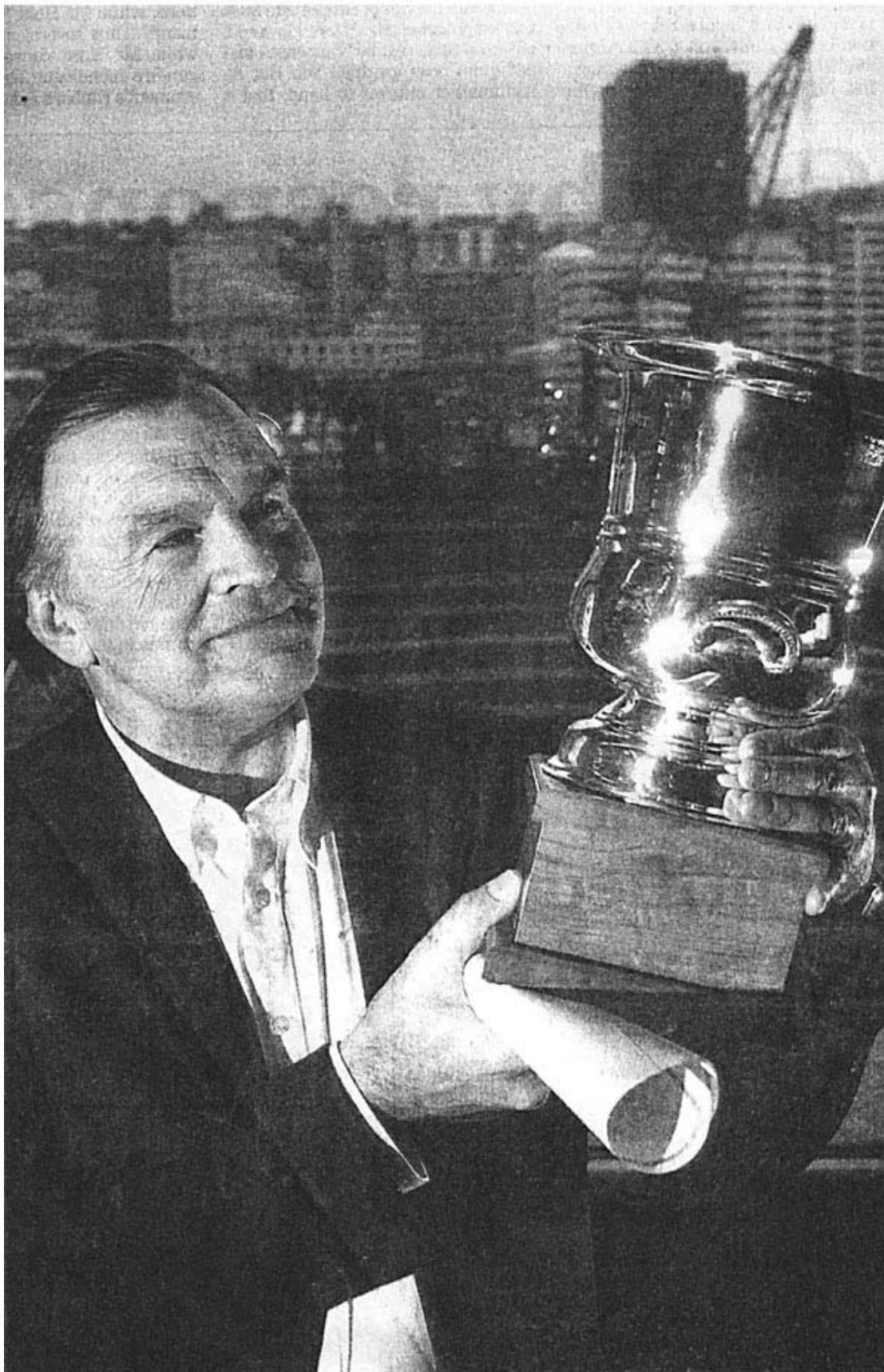


# People's champion honoured



A LAW lecturer and barrister who has won substantial cash awards on behalf of hundreds of accident compensation claimants was named 2002 Wellingtonian of the Year last night.

John Miller, 57, of Kelburn, was awarded the title at a ceremony at Te Papa. His daughter, runner Melissa Moon, won the sport category last year.

He said he was astounded by the win, which he said could have gone to many others. "It's like those beauty contests when you see the winner and you think there are thousands of people just as attractive." He was one of 13 finalists.

The *Dominion Post's* managing editor, Tim Pankhurst, said the Scotland-born lawyer and Victoria University lecturer "gives the law fraternity a good name".

Mr Miller specialises in cases where claimants entitled to redress have been rejected by ACC, and he has been instrumental in changing accident compensation law.

"He works for little or no reward — he was chuffed when he once got a pot of honey, and from another claimant a supply of handmade soap," Mr Pankhurst said.

Among cases to benefit from Mr Miller's work are:

□ Families who won the right to 24-hour care for seriously-injured relatives.

□ An HIV-positive mother and son who won ACC cover. She contracted the condition from her husband who was given an infected blood transfusion.

□ 278 incapacitated pensioners whose payments were restored after age-qualifying rules were lowered and their entitlements cancelled.

□ A man who could barely stand, and with other ailments, who had his entitlements restored after ACC stopped weekly payments, ruling that he should set himself up as a fitness trainer.

The awards, in their 14th year, honour Wellingtonians who have made a difference.

Finalists (winners' names first) were: Arts — Kim Wicksteed, Jim Moriarty, Neal Palmer; Community service — John Miller, Margaret Faulkner, Chris Morley-Hall; Business — David Haynes, Mieke Cains; Youth — Dai Phonevilay, Marilyn Heud; Sport — Jonathan Wyatt, Wayne Hemi, Rodney So'olalo.

**People's lawyer:** *Dominion Post* 2002 Wellingtonian of the Year John Miller with his trophy last night at Te Papa. The law lecturer was nominated for his community service.

Picture: ROB KITCHIN

See A DIFFERENCE A11