

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 1999.12.31.b

DATE: Friday December 31, 1999

LOCATION: The incident took place at Oreti Beach, South Island, New Zealand.

NAME: Jennifer McDowell

DESCRIPTION: She is a 13-year-old female.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Third Quarter, December 30, 1999



NARRATIVE: Two girls, Jennifer McDowell and Genna Hayward, were swimming and Tim Wild was surfing when the incidents took place. There was some confusion about what sea animal had attacked the three teens. Some speculated that it might have been a seal or sealion but Hayward said it was a shark.

INJURY: The flexor muscle and tendon of McDowell's left forearm were lacerated.

TREATMENT: McDowell was admitted to Southland Hospital in Invercargill. Her injury required more than 60 stitches to repair and she underwent scar revision of her left forearm on August 6, 2002.

SPECIES INVOLVED: It was thought that the incident involved a broadnose sevengill shark, a species common in the area.

SOURCES: The Otago Daily Times, Sunday January 2, 2000, page 3; Waikato Times, February 5, 2000;

The Southland Times, February 5, 2010,

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/southland-times/news/3295461/Similar-shark-victim-advises-persistence>

Stuff.co.nz, December 4, 2014,

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/63848338/Shark-bite-inspires-career>

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Richard D. Weeks, GSAF

Sea Attack Puzzling

Wellington: An Invercargill teenager was recovering in Southland Hospital yesterday after being attacked by a "mystery" sea creature while swimming on Friday.

Jennifer McDowell (13) had a chunk of flesh, about 15cm long, torn from her arm by a sea creature while swimming at Oreti Beach.

The attack also left Jennifer's friend, Genna Hayward (13), with a cut to her hand and Tim Wild (16), who was surfing, with six puncture wounds to his leg.

Confusion surrounds what it was that attacked the girls.

Genna believes it was a shark, but others said it could be a seal or sea lion. –NZPA

SOURCE: The Otago Daily Times, Sunday January 2nd 2000, page 3
(Source: Dunedin Public Library)

Similar shark victim advises persistence

Southlander and shark attack victim has lent her support and advice to a young teen who was bitten by a shark this week.

Jenny McDowell, now living in South Africa, was 13 when she was attacked by a shark at Oreti Beach on New Year's Eve in 1999. She had been swimming at the beach with friends when a broadnose shark bit her left arm. The bite went through to the bone and severed her ulna artery.

In an email, Ms McDowell said she wished Lydia Ward good luck in her recovery.

Lydia, 14, was bitten by a shark this week while swimming at Oreti Beach with her brother.

"If the experts are correct, then Miss Ward and myself were attacked by the same type of shark, at the same point at the beach, almost 10 years and one month to the day, and we were of very similar ages, so I truly do understand the experience," Ms McDowell said.

"If I could give her any advice it would be to jump back on the horse as they say. If she can, I would say to her, get back to the beach and go swimming because the longer you leave it the more there is to overcome."

Ms McDowell said after her attack she became fascinated about sharks. "I have been able to use my experiences to fill my life with excitement and passion. "I dive with sharks, I have done so in Fiji, New Zealand and soon in South Africa," she said in her email.

Yesterday Lydia's mother Fiona Ward said her daughter was recovering after being bitten.

SOURCE: The Southland Times, February 5, 2010,
<http://www.stuff.co.nz/southland-times/news/3295461/Similar-shark-victim-advises-persistence>

Shark bite inspires career

A moment of terror has led to a lifetime of achievement for shark attack survivor Jenny McDowell.

Now 28, McDowell was 13 when she was attacked by a shark at Southland's Oreti Beach on New Year's Eve in 1999. She was swimming with friends when a broadnose shark bit her left arm to the bone. The bite severed an artery, leaving her with permanent loss of feeling and poor muscle control in her arm.

McDowell refused to let the attack hamper her, becoming a forensic anthropologist, specialising in marine forensics.

"My interest in the field stems from being attacked by a shark as a child," she said. "Before the attack I wasn't into marine biology at all. So it's been the worst thing that's ever happened to me and also the most influential."

McDowell received one of 15 awards at the AMP Scholarships National Awards evening, held at the Auckland War Memorial Museum tonight.

She wants to eventually work in the field of victim identification after disasters, both in New Zealand and overseas.

Currently studying towards a PhD at Otago University, McDowell has put the attack behind her, diving with sharks in Fiji, New Zealand and South Africa.

She will put the \$10,000 grant towards spending two months in South Africa working on forensic cases at a morgue in Johannesburg. "It's one of the busiest and of the most underfunded in the world, they perform 18 autopsies a day."

"The AMP National Scholarship is a real boost and will help me gain the experience I need to reach my goal."

Other scholarship winners included;

- Lou James, who helps rehabilitate cancer patients with physiotherapy.
- Sacha Earnest, who at just eight years old, aims to compete at the UCI 2015 BMX World Championships in Belgium.
- Eldon Tate, who is working on the creation of a solar-powered water treatment system using unique nano-composite materials he has created.
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SOURCE: December 4, 2014, Stuff, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/63848338/Shark-bite-inspires-career>



Shark attack survivor Jenny McDowell has received a \$10,000 AMP scholarship towards studying forensic cases in South Africa.