

Homebirth champion now OBE

Until last night Mrs Joan Donley had not told any of her family and friends she was on the New Year Honours list.

"I feel very honoured," she said, "but I also feel a bit shy."

Mrs Donley, of Mt Albert, Auckland, has been appointed an OBE for her services to midwifery.

Regarded as something of a homebirth champion, she has delivered 679 babies in homes around Auckland since she became a domiciliary midwife in 1974.

She has written a book on attitudes to birth in New Zealand as well as numerous educational articles and papers for journals.

Mrs Donley founded the New Zealand Home Birth Association, the Domiciliary Midwives' Society and the New Zealand College of Midwives.

Her appointment as an OBE, she said last night, was "recognition for midwifery and for the role of midwives."

For many years "midwives nearly went into a state of extinction," but she said that was no longer the case.

Mrs Donley, aged 73, said she was not as busy as she used to be, because more domiciliary midwives were practising in Auckland now.

The new year promises to be busy for her, however, with many midwives on leave and a number of due babies on her books. The first is expected on January 8.

O.B.E.
Ordinary officers of the
Civil Division of the Most
Excellent Order of the
British Empire.

Joan Elsa Donley, of
Auckland. For services to
midwifery. Mrs Donley
founded the New Zealand
Homebirth Association in
1978, the Domiciliary
Midwives Society in 1981,
New Zealand Col-



Mrs Donley with her 679th home delivery, one-month-old Jerome

Webber

PICTURE: GLEN HERRON