

A Celebration of Life – Loris Mason

It all began in the beautiful seaside town of Wynyard, Tasmania in January 1936. Loris and her younger brother Rex grew up during the war with their father away in the Middle East. Childhood was filled with adventures such as floating down the Inglis River using bits of timber as rafts or exploring Table Cape. Loris's interests included piano playing and square dancing. Loris left school and joined the local savings bank then became a dental nurse. The cold winters became too much for her, so she escaped to sunnier Brisbane where her friends arranged a blind date with a certain Rox Mason. Despite being a born and bred local, he managed to get them lost that night, no doubt resulting in what would be the first of many arguments to come. Love, however, was found and they married in August 1959 settling into the house just across the road from here that would be home to Loris and her family for more than 40 years.

Starting a family proved difficult so Loris and Rox took the none too easy route of adopting children – Brett in 1963 and Sally in 1965. Loris was a devoted, proud mother who would tell strangers all about her wonderful children at any opportunity. She was a great homemaker – sewing all their clothes and making sure there was always home baked biscuits and cakes on hand. She always loved entertaining and was still baking and cooking for herself, her family and friends just a few short weeks ago. Her specialty shortbread became a Christmas tradition and was loved by so many for years.

Loris was always immaculately dressed and groomed taking great pride in her appearance. She loved to wear yellow, always with new leather shoes of course. Any yellow flowers, but especially roses were a big favourite.

Loris was always ready to give back to the community and was involved in kindy and school committees, the library ladies at Kenmore State, running the Book shop at Kenmore High and volunteering at Wesley Hospital. Her biggest achievement was probably being involved in establishing Kenmore Meals on Wheels. Many here will be familiar with her doggedness and determination that things be done the right way and this no doubt assisted in getting the organisation up and running so successfully.

Loris and Rox were able to travel overseas in 1986 and she always looked back fondly on that trip. Unfortunately, shortly after the joy of a second grandchild, 1989 dealt Loris the blows of suffering a heart attack and then losing Rox to a stroke just weeks later. Loris responded in true determined Loris fashion – she took up walking with a vengeance, losing weight and boosting her fitness to the level where she was soon trekking up Mt Coot-tha.

In 2001, Loris moved to Iona Retirement Village where she created a beautiful, welcoming home. She made many friendships there and loved tending her little garden, even growing veggies for herself and her neighbours. Loris petitioned and lobbied successfully with the authorities for the installation of the turning lane into Iona to make it safer for all.

Loris had always been very creative and good with her hands – in addition to sewing and painting she had a lifelong interest in wood and took up wood carving. It turned out that she was extremely talented, creating many lovely works of art, some of which are on display here

today. She won the RNA award at the Brisbane Exhibition and was very proud of this well-deserved achievement. Her many works will live on bringing joy to many.

Those of you who knew Loris would recognise that she didn't always read the room or conform to everyone's expectations. One weekend she was staying with Brett & Graeme at the coast. Over dinner with friends Gary & Graeme and many bottles of wine, Gary naïvely told Loris he went walking every morning. Next morning Loris was knocking on his door at 6 am raring to go! To his credit, Gary groaned, shrugged off his hangover and strode it out with her.

Sally & Andrew's three children, Josh, Talena and Ty grew up adapting to Nanna's exacting standards and high expectations, especially when it came to her persistent and excessive gear changes when driving home from school. As in so many other things, she was not a conventional grandma but still loved her grandkids and later great-grandkids immensely. Mason and Lola were able to visit her just a few weeks ago and that visit made a huge impression on her. She was very proud of Matilda, Audrey, Mason and Lola, and will be comforted by knowing that all her Great Grandkids still went looking for Nanna's legendary Jelly bean jar on Friday afternoon. I like to think this was her Great Grandkids raising a glass and toasting Nanna.

We are sure many of you have been constantly updated on the achievements and adventures of Brett & Graeme, Sally & Andrew and their children and grand-children. Mums are always proud but it would be difficult to find a mum or Nanna more dedicated and fiercely protective of her tribe.

Loris loved being part of the Anglican parish here, especially the time spent singing in the choir. The Filipino lullaby you heard at the start of the service was one of her favourite hymns.

Loris was extremely independent and despite her breast cancer fight managed to keep her lovely unit at Iona clean and tidy, cook for herself and others. Thanks to her fantastic carers she was able to stay in her home for as long as possible even as her mobility lessened. The highlight of her week was her shopping trips with her wonderful carer Phillip (even in the wheelchair), and she was superbly organised, making sure that Andrew always had soda water in the fridge and Graeme had his favourite chocolate ice cream. The phone was her lifeline and she managed to keep in touch with an enormous number of friends and family, particularly at 6:02 in the morning. Loris loved an early morning phone call often to discuss things that had been playing on her mind overnight. She had an amazing capacity to recall details from her entire life and loved chatting for hours with people all over the country. So we would also like to thank Telstra for many, many phone calls from Loris over the years.

Over the last few weeks, Loris's health declined sharply, and she entered The Prince Charles Hospital Palliative Care unit where she passed away surrounded by her loving family. Loris leaves many wonderful memories and will be missed every day.