

DEATH NOTICE FOR DORIS McDONALD

McDONALD (nee Unmack) Doris Emily

Doris died peacefully at home surrounded by her family on Friday 4th Jun 2021 aged 96.

She was the much-loved wife of Hughie for 73 years, and a loving mother and mother-in-law to Greg and Rene, Rosie and Brian, Michael and Christine, John and Arlene, Kevin and Denise, Marg and Kaye together with Rhonda and Margaret. Gran to 13 wonderful grandchildren and Supergran to 23 precious great grandchildren, all of whom will miss her greatly.

Due to Covid restrictions a private funeral was held on Friday 11th June at the Saint Michael and Saint John's Catholic Church Horsham.

DORIS AND HUGHIE Mc DONALD WITH THEIR SIX CHILDREN



Back (L-R): John, Greg, Michael, Rosie.

Front (L-R): Kevin, Hughie, Doris, Marg.

FAMILY EULOGY TO DORIS McDONALD.

(Provided by Rosemaree Hickman – daughter)

Mum was an incredibly strong, capable and outgoing woman who always had time for others- no matter what. She got so much energy out of being actively involved in the community and she formed many long-lasting friendships over the years throughout the Wimmera. If they all could be here today this church would be overflowing. For many reasons this is not possible and we warmly thank all of you for being here today to celebrate the life of this amazing woman - Doris McDonald.

Mum's love of people came from her roots. She grew up in Dimboola East on a farm during the Depression with her older brother Richard and younger sister Thelma. Mum's family home was always a happy place where visitors were very welcome and though they didn't have much everything was generously shared. Mum spoke fondly of the memories she had of people dropping in at all times, and on weekends friends gathering at the Unmack's to sing songs and play cards. This strong sense of gathering and welcome stayed with Mum and through her life she took every opportunity to embrace all newcomers - welcoming with delight people from far and wide - from the Vienna boys' choir to young lads from Minyip and Rupanyup seeking further education; they were all part of her family.

Mum was very outgoing and always enjoyed meeting new people. Early evidence of this was when she first met Dad in June 1943. He was on leave from his RAAF responsibilities as a radar operator in Townsville and had come home to visit his father at Caulfield Repatriation Hospital. Little did he know that his Dad (Old Mac) had also encouraged one of his regular visitors, the gorgeous young Doris, to be there. By the end of that visit the very friendly Mum naturally felt inclined to invite the young man with no family in Melbourne, home for dinner and ... well we all know how that story ended.

Mum was also an incredibly resilient and determined woman. When Mum and Dad were first married, they moved to Tasmania where they spent a very happy few years before deciding to return to Victoria. Dad secured a job at the Horsham Times and was expected to start work at a time that wasn't exactly convenient to the young family. You see Greg was about 15 months old and Mum was too pregnant (with Rosie) to fly so she had to stay in Launceston and with the help of Dad's 16-year-old sister Rosalie she had to in her words "just get on with it!"

When the time came to move her new family across Bass Strait Mum again just got on with it and on Melbourne Cup Day 1950 a very determined young mum with a four-week-old baby and a very busy toddler made the long and arduous trip solo. On that day Mum coped with her luggage being left on the side of the road as the bus took off, arriving in the Wimmera on a red rattler with two unhappy babies, in the middle of a thick red dust storm on an incredibly hot and dry day. Can you imagine how happy she was to see Dad?

Once safely settled in Horsham Mum's love of community, soon had a home with the Catholic Church, Ss Michael and John's school and St Mick's sporting clubs. Mum threw her considerable energy and enthusiasm into everything that the family was involved in, whether it was coaching junior tennis, taking school kids to swimming lessons, running the tuckshop, or fundraising for the school through events like the Catholic Ball, and school fetes - Mum had a hand in it all.

I love the story of how one year she and a few ladies from the Catholic Ladies club gathered at a friend's house on Melbourne Cup Day for some chicken and champagne and then over the next few years the event had grown beyond their wildest imaginations. The Chicken and Champagne Cup Day Luncheon became the biggest fundraiser and hottest ticket in town as the Catholic Mothers Club hired the town Hall, filled it with guests and catered for the whole event. Our lounge room floor was covered in small bowls of trifle and the old copper out the back was going for days cooking all the chooks. I'm not sure current food handling standards were always met but that wasn't so important as everyone worked hard and raised thousands of dollars - all under Mum's watchful eye.

Mum was also very proud of her long association with St Vincent De Paul. She was there at the beginning when Dad and a few friends started a chapter of St Vinnies in Horsham in 1954 and her unbroken connection lasted until she could no longer get herself to the shop which was only a couple of years ago. Mum never looked for recognition for her good works and she was very surprised in the early 2000's to receive a certificate from head office Melbourne for her significant contribution over 10 years of service. Those of you who knew Mum well would appreciate that she could not let such a significant error go uncorrected so after a couple of forthright conversations and well worded emails Mum was duly provided with her 55 years award and all was then right with the world.

No recollection of Mum's life would be complete without mentioning her love for sport. She played tennis for St Mick's, golf with Dooen and bowls with Horsham City right across the Wimmera for well over 60 years. She was well known across the district and Mum couldn't go out without running into someone she'd played some sport against (and often beaten). Recently we took Mum and Dad on a trip and when we walked into a cafe in Minyip for lunch it was as if royalty arrived - ladies joined our group and greeted Mum with genuine warmth and care, sharing old stories and filling the air with laughter - it was such a lovely insight into the many friendships Mum had formed over her life.

For the last 40 years bowls had become central to Mum's existence. She was tickled pink with her Life Memberships of both Central Wimmera Bowling Association and Horsham City Bowling Club but she always believed she received so much more than she ever gave by being part of these wonderful organisations. It was hard for Mum when after 50 years of active membership she could no longer regularly attend Friday night Happy Hour and catch up on the bowling news - and she could hardly rely on Dad to retell her all the gossip. It is so lovely that many of her friends are here today.

But as important as all these organisations were to Mum, her family meant even more. She was very proud of all her children, grandchildren and great children and took enormous joy in keeping up with all our adventures. She didn't need a phone call to find out what was happening as she was regularly on her iPad checking out Facebook to discover what we were up to and getting onto the family What's App to discover the latest news and pictures of everyone.

Whenever we gathered as a family it was important to Mum to provide food for us all. We all share many precious memories of Mum's cooking and the way in these last years every meal was infused with so much love. Mum could always feed any amount of people no matter who would turn up at the last minute and no one ever left the table hungry.

We will never forget roast dinners with a minimum of 13 veggies (most of which came from Dad's Garden), the yummy golden syrup dumplings, her ability to whip up a batch of date scones whenever we had to 'take a plate', the date slices, Anzac biscuits, orange cakes, chocolate cakes with peppermint icing, and yo-yo biscuits that always appeared in our lunch boxes as kids or in the bickie tins for Dad's afternoon tea.

Mum could never let any fruit or vegetable go to waste and all excess produce had to be preserved, frozen or made into jam, sauce or pickles. None of us have ever had to buy marmalade, plum jam, plum sauce or pickles and nor will Dad for quite some time to come.

Her most appreciated culinary experience though would have to be her Christmas pudding. The excitement would build as Mum tipped the pudding onto a plate where we could all see the threepences and sixpences poking through before we all started bagging the piece with the coins clearly visible. Then would come the pouring of Brandy over the top where Mum was always very generous with tipping her elbow and whoever was sitting to Mum's right got to light the brandy. It was such a wonderful tradition to lean forward and call out if we could see flames as we all squinted hard to see the pudding on fire!

Mum enjoyed every minute she spent with her family and particularly loved a couple of things not common to every family: playing cards and praying the rosary. We are definitely a 500 family and it didn't matter how many were present or how young we were Mum could always work out a way to deal us in and teach us the tricks of the game. As for the rosary, well apparently a family that prays together stays together and we'd have to say that is true for us. In her last days, we were all gathered together and were with Mum every last step of the way. It was such a privilege to be part of this amazing woman's life and we are all so proud to call her our Mum, Gran and Supergran.

Each one of us felt very special when we were with her and all were convinced, we were her real favourite! But I can safely tell you now, without fear of contradiction for the first time ever that it really was me!

