

## **Eulogy – Ivy Newton**

**It would be an impossible task to do justice to 90 years of living and memories in just a few short minutes?**

**So rather than a history lesson of dates and events, my brother Ed and I thought it would be more appropriate to try and leave you with fond and reinforced memories of a great and dignified lady.**

**As we sat with Mum moments after her passing on Saturday afternoon, Ed made an interesting comment which I think sums up our general mood. He said “Why is it that after living a long, full and good life, surviving to a very ripe old age with illness only in recent times, and knowing that she was totally at peace with death - that we are all still so sad.”**

**The sadness will pass, to be replaced in our consciousness by memories of good times, and a humble life, well lived.**

**We are very thankful that Ivy’s husband of 71 years, Gilly, is with us today. Dad will be 95 in April. Ed and I took him to visit Mum in her last days and that will go down in my memory as the most poignant and tender moment that I have ever witnessed. Deep down, we are convinced that Dad is very aware that his soul-mate is gone, and in his own way, will deeply feel the sense of loss that we all share.**

**Mum might have played the traditional role of housewife and mother, but it became apparent many, many years ago, that she was in fact everybody’s mother.**

**I was always amazed that Mum and Dad knew countless cousins that I had never met. 103 Berserker Street, for the last 30 or more years, had become a sort of family drop in centre. Every one- no matter how remote the family link – was welcomed. At least it gave Dad an opportunity to retell his extremely dry stories to a new audience...especially the one about his treatment in the orphanage where at mealtimes they put out 12 plates, but there were 13 kids at the table. He was never in an orphanage, although it should be noted that his mother did spend some of her childhood in one.**

**As the middle child in a family of 12, it is to Mum's great credit that she maintained communication with all of her siblings to the end. We welcome Mum's brother Frank today, and another brother Allan, in Sydney and sister Gladys in Brisbane are sharing our sadness and send their greetings to all.**

**Despite what might have appeared to be a quiet, well ordered life as wife, mother, social secretary, laundry maid and cook in those frugal post war years, Mum led a busy life, absorbed with a variety of handicrafts and tapestries and tending to her beloved garden and pot plants. In the earlier years, and in tougher economic times, she made most of the children's clothes and outfitted many of the offspring of her 11 brothers and sisters with recycled hand-me-downs.**

**She had been trained well. She loved revisiting the site of the Bartlett Family home at Moongan, where all the children were raised. Her father Albert and mother Mary Jane were from all accounts very caring parents and good providers, but the kids had to earn their keep. Mum remembers picking the caterpillars off the vegetable garden by the light of a carbide lamp, and riding with her mother in the horse and sulky around midnight to pick up Albert from his job at the mine.**

**Like many mothers of her era, Mum could have spent the rest of her life living in the past, simply doing her duty and attending to her chores in the time honoured way. But she wasn't about to accept that. She really wanted to keep up with the trends. She took an interest in everything, and despite her later deafness, and also despite her dogged refusal to wear a hearing aid, she demanded – yes demanded – to be included in all conversations. I swear she became an accomplished lip reader because very little got past her. This determination to keep up with life continued until last Friday.**

**During perhaps the second half of her life, Mum didn't complain or do anything rash, but it became obvious that she had acquired a certain fierce independence, which would stand her in good stead when Dad's life changed and Mum was left on her own.**

**As a by-product of this new independence, or perhaps I should say a latent independence, we have all enjoyed Mum's company enormously in recent decades. She seemed to blossom as she got older. She became uncharacteristically outspoken and as Ed will readily tell you, more and more demanding – in a nice way.**

**Mum loved going shopping with Ed's wife Gail, or my partner Bron, or her niece Estelle. Even in her illness years, as she lost weight, she was very conscious of her dress. She wanted to be fashionable, and she took great pride in being able to coordinate her clothes.**

**This might be an appropriate point to say something else that needs to be said. I pay a personal tribute to my little brother Ed, who's only recollection of our childhood years was that I took him to school on his first day, and left him at the gate to figure it out for himself. Sorry Ed – I was only a kid.**

**Ed has had enough on his plate in recent years, and both he and his wife Gail and his late wife, Lynda did more than anyone could have done to make Mum's life liveable and happy. It was a big call for Ed and Gail, moreso because Gail farewelled her own Mum only very recently.**

**Another great joy of Mum's life were her grand children and her great grandchildren, all fifteen of them. The great grandchildren particularly will grow up as very privileged to have at least known a great grandmother. She loved you all – Sharona and Harmon, Aiden and Reece, and**

**If just a little of Mum's humility and grace rubbed off on them, they will grow up well blessed.**

**Much of Mum's social life was centered on the little Church of Christ in William Street, and she will be missed particularly by her closest mate Jean Chapple and a number of other great ladies, some of whom are here today. This was the same church, where, on August 12<sup>th</sup> 1936, as a bright-eyed 20 year old, she married Gilly Newton.**

**In the past few years, when cooking became a burden, Mum happily accepted the modern practice of going out for lunch, something which would have been totally contrary to her frugal up-bringing.**

**You didn't have to ask her twice to go out, and aside from fresh mangoes and avocados, her idea of a truly gourmet meal was a Cranston pie with mushy peas.**

**It seems a shame that she spent less than a year at Leinster Place, which she loved and called home, surrounded by enough photographs and trinkets to make her days comforting.**

**In her typical, understated style, she endeared herself to both residents and staff at Leinster Place, most of whom were most impressed and even in awe with Mum's life achievements and her handiworks and her sense of style. It was not surprising that many ladies and a couple of the men, who weren't all that mobile themselves, kept a daily vigil at her bedside, bringing her flowers and a comforting pat on the arm.**

**Perhaps the saddest thing of all was that Mum was forced to endure the indignity of growing old, with an illness that sapped her energy and ravaged her body.**

**Both Mum and Dad had subscribed to the belief that 'three score and ten' was the acceptable lifespan and we often joked about them waking up after their 70<sup>th</sup> birthdays and wondering why they were still here.**

**But as we know, it doesn't work quite like that. Longevity is a family trait – on both sides, so Mum had to accept that illness would force her to submit to the indignity of having others attend to her every need. I can tell you she hated it with a passion.**

**Mum never, ever swore, but I can tell you that every time we visited her in the last 12 months, she would punch the air defiantly and say "this is a bugger".**

**Even when her minister, Ray, paid her a visit in the final months, she wagged a finger at him and warned "Don't you pray for me – unless it's to end this."**

**Mum lived and died with great dignity and we are thankful that the illness which ended her life was with her for a relatively small number of those 90 years.**

**So with that, we say farewell to a grand lady, and a mother that we were only too happy to share.**