

Vale Mary McKay.

On Saturday November 2nd a small group of close friends gathered to honour Mary Livingstone McKay who died on October 1st, just a two weeks after her 101st Birthday. Loving and much beloved wife of Clement (1943) and very special and generous friend and mentor to many. Mary and Clem maintained a close relationship with Pulteney, supporting us financially, over many decades.

Clem was a student at Pulteney during World War 2 when his father was killed in New Guinea. As his stepmother was unable to continue to pay his school fees, Pulteney, together with Legacy stepped forward and covered the fees for 3 years enabling Clem to complete his leaving certificate. Clem was forever grateful for this benevolence and wanted to pay it forward.

The entire proceeds of Mary and Clem's estates will fund perpetual scholarships through The Pulteney Foundation, specifically benefiting children who would not otherwise, for financial reasons, be able to benefit from a Pulteney education. An incredibly selfless and generous act of benefaction. That Mary honoured Clem's wishes some 29 years after his passing, tells of her enormous integrity, given she was an Old Scholar of Presbyterian Girls College.

Before the war, Mary's father operated a Motor Garage on Greenhill Road. Adjacent to the garage was a newsagency owned by Clem's father. Mary told us she was more than a bit interested in the newsagent's son, but he was very shy and wouldn't talk much and so nothing eventuated at that time. After school, Mary, who was very artistic, became a window dresser for the Demasius Emporium and later for David Jones. Clem had studied accounting after leaving Pulteney and was working for the Commercial Bank when they met again some years later. Romance blossomed and they married when each was approaching their late thirties. Mary was a talented house maker and loved China painting, needle work and water colour painting. She became a passionate gardener with an eclectic love for roses, native plants and poppys.

When it became obvious that they were not to be blessed by the pitter patter of small feet, Mary and Clem decided to purchase the Brompton Park Hotel, a long-time dream of Clem's. He left the bank and together they ran the hotel very successfully for many years. In those days the area was full of light industrial businesses who provided plenty of thirsty customers at lunch time and then again after work, before 6 o' clock drinks.

The gregarious Mary developed relationships with local schools and sporting clubs, sponsoring them generously and as a result, bringing more business to the Hotel. Together, they developed a love of art and invested in a collection that will add significant value to their benefaction. The Pub precluded regular or lengthy holidays, and so they decided they would purchase a painting each time they were due for a holiday. They built a significant investment portfolio which Mary has actively managed. In retirement, they moved to Victor Harbor and shared many happy times travelling around Australia in their campervan, on bus trips and developing a very pretty garden.

Very sadly and quite prematurely, Clem died in 1995 leaving Mary very sad and a little lonely. She and Clem were both only children, so relatives were few. Mary threw herself into her craft and artwork, became active in the National Trust, Probus and other groups and built many friendships.

When Mary suffered a stroke in 2022, she required an extended rehabilitation stay in Strathalbyn Hospital. It was during this time that I gleaned a huge determined and generous

spirit within this little lady. All the time matched by a wonderful sense of humour and a gracious acceptance of circumstance.

One day I received a call from the Strathalbyn Hospital to inform me that Mary needed to go to Mount Barker Hospital for an MRI and that they were going to send her in a cab. I protested immediately, reminding them she was 99 and deserved at least an ambulance transfer. Having been told she was not unwell enough for an ambulance trip, I decided that I would travel down and take her myself. Mary's stroke had diminished her ability to walk, she could stand, just, but couldn't get into my 4WD so I said "Mary, would you mind if I pick you up and pop you in the front seat". She replied, as quick as a flash, with a glint in her eye, Oh, would you?

I scooped her up gently, she was light as a feather, and popped her into the car. She looked at me and said, "just as well Jo isn't here!". When it became clear that she wasn't going to walk easily again, I purchased a lightweight aluminium wheelchair. Well, talk about taking to water like a duck, she was off like Fangio or Schumacher.

It was about this time that we all realized Mary wasn't going to be able to go home again. We were very blessed to secure a room in the lovely Resthaven at Port Elliott. Mary settled in quickly, making friends amongst residents, their visitors and the staff. She had a very happy and fulfilling last couple of years, a highlight being the receipt of cards and letters from the King, Governor General, Prime Minister, and others on her 100th birthday. However, in true Mary style, it was the cards and the gifts from her many friends, that meant the most to her. Mary thrived on friendships, she valued all, saw fault in few, and was rarely critical, she was humble and generous both in kind and in spirit.

She was indeed a beautiful lady, whose munificence will live long in the annals of our School.

Excerpt form a Eulogy given by Mark Bouchier.