

On behalf of Janene, myself and our families I would like to welcome everyone to a celebration of Denise's long and rich life. We have many treasured friends over a long period of time present today to pay their respects. We also welcome those who are unable to be here in person, but who are using livestream to join Denise's final service.

Denise was born in Melbourne on the second of October 1932 to Drew and Bea Turner, brother to Drew Junior. Drew Snr was a successful real estate agent in post war Melbourne, who was able to provide Denise with a comfortable and happy childhood.

She attended Loreto and Manderville College where she made many friends, some of whom may be watching today. And while her school days required occasional attention to her studies, she was perhaps more committed to regular parties and her great passion for following sport. From an early age she would regularly attend the tennis at Kooyong, and football and cricket at the MCG.

Denise's most famous sporting moment came when she was photographed patting Sir Don Bradman on the back as he went out to play in his last match. This was a testimonial game at the MCG in early December 1948 between teams captained by Bradman and Lindsay Hassett. Unfortunately for Denise aged 16, the photo was taken on a Friday—a day when she should have been at school-- and it then appeared on the front page of Melbourne's Saturday paper. It was a matter that required some explanation to both her parents and the nuns. The photo, which you find in your service booklet, has had a long life, having been used over the decades in newspapers and books celebrating the life and times of the Don.

After leaving school Denise continued her preparation for life as an upper middle-class Melbourne mother by attending Invergowrie; a Hawthorn finishing school where young women were taught how to run a household. Following Invergowrie she progressed to Mercy Hospital to study nursing. It was in her second year of training that her life took an unexpected turn when she met patient Derek Reynolds, a farmer from Tambellup in Western Australia.

Derek was in Mercy recovering from several operations trying to save his eye-sight following a farm accident. The nurse and the patient fell in love. The Mercy Nuns, however, didn't condone such relationships and were determined to ensure that true love didn't run smooth. It was necessary for Denise and Derek's engagement to progress secretly for some time, until Derek was eventually able to persuade the Mother Superior to allow them to make it public in 1954.

Derek and Denise were married in Melbourne on February 16, 1955, a day on which Tambellup was flooded. After their marriage they moved to Winton Park, the family farm at Tambellup, and began their lives together. The small farmhouse at the time provided Denise with a very different life from that which she enjoyed in Melbourne. There was little water, a generator providing limited power, and no flushing toilet.

It might also have been a sadness to Denise that back in Victoria, Melbourne the VFL club she had ardently supported without success, could suddenly do no wrong. From 1955 they won five premierships in six years, and all without her personal support.

Denise and Derek's first vehicle was a 3-ton Austin Truck which--with Derek now blind--required Denise to attain a truck licence. This licence, which she maintained until she stopped driving, became a road-train licence when national standardisation was undertaken in 1997.

I was born in April 1956 which necessitated a family car. Denise's father purchased her a huge 1948 Buick which had been the Elders state manager's car. It was a very welcome from the truck. One of my earliest memories is of a winter night when the Buick became heavily bogged on Crosby Road, which was always treacherous after rain. Denise's father also provided the young couple with a few other small luxuries, including the first silo at Winton Park, a flushing toilet, and Richard the Hereford Bull.

With Prue born in May 1957 and Janene in September 1958, Denise and Derek soon had three children under 2 and a half years. Needless to say, Denise's life was extremely busy. In addition to mothering, she was also the family driver, wrote out the farm cheques and ran the household. My parents also began to purchase Winton Park from Derek's father, and so began the farming partnership of D and D Reynolds.

On reflection, I feel D and D also stood for determination and devotion to prove to many people what they could achieve despite the challenges associated with Derek's blindness. They were determined for the farm business to succeed in difficult circumstances and devoted to providing their children with the best possible upbringing. With pressure from the WA education department for Prue to be schooled in Perth, they bought 5 Klenk Road in Attadale, close to Santa Maria College. That house became the base for our high school education.

Denise and Derek were ahead of their time in having off farm assets, although I recall they regularly received letters from the bank manager about their sizeable overdraft. Some still doubted what this amazing couple could achieve for their family. Fortunately, the farm had some good years at the right time, and the troublesome bank manager was transferred. With a new car, a swimming pool, and the farm finally paid off, they were able to enjoy some of the good times.

Throughout Prue's life, it was a high priority for Denise and Derek that she to be treated equally in mainstream education and sport. They were again ahead of their time in encouraging Prue to succeed and prove that despite the challenges, anything is possible. Their determination and devotion helped Prue graduate with a social science degree from WAIT. Denise was able to attend the 1984 Paralympic games in New York city where Prue ran in several events and in 1992 the Barcelona Paralympics where she rode a tandem bike. Many training sessions and extra study were required for Prue to achieve these goals and Denise was totally supportive at every stage.

Denise and Derek moved to Alison Parade in Albany soon after Liz and I were married in 1985. Here they enjoyed gardening and fishing. Sadly, Denise lost her soul mate Derek in 1989. Her determination then became to overcome his loss and devote her time to her family including her aging parents in Melbourne. Denise was

constantly on the move, travelling between Perth, Albany, and Melbourne. This period also continued to present many family challenges which continued to demonstrate her determination and devotion to her children and grandchildren.

Another constant love in my mother's life was dogs. They were companions throughout, from Dale the cocker spaniel in Melbourne, Tuppance and Lucy the pekingese on the farm, Prue's guide dogs, Quintella, and Ming, and finally Jessie and Rosie, her golden retrievers. In later times Denise was known to cook for her dogs before herself! Her other great loves were gardening and travelling, especially when with friends. She has many happy times viewing heritage rose gardens and touring England with Ros Bowl and spending time with Ros's sister Catherine in London. During these years she managed to shift her footballing allegiance from Melbourne to the Eagles, and enjoyed watching televised horse-racing, reminding her of her Melbourne days where her parents had been members of Caulfield and Flemington for some fifty years.

Denise never liked celebrating her birthdays especially when another decade had passed by! We had to be very discreet in arranging any celebrations and age was never mentioned. As with all people going into care, Denise was apprehensive moving into Montgomery House but came to realise their care and devotion improved her happiness and outlook with new friends and activities including cards, bingo and the knitting club. Denise always said she only went to Bingo to win chocolates and biscuits for me! A highlight for Denise was being able to help with the plant choices for the large courtyard garden at Montgomery. We sincerely thank all the staff of Montgomery House for their care of Denise over the past 3 and half years.

I wish to acknowledge the support our family has received from the Jessop, Bowl, Taylor, Birt, Bradshaw, Howard, Groves and other families through the many happy and sometimes challenging times for Denise. I also want to thank Liz for her care and friendship to Denise over many years. At times when Liz was often dealing with the needs of her own parents, she has always been prepared to do what was needed to support Denise in any way that was required,

Thank you to Anne Birt, Monsignor Kevin and others for their help in coordinating today's celebration.

We remember Denise today as a strong caring person. A person whose foundations of love and charity began with her Catholic faith. Hers was a life well lived.