

## Patricia and David Forsythe

1952 was a significant year in the history of Newcastle, although it was not realised at the time. David's arrival was uneventful, but it should be noted delivery was effected upstairs at the Salvation Army Hospital, Hillcrest, in Merewether, not downstairs. Debate ensued in the family for the next 15 years as to whether his birthday was 7<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> of March. Dad's view prevailed when David demanded a copy of the birth certificate be obtained to end the argument, once and for all. 7<sup>th</sup> it is, and as long as Dad got it right at the Registry, 7<sup>th</sup> it was!

A week earlier, on 1<sup>st</sup> March, in another part of town, doctors had faced the grim prospects of loosing a mother, and/or loosing twin baby daughters with very major complications. Patricia was baptised immediately with a single name, born some two months premature, and not expected to survive.

As the story continues, therefore there is little surprise that 18 years later, David noticed Patricia debating every motion put forward by the radical Students Representative Council at Newcastle University, and usually winning.

Tenacity had won, and Patricia's mother Peg lived a long and full life, and her twin Anne, possibly identical, has had roles as the Dean of the Law Faculty at Newcastle University and Commissioner on the Law Reform Commission. David's mother is the only survivor of the previous generation and lives in Newcastle.

Newcastle is not a big town, and of interest, the very noted doctor and hematologist who played the key role in Patricia's survival, gave a eulogy at my father's memorial service in February 2005.

David and Patricia still debate who asked whom out first, and who is really older. The jury is still out! Anne may yet have to deliberate. David's argument may not be as strong as Patricia's.

David boarded at Shore School, at North Sydney, and after subsequently paying day fees only for Kate and Jono at PLC and Shore respectively, realises the great sacrifices made by his parents in sending brothers Graeme, Stuart and himself to Sydney for schooling.

David achieved his HSC with mixed result. Subject options did not assist. Good at Maths and bad at Science meant a good result in Short course maths, with the only error being the addition of 1 plus 1 yielding 3, a result no doubt familiar to most Rotarians! Inability to do maths at the higher levels at school, meant inability to do maths at University, and exclusion from the exciting prospects of actuarial studies!

Further, the French teacher had declared that over his dead body would David be allowed to do french after 4<sup>th</sup> year. (The French teacher is now dead and David has made several trips to France in recent years. Prophetic really!) This caused the unusual choice of Latin and English. Unusual in result, as David achieved 1<sup>st</sup> level Latin, but was only allowed to sit for 3<sup>rd</sup> level English due to perceived lack of skill in this area! This seems to account for an obscure writing style. Perhaps he was good at remembering large tracts of translation of Caesar in Gaul, for God's sake!

Patricia went to a different school to her more studious sister. She claims to have loafed for 5 years, before getting into gear and achieving merit list in Economics and History. Newcastle 60's folklore has it that the twins regularly swapped uniforms and schools, and were never caught! The ultimate irony of school was that in later years, a liberal Education Minister, Eric Willis, abolished selective schools in Newcastle, and specifically closed Hunter Girls High, Patricia's old school, a black day in Newcastle liberal memory.

Success in Latin left David in a quandary. Novocastrians are proud people, and he could never work out why they were not Novocastillians. *Castra* is Latin for camp, not castle. In the 70s it was less usual to describe oneself as camp, at least it was usual to describe others as camp if you did not like them! Anyway, once a Novocastrian, always a Novocastrian!

So in 1970, Patricia and David arrived at Newcastle University. Patricia studied Arts and Diploma in Education, topping History with the University Prize, and was posted eventually to a local High School, you guessed it, to teach Art, as in painting (not meaning of course to be disparaging towards the Rotary club's brushmen). Average fellow History students drew the History teaching straws! David studied Commerce, winning a prize along the way, did some tutoring in Accounting, and joining his father and uncle's firm, to eventually become a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Chartered Accountant.

Both were keen Young Liberals, who enjoyed the good years of being fee free and pressure free university students. They worked the system, Patricia being the debater who never let an opportunity pass. She frustrated the Student Representative Council every time at lunch in the quadrangle, proving the youth of Newcastle were indeed very conservative, but naturally Patricia never ran for election to that "august" body.

David was president of the Economics Society, best known for its Beer fests, and with good connections, bringing prominent Liberals such as John Howard, onto campus. Later with Patricia's political guidance on the electoral system, and with a team of sceptical colleagues, the conservative Commerce students decided to try to take over the University Union from the radical Arts types. David ended up Vice President and several of the team got up in a flow on of votes, but they failed to get the overall numbers. But it was sufficient to stop funds for student amenities from leaving Australia to assist in obscure international uprisings.

They were the Golden days and in late 1973, a couple of 21 year olds were married and ventured out into the world, well at least down to Tasmania, in their old Toyota and with a few dollars saved in pocket!

The rest is history, as they say.

David went on to become a Chartered Accountant, partner in Forsythe McKensy & Co, partner in Deloitte Haskins and Sells, probably the youngest retiree from the same, and partner in Rost & Kitchener on moving to Sydney.

Patricia went on to be a Politician, Honourable, in the State Upper House, shadow for various this and that, and including Education and Juvenile Justice, and ever hopeful of coming out of the shadows into ministerial limelight, and perhaps restoring her old school! Career paths in politics are not all straight, and timing, support given and received, can

influence the direction you travel. Patricia is currently Parliamentary Secretary to the Opposition Leader. Pre-selection again will be interesting and a challenge.

Kate and Jono are chips of the old blocks in some ways, certainly in determination, if not study, as yet. At 26 and 24, they have managed McDonald's stores and Senator's offices, and captained the Australian Junior Snowboard team degreed in Business Management, respectively, and traveled extensively, and like most young men and women today, more confident and worldly than their parents ever were at that age. Kate is recently back from 2 years in Europe and UK, after working with several councils in London, and Jono is (at the time of writing) in the Sahara, after working the Bungee Jump in Crete, and running the kitchen of a café/bar in Chamonix Mont Blanc.

Questions will still be taken on notice, thank you.