

Joyce Newton Tribute

Unexpectedly, one Monday morning in August 1974, a blow-in new teacher arrived at our small staff-room at the then Maleny High Top – someone with a wide smile and an American accent – someone of sharp intellect who was going to have a profound influence on both the students and the staff at the then small Secondary Department/High School which was attached to the Primary School. Someone who was also going to have an amazing influence in the local community and beyond. Who was this woman who would travel to school each day on the school bus because she didn't have an Australian driver's licence? I didn't know it then, but I had just met the woman who would become my best friend for the next 44 years. Her name of course was Joyce Newton.



Joyce taught Science and Maths at Maleny – and very quickly all of her students changed their pronunciation of Maths to Maaath. She was amused by her students lining up outside of the classroom door, waiting until she told them to come in. And we were equally amused when it was raining, and she would turn up to school in her gumboots and jeans, holding her good clothes in a plastic bag, as she had had to use the flying fox to cross the creek near her home. Joyce taught with such passion and developed a unique relationship with every individual in her care - she inspired and helped them to develop their strengths, but she also helped them in their moments of weakness. Joyce encouraged her students to do their best and wouldn't accept anything less. If a student needed to be told to pick up their game and put more effort into their studies, then she told them forthrightly. But if a student needed an understanding ear – she was a caring, empathetic and confidential listener who offered valuable and truthful advice. Joyce became a voice for those who could not be heard.

Joyce modelled the behaviour she expected from her students by living an intentionally positive life, choosing to see the possibilities and potential in everyone and everything. Not an easy thing to do, but she made it look effortless. She always looked to grow; to better herself as a person and a professional. Through pure determination she never gave up. Joyce was resilient and authentic – what you saw and heard is what you got. You always knew where you stood with her. She made her students and us fellow-teachers feel we could accomplish anything if we put our minds to it. In fact, if Joyce couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel, she didn't wait for someone else to turn it on, she confidently strode down there and turned the light on herself!

Joyce became involved in everything she could at the school – from class teaching, coaching sport, drama productions which were held in the local town hall – and as many extra-curricular activities as she could manage. She had an enviable zest for life, boundless energy, a graceful spirit, a giving heart and she was such a beautiful soul. She was a woman who cheerfully donated her time and talents to anyone with no expectation of anything in return. While Joyce was busy raising her family she also became actively involved in both the primary and high school P&C committees and was instrumental in setting up the fund-raising committee for the Maleny Pool. She was truly a mover, shaker and champion for the school and wider community.

Joyce was special. Dare I say extraordinary. How do I describe the most selfless person I knew? How do I explain the multitude of ways she made me better, or how she never missed an opportunity to encourage me or support what I was doing? How can I adequately describe her warm and welcoming heart and how blessed my husband and I feel to have had Joyce and Greg in our world for two-thirds of our lives? No words seem adequate enough. We loved our get-togethers at their Baroon Pocket farm. She taught us how to live and she taught us how to die – she accepted her diagnosis and the subsequent limitations with dignity and grace, yet she still chose to be happy and continued to amaze us by achieving the unachievable. Today is a wonderful commemoration of Joyce's community contributions and celebration of her driving spirit. That she was more interested in influence than leadership, in results than glory, is a legacy – and what an amazing legacy she has left for all of us to continue on. God bless you my beautiful and treasured friend, Joyce Newton.

Joy Strong



Teaching Staff 1975 High School Top

Back Row: x, Barry Garson, X, Barry MacNamara, Ross Garrad, Middle Row X, Margaret Erskine-Wise, X, Joyce Newton, Dorothy McPhail, Carolyn Lawson
Front Row: Vince Carbery, Eric Linde ???< Penny Pottinger, X, Don MacL
Lachlan (Principal) Carolyn Wood, Helen?, Molly Gittins, Ian Jennings



Maleny State School Staff, 1976

Back - ?, Greg Czechura. Peter Zillman, Craig Fleiter. Scott Battersby, Bary Garson, Barry McNamara

Middle - Margaret Erskine-Wyse, Desley Malone, Joyce Newton, Max Bryve, Gail Monson, Lyn Shailer,

Front - Vince Carbery, Joy Penney, Joy Strong, Dorothy McPhail. Don McLachlan (Principal), ?, Mrs Gittens, ?, Ian Jennings