

## OBITUARIES

**REV ERIC EDWARD ATKIN**  
**29 March 1924 – 20 September 2009**

Eric grew up in the Sutherland Congregational Church. Eric served in the Navy during World War II, then worked as an Accountant for Government Transport until he trained for the Ministry at Camden Theological College.

In 1947 he and Thelma were married. While training, he served as a Student Pastor at Kogarah Bay Congregational Church. The Reverend Keith Matta and the Reverend John Robinson were his mentors. Eric was ordained in 1962, then became Minister of the Port Adelaide Congregational Church in 1964, after which he transferred to Sylvania Congregational Church.

In 1977 Eric became a Minister of the Uniting Church in Australia. Eric retired from the active ministry in 1976 and worked for 10 years as an Accountant for the Bush Church Aid Society, moving to live in their house in Jannali, attending the Jannali Uniting Church.

In his later years Eric's health deteriorated slowly. He passed away on Sunday, 20 September 2009, at the age of 85 years. Eric's funeral service was held at Jannali Uniting Church, conducted by Steve Wylie, the Chaplain at Thomas Holt Village, Sutherland, where Eric and Thelma had been living for the last few years.

Eric is survived by his wife Thelma, daughter Lorraine and his sons Brian and Greg and their families.

Reverend Eric was a faithful servant of his Lord and Master.

**REV ALAN WILLIAM BLAKE**  
**5 January 1925 – 11 January 2009**

Alan William Blake was born on 5 January 1925 and died on 11 January 2009 at Bowral. The funeral service was held in the Bowral Uniting Church on 15 January, led by friend and former colleague, Rev John Brown, and Alan's body was cremated at the Woronora Crematorium.

Alan is survived by his wife, Jean, and children, Susan, Rosemary, Garry and Jonathan.

Alan graduated from the University of New England, before studying theology at St Andrew's Theological College in Sydney. He was ordained to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the Presbyterian Church in 1955. He and Jean served as missionaries in the New Hebrides/Vanuatu from 1955 until 1970. He was a teacher and spent many years in training teachers of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides.

On returning from Vanuatu Alan was called to Artarmon Presbyterian Church where he served from 1971 till joining the staff of COEM in 1974 as the Secretary for ecumenical mission in New South Wales. At the time of Union, Alan became World Mission Consultant in the NSW Synod Board of Mission, and served in that capacity until 1981. He then ministered at East Killara until his retirement to Mittagong until his death.

Alan was an enthusiastic gardener, an excellent musician and gifted organist. "He planted his feet in the compost, and sang with the angels". He made music with his family, with choirs which he trained wherever he lived, and with the people of Vanuatu to whom he taught Solfa. In retirement he took up woodworking. He trained his grandchildren in public speaking.

Alan is remembered by those who knew him as a warm, endearing person, a great encourager of people. He was a fine Pastor, always sharing his own deep trust in the grace of God, and a great colleague.

## **REV KEN CORNWELL**

**23 September 1931 – 19 February 2009**

Ken was born at Brighton-Le Sands in 1931. His mother Beth was a talented musician and father Stan a surgical boot-maker. Ken was the eldest of three children and with his brother Ross and sister Ruth grew up at Kingsgrove.

Living in a musical family meant Ken learnt the violin from an early age and he loved singing. Educated initially at Canterbury Boys High School, Ken chose to follow his heart and God's calling by continuing his education at Sydney University, Leigh Theological College and later through London University and the Melbourne College of Divinity. Ken worked at the local Holden dealership to pay his way through university and travelled around Sydney on his trusty motorbike.

Pamela, a young British migrant, won his heart in 1954 and they married in 1956 in the former Wesley Chapel.

In 1957 Ken was ordained as a Minister in the Methodist Church. His early days in country areas gave him a real insight into the isolation of parts of Australia and the struggles that many farmers experienced. His ministry in these areas touched many and left him with fond memories of the generosity of those with few possessions but with big hearts.

A period of ministry followed in Victoria where Ken first undertook school chaplaincy. Returning to Sydney in 1962 with three children, Ken was called to serve God and utilise his skills in education. He had an idealistic view of wanting to make the world a better place and saw education as a tool for this. During his time as Chaplain at Newington College, Ken's ministry included not just the boys, but the staff, parents and greater school community. Whilst at Newington, Ken also completed his Master of Arts degree and coached sporting teams. He also supported a local fellowship group.

1970 was the beginning of Ken's 20 year ministry at MLC School. His leadership, inspiration, counsel and dedication to the school, its students and staff, ensured the continued growth of MLC School and shaped the future for many girls long after he left. In recognition of his contribution, the Cornwell Building was opened in 1990.

In 1990, he was inducted as a Minister of Wesley Mission in Sydney where he served for six years and during which time he was the Moderator of the NSW Synod of the Uniting Church. Subsequently he was Presbytery Minister of the Sydney Presbytery for three years.

Though he formally retired in 1999, Ken continued to lead spiritual retreats, mentored ministers and students, led a home bible study group, held positions on many committees and provided support to the Ultimo Mustard Seed Faith Community.

Ken was blessed with many God given gifts which he used throughout his life and ministry. He was a peacemaker who loved and cared for others. His strong commitment to God and his faith allowed him to make a difference to people's lives.

We thank God for Ken's life.

**REV WILBUR DUNDAS**  
**15 December 1914 – 20 July 2009**

Wilbur was born at Fairley Hill near Bangalow NSW, the last of six sons. His parents were dairy farmers, from whom he gained many skills, enabling him to be a resourceful handyman throughout his life.

As a teenager, he committed himself to a life of Christian service, and became an accredited Local Preacher conducting his first church service at age 19. At 21 he left home to join the Central Methodist Mission (the CMM) at Newcastle, as a student preacher. At 25 Wilbur had completed the studies necessary to gain entry into Leigh Theological College, and at 29 he was ordained as a minister of the Methodist church.

During his time at CMM, Wilbur met Florence Bedford, who was the organist and Sunday school teacher at the Hexham church. They fell in love and became engaged, but were unable to marry until Wilbur had completed his theological studies. Following ordination they married, along with the other 5 men who also entered college in 1939, and these six couples continued to celebrate their ordination and wedding anniversaries together, for over 30 years. Wilbur and Flo had four children, John, twins Glenda and Robert, and David.

Together, Wilbur and Flo served at eight circuits or parishes (Ungarie, Adelong, Coolamon, Gunnedah, Turrumurra, Concord, Forestville and Kiama) where pastoral visitation was an important part of his ministry, following the example of Rev Silas Bembrick, who made it his goal to visit every family in his parish each year. Wilbur and Flo retired to Blaxland in 1980 where they spent 15 happy years together until Flo's death in 1995. Wilbur remained in their home until he went into the Uniting Aged Care facility in Springwood in 2006.

He was renowned for his passion for watches and clocks and would often come home from a pastoral visit with someone's broken timepiece, which would be returned next visit in working order. He built his own Grandfather clock, giving him many hours of pleasure.

In recent years, Wilbur said "If I were permitted to live life over again, it would be my wish that I would hear again the Call of God. The ministry affords the greatest opportunity to serve God, and His Kingdom, by preaching and practising the Message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Saviour and Lord.

**REV COLIN GARLICK**  
**26 January 1926 - 2 May 2009**

During the war, Colin enlisted in the air force. He volunteered for active service initially training as a pilot; and when pilots were no longer required for active service retrained as a navigator and then later a bomber and signalman – just so he would do his bit. Not that Colin was a hero in the popular sense of the word. A few years ago Colin's family received a copy of his complete war record. Well it appears that amongst his medals Colin also had some crimes. He was docked 2 days pay for going AWOL – Colin says he was chasing girls but his family thought this was just cover for ducking off to church.

After the war Colin initially returned to drafting for a short while, and then gradually felt God's call to full time work for the Lord.

It was about this time that he started his courtship with Frances Beehag. The story goes that Colin had a motor bike at this time and thinking he could impress her took her for a ride. Although the detail is lost in the mist of time, somehow Frances fell off the back of the bike, and she ran after Colin's bike calling "Col, Col", and Colin not being aware that he had lost her. It was love at lost sight.

Initially Colin trained as a home missionary for 2 years at SMBC. His first appointment was to Dorrigo.

In 1950 Colin married his longtime sweetheart Frances. He almost didn't make the wedding, only arriving back in Parramatta a couple of days beforehand, and many days after he planned, as he was delayed and rerouted due to floods. He used his growing initiative, and emerging skills with his hands to nurse his 1927 chev home.

After their wedding Colin and Frances took two trips to transfer their belongings to Grafton for their first home together and Colin quickly settled into his role as pastor.

Colin and Frances then decided to return to Sydney for Colin to do more studies and became an ordained minister. They had ideas of becoming overseas missionaries.

They then headed to the Papuan islands. Whilst they were in the Papuan islands they had a few months return to Australia for Colin to tell everyone about life as a missionary. Then it was back to PNG this time New Guinea – Matupit. While living at Matupit, an island joined to New Britain by a causeway, there was a very big clash between tribes of people who formed a political party called the Matoungans and the Government. This stand-off took place at Vunapalalong, a place about 40km out of Rabaul. The Mataungans were dressed up in their war paint and they were prepared for a battle, and on the other side the police had their riffles, tear gas, helmets and body armour. They also were ready for a battle. It was an explosive situation.

Colin and another minister, Don Marshall whose people were at this stand-off, went to try and mediate a resolution. But in fact, what eventuated was that these two white ministers became sandwiched between two rivaling forces.

Back in the villages, the women were very frightened for their men. They took action and for the duration of the stand-off, the women of the village met at six in the morning in their respective village churches to pray.

This confrontation lasted for six days. It was resolved peaceably without bloodshed.

As a result of this clash, and the tense political situation, the District Commissioner sent a message to Frances and Colin asking them to come into the town of Rabaul for their safety.

After considering this request, it was decided to stay at Matupit as Frances and Colin felt safer amongst their people, than in the wider "safer community".

So through the power of God, two white ministers stood and held two warring tribes apart for six days until they could stand down.

After Matupit they moved to Rabaul. After Rabaul Colin and Frances decided to come back to Australia where they moved to Dural. After Dural Colin and Frances moved to Nowra and then to South Cronulla. Finally retirement to Forster but then they moved to Parramatta to care for Frances' mum for a few years – then back to Forster. Finally after caring for Frances' mum Colin and Frances felt that they could let someone else look after her and moved to Glaica.

Colin asked to be able to express his thanks to Jesus Christ, and to many people and things that enriched his life. He wrote:

To-day, as we sing, I want to thank God for my father and mother, my two sisters Jean and Beryl, all of my grandparents and the extended family who together provided me with a loving and secure family. One person with whom I have spent more years than any other is of course my dear wife, Frances who has shared with me the cares, responsibilities and joys of family life through the good and anxious times. Frances always supported and encouraged me sharing with me in our work and ministry with many people for the Lord Jesus. God blessed us with four wonderful children, Peter, Catherine, Pauline and Andrew, all of whom are now married bringing Elizabeth, Stephen, Frank and Sheryn into the family circle, and now with their children, thirteen very special grandchildren. Last, but certainly not least, in marrying Frances, I gained two wonderful additional parents, known as "in laws". For all these dear people I give humble thanks and praise to our Almighty God!!

Thanks to God for:

Rev. Richard Barlow who taught scripture at Granville Junior Tech.

The Christian Endeavour group of young people who first made him think about what it was to be a Christian.

The Inter Schools Christian Fellowship at Sydney Tech High School and Christian camps.

The people who helped him hear God's call to missionary work.

The training he received at Sydney Missionary and Bible College and then Leigh Theological College.

Ordination as a Methodist Minister and the acceptance for mission work in Papua New Guinea.

Thank God for the privilege of being with and working with the people of PNG.

For the people and experiences of the parishes in which he served.

Praise God that for all the mistakes he has made in life, God has assured him he is forgiven.

God used many things and many people to draw me to Himself over a period of time, and now, for every one of them, before you, I want to give profound and humble thanks to God for His immeasurable love, mercy and patience that drew me to Jesus.

So there you have it, but a sample of an incredible man's life: he was trustworthy, humble, stoic, a gentleman, wise, loved Jesus, loved people, didn't like his food mucked up – but liked it simple, was a good listener with empathy, always bought his children cream buns on holidays, picnics in the cold, rain and wind were always more fun than the warm sun, he was generous, had a Pastor's heart, he was funny, strong, loved his wife, was stubborn or determined – it depended on which side you were on, he was proud, thought vicks could fix anything, was not afraid to learn computer late in life, honest – always did what was right – no matter what the cost, he brought up children, he was a man of integrity, he spoke of his Lord without fear, loved the unlovable, gave without bounds, became a gifted orator, taught with amazing wisdom, walked for miles in jungles showing amazing strength and tenacity, was hospitable, he was a husband, son, son-in-law, brother, dad, pop, uncle, cousin and friend.

**DEACONESS LORNA LATIMER**  
**27 July 1920 – 12 March 2009**

Lorna was born on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 1920, in "The Cottage Hospital" Diadem Street Lismore which was located just about where K-Mart mechanical shop is today. Her parents were Ethel and Arthur Latimer. She arrived into the world with three older siblings, Arthur 13 years her senior, Jack 11 and Winifred 9. Winifred told Lorna the story of how excited she was going to school the next day and telling everyone about her new baby sister.

Lorna attended Lismore Primary School in Keen Street and Super Primary in North Lismore. At the end of her schooling Lorna cared for her parents in the family home.

After her parent's death Lorna now in her early thirties, candidated for Order of Deaconess in the Methodist Church. She was accepted and moved to Sydney in March 1952 to complete her training. When she was appointed to the position she travelled all over NSW country and coastal areas doing God's work.

Lorna worked for 5 years in Central Methodist Mission with Rev Dr Sir Alan Walker, well known on radio and for services in the Lyceum Theatre and as founder of Lifeline. Lorna tells the story of being on the 'Trouble Team for Lifeline' and being called out of church in the Lyceum Theatre on a Sunday night to assist a caller who needed food. Lorna remarked she never felt disgruntled at the workload, and she always felt she could manage. She told me if you start thinking about yourself what's in it for me, then it's time to get out of it.

In all she spent 25 years as a Deaconess. Her position entailed assisting the Minister of the congregation and mostly doing the same work as a minister. Lorna remarked in those days women were not ordained as ministers. At other times in her life she held the position of House Mistress for the Methodist Ladies College, Burwood. She said she was glad to get back on the circuit because being House Mistress was not easy. On the circuit again took her to Molong where she helped the small Methodist Church join with the Presbyterian Church and to see the congregation get back on their feet.

In 1972 Lorna sailed around the world on the Greek liner Britannis for about five months. She travelled through the Suez Canal, around England, Scotland and the Scandinavian countries, down the west side of Africa and around the Cape of Good Hope. She had her 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday on the high seas on her way home to NSW Australia via Perth. She found that each country had its own beauty and charm.

When Lorna returned to Sydney the Church asked her to work at Orange in the Methodist Church. However her sister Winifred became ill and Lorna returned home to Lismore for seven months to care for her. When she was well again Lorna went back to Deaconess work at Menindee, near Broken Hill.

Lorna retired from Deaconess duties in 1977 at about age 59 years. She came back to Lismore and lived with her sister.

But Lorna didn't really retire altogether as she worked in Jarman as an Assistant Supervisor for six years helping out with Worship Services, exercise classes, doing the medications and as cook and bottle washer. Jarman had the same number of residents in those days as it does now. Lorna retired altogether in 1984 at age 64.

Lorna came to live in Carroona Jarman on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1991 aged 70 years. Her brother Jack came to her rescue and made the next eleven years here in Lismore very happy.

Lorna never married and had no children of her own. These facts she said never worried her as she has always felt part of a close family. She loved and appreciated her siblings' children. Their worries were her worries and she regarded them as her children. Arthur had 2 children, Jack had 4 and Winifred had 5 children. So Lorna experienced children growing up through her nieces and nephews. She spoke of her family as being 'very family orientated' and as 'sticking together' and 'supportive of each other'.

Lorna explained to me that the Church and her faith in Jesus Christ is another dimension to her life. It has been her backbone and her strength. Her instructions to me were not to try to find answers for there are no clear answers but to simply have faith.

## **REV FRANK McINNES**

**11 August 1920 – 9 August 2009**

Rev Frank McInnes was received into the arms of Jesus on Sunday 9 August 2009 after a short illness in RPA.

After being inducted at Cronulla Congregational Church as a Pastor Frank trained at Camden College as a mature age student. He was ordained at the Cronulla Congregational Church in 1966. He served there with distinction. Frank conducted Beach Missions and gathered an enthusiastic team for ministry while continuing to lead missions across Australia and overseas as well. Frank encouraged Alan Russell and Barry Fairfax to candidate for ministry through Camden College. He also saw a number of people enter Christian missionary organisations.

Frank served as Director of Evangelism for the Congregational Board of Evangelism. He led Sylvania Congregational Church into the Uniting Church after that congregation had exercised a 'no' vote in the original voting process.

Frank was a popular speaker and broadcaster presenting a Sunday morning program each week for 27 weeks. He was a founding Director of 2CBA now Hope FM.

Frank retired from active ministry from Sylvania but continued to lead evangelical Missions and to broadcast. He continued as Chaplain to the Camping Association and as guest preacher until he grew infirm. Frank was a great prayer warrior and a great encourager of many ministers.

Frank McInnes will be greatly missed by his colleagues and the many people that he led to Christian faith.

Prepared by the Rev Bill Clarke, Caringbah Uniting Church.

**REV ROBERT LACHLAN (LACH) McINNES BA**  
**10 January 1917 – 31 January 2009**

The Rev Lach McInnes served the Presbyterian and Uniting Churches with grace and distinction. Lach received his Exit Certificate from the old United Faculty of Theology, Sydney, in 1939 and was appointed as Assistant Minister in Tamworth. In 1940 he was called by the Congregation of the Presbyterian Church at Walcha, and was ordained by the Presbytery of New England. Then followed his ministries in Gunnedah 1943-1952, Goulburn 1952-1964, and Burwood 1964-1977.

Throughout his Ministry he had a high sense of Churchmanship and of the Ordained Ministry. He was elected Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in NSW. His interests were in Faith and Order, and in the Uniting Church he was Convener of the Synod Faith and Order Committee.

Lach was a member of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the 1970's which debated the proposal to enter the Uniting Church with the Congregational and Methodist Churches. Lach spoke against this proposal. After the proposal was passed Lach asked permission to make a statement.

He said that as his Church had made the decision to enter Union, as a loyal Presbyterian Minister he accepted that decision and would become a Minister of the Uniting Church in Australia. His decision meant that he must leave the Burwood Presbyterian Congregation, a large Church which continued in the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W. He accepted a Call in 1977 to the Uniting Church Congregation of New Lambton 1977-1982. He retired to Bowral in 1982, where he died in 2009 at the age of 92.

In retirement Lach taught for many years in the UCA at Bowral, a class in the History of Religious Thought, which was very popular. He and Barbara were very active members at Bowral Uniting Church during the years of his retirement.

Barbara McInnes was Lach's greatly loved companion and gifted co-worker throughout their ministry and in retirement. Lach's care of her in her last few years was inspirational. His preaching always thoughtful and pastoral, was appreciated by many people, including those of the Bowral congregation where he preached occasionally, up until 12 months before his death.



**ANNE McPHERSON**  
**20 May 1935 - 7 September 2009**

Anne was an amazing lady who shared her gifts of wisdom, counsel, faith, humour, networking and love with many people and groups. Her leadership in the Wellspring Community was constant and life giving. Her life of faith was enduring. Her wonderful heritage to the Wellspring Community was the 2 books she co-authored and they are proof that you can plan to achieve things even though you are told you may only have a certain period of time left on this earth.

Anne was one of the most genuine people and her deep Christian faith informed all that she did. Her compassion and deep caring for people, especially those on the margins of society, her deep commitment to justice for Aboriginal people and her ability to get to the heart of issues and speak the prophetic word was something that will never be forgotten.

It was Anne along with Peter Miller who was largely responsible for the renewal of Wellspring during the time she was a leader. Her encouragement and wise counsel of those who were the link people in State groups was greatly appreciated as were her visits to them.

Anne will always be remembered as a person of great vision, integrity and gentle leadership, who was able to get beside people and inspire them.

Anne encouraged others by the strength she showed in times of suffering and joyful that one is now in a greater realm of mystery with the One to whom she devoted her life.

Till we meet again, Anne, rest in God's loving arms.

**REV ROBERT GRAHAME MILLS**  
**24 July 1937 – 12 March 2009**

Bob Mills was born at Orange on 24 July 1937, and grew up on the family property at Tottenham. He went to school at Scots College at Bathurst, an experience which changed his life. He came back from this Presbyterian school a committed Christian who wished to belong to that church. After school he went back to work on the farm, but it wasn't long before he was accepted as a Presbyterian Home Missionary. From 1958-1964 he served at Lismore, Beresfield, East Maitland, and Sawtell. For the next three years he returned to the farm, but wanted very much to return to ministry.

In 1968 he returned to Home Mission service, going to Kandos (1968-69), and Bowenfels (1970). Bob was by this time married (to Helen) and had children. In those days married Presbyterian candidates for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament served in Student Home Missionary appointments and also studied at the Theological Hall (on the grounds of St Andrews College at Sydney University) with Methodist and Congregational students.

Bob was appointed to Cabravale, and served there from 1971 to 1973. He was both a fine student and a good pastor. Somehow he managed to squeeze his studies into a quite busy pastoral situation, and did very well.

He always talked easily with people, connected with the issues that concerned them, and gave them wise counsel. He was a fine preacher. These were early days in the liturgical renewal movement, and Bob was greatly interested in worship and liturgy. One of his major study projects was exploring the design of liturgical vestments, and he designed his own alb and stoles and had them made.

## **REV JOHN PEARSON**

**4 January 1947 - 8 January 2009**

John Pearson, who died in active ministry in the Oberon Congregation on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2009, was born in Sydney on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 1947. He grew up in Lindfield and with his parents was a member of the Lindfield Methodist Church. He was actively involved in the Sunday School, Order of Knights, Youth Fellowship and Crusader Camps.

John attended North Sydney Boys' High School where his interest in reading and learning began. It was here and in his family life that an interest and participation in sports (Tennis, Rugby Union and of course Cricket) was also nurtured.

After leaving school John worked for 9 years as an accountant, did National Service and spent 2 years working in the Central Methodist Mission in Sydney. It was from here that he candidated for ministry and trained at the United Theological College, Sydney. He was ordained as a Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church in February 1979.

In 1980 he married Lorraine who has been his constant companion and support during his years of ministry.

His placements have been in South Tamworth, Corowa, Narrandera, Picton and Oberon. For a period John had also offered important periods of Supply Ministry in other congregations. Interest in the Emmaus Movement, preaching, scripture in schools, pastoral care and a special interest in young people and their growth and development in faith have been some of John's passions in ministry in the Uniting Church. His involvement in ecumenism was seen in the pastoral care and support given to him and Lorraine by his colleagues in ministry from other denominations in his last months of life.

John had always shown an interest in the wider life of the church, serving in several presbyteries and being a regular participant in synod meetings. He contributed to the work of several committees and consultations, most recently in the Macquarie Darling Presbytery.

Beyond the church John kept a long term association with the Rotary Movement, serving during the 2007-8 year as President of the Oberon Club. In later years he had also been actively involved, and shared with Lorraine, leading Christian tours to the Holy Land and beyond. A tour to Oberammergau was in planning as he struggled with cancer in 2008.

John's service to God, to the Church and to communities in which he lived is acknowledged. We give thanks to God for the life and ministry of John Pearson.

**REV VICTOR JOHN SMART**  
**11 June 1921 – 30 April 2009**

Victor John Smart was born in Temora, NSW on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1921, one of nine children and one of twins. His twin sister died when she was 6 months old. From about the age of 20 after his conversion, he started lay preaching in the Methodist Church around Liverpool and Sydney. He spent 35 years in the sheet metal and welding trade, working in Protected Industries during the 1939-1945 War.

He met his wife Joan in 1947 while participating in Combined Churches Choir events. After they were married in 1948 they moved to Melbourne and Victor continued working, lay preaching and theological studies. Their three children were born in Box Hill, Victoria.

In 1952 they went on a Faith Mission on Cape Barren Island (off Tasmania) for almost twelve months to work with 200 Tasmanian Aborigines.

Moving back to Sydney in 1955, Victor continued preaching in the local Methodist Churches and studying theology. Victor and Joan also worked among adult handicapped groups from "Crossroads" Christian Fellowship in NSW, continuing for 25 years.

In 1971 Victor applied for full time work in Ministry in the Methodist Church. Through the Home Missions Department he spent one year in Charlestown and then 2 years at Spring Hill, near Orange.

In 1975 at the age of 54 years, Victor candidated for the Methodist Ministry and studied at Leigh College at Enfield. Victor completed his thesis and was ordained in 1977 at Wagga. His lifelong yearning and prayers had been answered.

Victor and Joan went to Culcairn in 1977 witnessing the start of the Uniting Church. Subsequent placements included Narooma (1980) during which time he studied to be qualified for Hospital Chaplaincy; Visiting Hospital Chaplain at the Coast Hospital (Little Bay & Randwick Children's) (1983); relieving at Mullumbimby on the North Coast (1983) and then in placement at Cessnock (1984-1987). During this time Victor commenced writing and became the author of many books.

Victor and Joan retired in 1987 to Blayney then moved to the Central Coast of NSW near Budgewoi Lakes in 1993, until Victor was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease in 2005. He was later also diagnosed with cancer.

Victor and Joan celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 2008 and treasured the ministry shared together since their marriage.

Victor died at home on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2009 at 87 years of age – knowing he had completed all God had called him to do.

*(Prepared from material provided by Victor's wife, Mrs Joan Smart)*

**REV ROBERT RICHARDSON SMITH L.Th., Dip R.E.**  
**22 October 1918 – 12 December 2009**

Robert Smith was a Churchman with considerable gifts for ministry who dedicated his life to the service of Christ in the Methodist and Uniting Churches in NSW, Australia and to some extent internationally through occasional visits to the United States and Britain. He is remembered particularly as one who had passions for both preaching and mission and was instrumental in enhancing the gifts of others for the task of mission. In all aspects of his ministry he was wonderfully supported by his wife, Mae, who, through her gifts, loving disposition and dedication made her own impact on much of what Robert did.

Robert was part of a family who regularly worshipped with the Tighes Hill congregation, which was part of the Mayfield Circuit in Newcastle. Here he came under the influence of the late Rev. Silas Bembrick whose strong voice laid the claims of discipleship on Robert. He began work at the Steel Works but heard the call and became one of a group of young men from Newcastle in the early 1940's who became candidates for the Ministry. He came to Sydney and was influenced by the Rev. Dr Frank Rayward who was Superintendent of the Central Methodist Mission. Robert joined the Evangelists' Institute in 1941 and became Senior Student the following year, exercising a strong ministry within the Mission.

In 1943 Robert was accepted as a candidate for the Methodist Ministry and was deemed already to be a capable preacher and administrator. He was appointed to Milton where he laboured for two years before entering Leigh College and the United Faculty of Theology. He then served at Wollongong 1947-1948 and was ordained in 1949. He secured the L.Th and Dip. R. Ed. from the Melbourne College of Divinity. His first appointment was to the Dunoon Circuit 1949 – 1952.

Next he ministered at Mudgee 1953-1956. The Presbyterian minister at the time was the Rev Bill Ives, an acquaintance of 10 years who observed: "Robert exercised an active ministry in Mudgee, gave evidence of his wide reading, a love of preaching, a concern for the Church's public ministry, and had a fearless approach to controversial issues when showing the relevance of the gospel to community life". They rejoiced in later life to be colleagues in the Uniting Church.

After Mudgee, Robert was ready for bigger challenges and his appointment to the large Hamilton circuit 1957-1963 was very likely a surprise to many because of his junior years. Here he found a great outlet for his preaching passion and the people were very responsive. Amongst many achievements during these years was the establishment of the Wesley Haven Senior Citizens and Fellowship House with a seven day programme including a very successful Youth Cabaret involving hundreds of young people.

Robert's next placement was to Chatswood South in 1964, part of the Chatswood Circuit. It appears to have been a strategic appointment: a springboard for future service by one who showed great potential for the gospel. Robert and Mae were warmly received and youth work and Bible study flourished during this brief ministry. Being in the city, Robert became involved in many committees and other matters at Conference level.

There was, however, Robert's other great passion – Mission. It found expression first in his appointment in 1966 to work with the Rev Walter Whitbread in the Home Mission Department as Director of Evangelism. His approach to evangelism was innovative, seeking local congregations to become agents for change in making an impact for Christ. To this end he worked to educate the church through duplicated papers on its mission task. He succeeded Walter Whitbread as General Superintendent of the Home Mission Department in 1968 and was a man whose time had come. His many developing gifts came to fruition and he was largely responsible for radical alteration of the Department through the application of new ideas.

Robert gained much from his many overseas trips. In his first year in the new appointment the Methodist Church sent him on a six month study tour of U.S.A. and Great Britain.

In 1971 he was appointed by the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia to be a member of the World Methodist Council, a great honour which did much to enhance his influence and experience.

Robert worked closely with the Rev Dr Sir Alan Walker in the "Mission to the Nation" and later was very supportive of him in his role as Director of World Evangelism with the World Methodist Council

Robert served the Council in several capacities and for most of his years as General Superintendent and later in the Uniting Church he travelled abroad to many countries on Council matters but also on preaching tours, for conferences, lecturing or conducting missions, most of which were related to mission and evangelism. Through his many new connections and numerous speaking engagements his experience broadened and new doors of opportunity opened for him and the Australian Church.

During this time he formed a close relationship with Dr Eddie Fox which enabled a number of ministers to gain mission insights from the United States through involvement in the New World Mission programme of World Methodism. Teams of Australian ministers went to the States to speak at Missions and there were reciprocal visits by American ministers to Australia. They were fruitful times in this highly successful venture.

Whilst the cities and suburbs were being touched by the Board under Robert's leadership, the outback was also in Robert's sight. He travelled extensively amongst the congregations in the Far West and was very supportive of the Nursing Services, having a particularly warm spot for the staff of Menindee. Robert also played a significant role in the work of the Flying Padre at Broken Hill, acknowledged when the replacement aircraft was named, '*Robert Smith*'.

Robert worked hard to develop the theology of mission within the newly forming Uniting Church in Australia and when Church Union came, Robert was the obvious person chosen to be General Secretary of the NSW Board of Mission of which he was a key architect. He soon arranged some splendid mission conferences with visits of Dr George Morris, an expert on Evangelism from America. The mission outlook of the Uniting Church in NSW was clearly well focused under Robert's leadership.

Robert held office on countless councils, boards and committees within his own denomination and the wider church. These included, President of the NSW Council of Churches for three years, President of the Australian Council of Churches (NSW) for three years, member of the Inaugural Commission of the Uniting Church in Australia, Chairperson of the Parramatta-Nepean Presbytery 1984-1988 and member of the Wesley Mission Board which honoured him by naming an auditorium after him in its new building.

After 17 significant years leading the Board of Mission, Robert, who always wanted to complete his ministry in a parish, returned to vigorous pastoral work for 6 years at Castle Hill. The fortunate people there received the benefits of a competent preacher and a man of mission who brought loads of experience to a large and strategic congregation.

During his time, the Kenthurst Church and extensions to the Kenthurst Retirement Village were established. Also the Hills Family Centre came into being. It was a work in conjunction with Wesley Mission to assist new families entering the community.

When he retired from active ministry in 1982 at the age of 70 Robert found it difficult to relinquish the role of preacher and pastor and agreed to take on the role of Associate Minister at St Stephen's Church in Macquarie Street, Sydney. It was supposed to be 80% of a full-time appointment but appears to have been "full-time". He undertook responsibility for pastoral care, parish visitation all over Sydney, elders' Retreats, home Bible studies, and regular conducting of the evening worship with solid Biblical preaching.

He was a great supporter of the minister, and very acceptable to the people who loved both him and Mae and who, years afterwards, still spoke of their care and support.

Robert was in his 80's when, after more than 12 years, he reluctantly completed his St Stephen's ministry. He and Mae then became members at the Killara Church where he carried out a short but very successful supply ministry following the death of the minister, the Rev Ivor Bailey. He then assisted the new minister, the Rev Chris Udy as needed up to the time of his own death on 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2009 when he was 91 years old.

Robert Smith's was a long and fruitful ministry. He was a fine evangelist, a gifted pastor and administrator of extraordinary talents: a man deeply devoted to his Lord and Master. He loved books and read widely thus being well equipped for the task. He was meticulous about his own appearance, a warm person of good humour who was highly regarded by colleagues and those to whom he ministered. By his side, supporting him completely was his wife, Mae. Together they made a huge contribution to the life of Christ's Church. Robert was a faithful servant of God: an outstanding Churchman who gave himself unstintingly and with passion to his calling as a minister of the Gospel.

Like Enoch, Robert "walked with God; and then he was no more because God took him." (*Genesis 5:24*).

*(Prepared by the Rev Dr William Ives with assistance from Mrs Mae Smith, the Rev Dr Clyde Dominish and Miss Marie Pereira.)*

**DEACONESS MARJORIE ALICE SOMERVILLE**  
**23 November 1920 – 30 September 2009**

Marjorie (Marj) Wilkinson Somerville was a double certificate registered nurse and deaconess, who, in 1946, pioneered the inaugural Methodist Nursing Services, establishing the nation's first interstate mobile nursing service between New South Wales and Queensland.

When Marj moved to Noosa in 2007, she returned to public speaking and gave talks at bookstores and events. She was booked with speaking engagements on the Sunshine Coast until February. It was with sadness they were cancelled when Marj died in Buderim Private Hospital after a short illness.

With her colleague, Ethel Helyar, she brought a unique combination of free pastoral, medical and dental care to all, "regardless of class, colour or creed" as was their motto. In this capacity, Marj patrolled an outback region of 35,000 square miles in an ambulance fondly named "Augustus".

As a much-loved "Methodist Sister", Marj was called upon to assist bachelor graziers, lonely housewives, Aboriginal communities by riverbanks and townspeople. She established Christmas plays and country children's camps to city beaches.

Marj, graceful and beautiful, was flattered by many romantic advances, but the cry of the suffering people was stronger than the longings of her romantic heart.

In 1949, when she left the outback for health reasons, Marj pioneered the first Methodist Nursing Service in Newtown, Sydney. As the infamous Coal Strike of 1949 heightened, her compassionate service to the poor, elderly and unemployed was frequently reported in newspapers. The Sydney press nick-named Marj – the nurse in the blue uniform – "the Blue Angel".

Marj was an inspiration for the Rev Arthur Preston and Queensland pioneer nurse, Olive Crombie, who, in 1953, adapted Marj's Newtown model for their inaugural West End Blue Nursing Service, adopting the same motto.

In 1951 Marj married and bore three children. In 2000, she was short-listed for Senior Australian of the Year. In 2006, the biography of her pioneering nursing life, "Angels of Augustus" was launched at Parliament House, Sydney.