

**MARGARET ILLUKOL:**

**I first met Margaret in 1980 when I was a Nurse Educator at Gosford Hospital & Margaret applied to commence her Nurse Training.**

**To meet Margaret was to be immediately impressed by her courage and determination. Initially her studies were quite a struggle for her, but she was in a supportive & caring environment & no one doubted for a minute that she would succeed. Such was her intelligence & strength of character.**

**And of course she was never without the love and support that the Rotary families gave her. That meant a great deal to Margaret, & succeeding in her Nurse Training was one way she could show her appreciation for all they had done for her.**

**When Margaret successfully completed her training she came to Royal Newcastle Hospital to work as a Registered Nurse. I was then the Director of Nursing. Margaret was a very good nurse – there are many here today who know that better than I do. But one couldn't help but be impressed by her quiet gentle manner & the sense of humour that was evident in her ever present smile.**

**As I was not in the clinical areas, where she worked, our paths did not cross very often, but we did keep in touch.**

**I well remember Margaret coming to see me to say she was planning to write a book about her life. I was thrilled for her. As hers was certainly a story worth telling.**

Perhaps there were times when Margaret regretted telling me about her plans for a book, because whenever I saw her after that, I would ask her how the book was progressing! Nudge Nudge!

She took it in good part of course, as she had that quiet sense of humour that stood her in good stead, & it became a bit of a joke between us.

Then came the wonderful day when she proudly told me the book was finished. What an achievement – another of Margaret's goals attained. And then, in 1990, the excitement of the night of the Book Launch! With all her friends and supporters there to share with her the culmination of years of work, & quite a bit of pain, as it had not been an easy book to write. But she did it!

Margaret will be remembered by all of us for her many special qualities that made her such a unique person. Not the least of which was her courage – the courage it took initially for her to survive that dreadful ordeal of being mauled by a Hyena.

The courage it took for her to face years of pain and surgery – more than 70 operations. The courage it took for her to persevere to gain an education – her HSC at the age of 23.

And then the courage it took for her to pursue her dream to become a Nurse, with all that that entails. Not the least being the need to be involved with people when she was so self-conscious about her appearance. It took great courage, and perseverance, but Margaret achieved her goal.

**The Nursing profession has indeed been enriched because Margaret had a dream to be a nurse and did not give up until her dream came true.**

**And I count myself fortunate to have been a small part of that dream.**

**Thank you Margaret.**