

My memories of my cherished friend Glenys Gill

Gayle Watson-Galbraith

I would describe Glenys as a gentle, loyal, diplomatic, gracious and passionate person and of course a lifelong netball lover.

Her great sense of humour, fairness and generosity always meant that this was a special person and a friend for life. You can sit back now, close your eyes and see her with her beautifully groomed ginger hair, perfect makeup and the beautiful welcoming smile she gave everybody. She shut no one out - no matter what happened.

Her love of her family, her netball girls, her basket ball girls, her running Harriets', her friends from TV days meant that she had quite a few networks and in all I know she was cherished. Somehow they all inter-connected and she found time for everyone. I can remember when we were living in Subi Central and she was on a run she would pop in for a glass of wine and then pick up the girls on the next stretch - she fitted us all in!

Through her whole illness Glenys researched, discussed options, and tackled treatment opportunities, went through so many small and big operations, numerous medications and programs and all with amazing determination. She never complained and seemed to have the ability to bounce back many times. I only remember her talking about but not actually complaining of the difficulty she had once with sitting following an operation in a delicate area and her sore feet! Even in the last week we talked about her family, my family, netball days and with encouragement she would put on her foundation, a bit of lippie and look in to the mirror and give you her smile. She enjoyed her coffee, chocolates and huge slices of lemon slice I took in.

In reflecting on Glenys's involvement in netball it is easiest to describe her involvement in each level of the structure. Netball is a highly structured sport requiring a series of levels to successfully deliver the sport. Glenys contributed to every level in so many significant ways.

Club Days - City Beach Surfers Netball Club

Wendy Holtom

Glenys was devoted to her City Beach surfers Netball Club from beginning to end. She was made a Life Member of the Club.

Netball Playing days

State and National representation

Elma Merillo

Glenys first made a representative team by being selected to the State Schoolgirls team in 1970 and then State Junior Team in 1971.

She then went on to represent WA in the State Senior team five times.

She is part of an era where Bette Allison was their coach and Glenys Dillon the State Junior and Assistant coach. The team members read like a "who's who" in netball or at that time "basketball" and they forever will be a very close group of friends who shared many fabulous times together. The girls still meet monthly for lunch on a Monday at Bette's house and whenever people are in town you will find them over at Bette's catching up.

If you ever have “time” you should sit with Bette and hear the marvellous times and stories of netball at this time. - they cover the transport, the time it took them to get to places, the rules, the uniforms and the black stockings and the black shoe polish they used to use instead of darning their holes. The matches were exciting but some of the tricks and shenanigans that happened are hilarious.

Glen was selected in two Australian teams and toured New Zealand on their amazing 5 week tour in 1972. She was only 18 years old and was the baby of the team.

Perth Netball Association

Gayle Watson-Galbraith

Glenys was an accomplished City Beach Surfers Coach - you would see her down every Saturday in her red City Beach jacket and black tracksuit pants. All through the afternoon she would be coaching, watching games and chatting to people.

She generally coached the Year 8 Division 1 and Open division 1 teams and they always did very well - in fact every year! She had a gentle, soft voiced, knowledgeable, encouraging and fun coaching style.

I often coached the year 8's and was regularly and comprehensively beaten by her teams. The day I had my first win against her team she was lovely allowing me to enjoy this moment of achievement knowing and commenting that she would be back next year. It is no surprise that many of Perth's top juniors have all come through Glenys.

Glenys selected teams and coached for Perth at the Member Association Championships many times. She loved the carnival and even did it when she was Perth Orioles manager and on the road most weeks. I can remember flying back from a trip and going straight to Wanneroo so she could coach her team.

Glenys was awarded Life Membership to Perth Netball association in 2006. She was thrilled and honoured to be recognised.

Netball WA Board

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Glen was on the Board for 6 years. I first met Glenys when I walked in to my first Board meeting as President at St Catherine's College in Nedlands. It was Glenys's first meeting as well and we instantly hit it off as friends. From that day on Glenys was a dedicated Director walking away from her first meeting with the portfolio responsible for the Perth Orioles. She often commented she can't for the life of her work out how that happened! That night the Board had made the decision to bring the Perth Orioles under the umbrella of the Netball WA Board and not to be managed by a separate Board. Our challenge was to help WA members see that the Perth Orioles were “their “team and that there was a pathway for all players to gain selection to the team. We knew we had to brand netball through this elite team. It was quite a tumultuous transition and it proved to be the right decision. It's just amazing to see where we started and where the team and the ANZ series is now.

Glenys also took on the role of Perth Orioles manager taking over from Flo Starcevich.

Some highlights of this time :

At the time netball only managed its operations from year to year and this new team was scrutinized by our members. It was a big issue for the members. We were a tiny operation and really needed to

expand our thinking and vision for the sport. They need not have worried because our Director of Finance well and truly had the Perth Orioles budget in his sights. We had to fight tooth and nail on every expenditure and justify every line item at every monthly Board meeting. Needless to say the endless fundraising - of fashion parades, quiz nights, game nights, cocktail parties, raffles, Parties at Fremantle Gaol etc raised funds to keep the Orioles budget in the black. Often there were times when Glen and I were topping up this program to make sure we broke even or have the fight with Eddy on cutting the program!! Eddy loved to wind Glen up and this subject dear to her heart would get her going. She knew her budget down to the last dollar!

Our Board held annual review, planning and budget setting weekends. These were always robust and hotly contested weekends especially when our projected budget was always way over. Every program was prioritised and debated. Not only were these fantastic Board working sessions but they fun and full of collegiality. They bring back wonderful memories.

At one stage following a serious issue our Netball WA finances were not healthy and stretched very thinly. Glen and I shared working in the office for no remuneration for a year to help get the organisation in a position where we could put us back on even ground and give the sport a platform to build on. After this we were able to employ a very passionate CEO who had netball in her heart and was able to take the sport to new levels. This was very rewarding.

The regular presentations to the WAIS Board for Netball to remain in the WAIS suite of programs. It was well known that Wally was not a fan of netball so we knew we always had to have a very strong case. It was nerve wracking as Wally made it a challenge for us given our first three KPI's were

- The number of gold medals netball won at the Olympics
- The number of Perth Orioles players in the Australian team
- The number of gold medals that we won at the Commonwealth Games

Given we could only manage zero in all of them it was always a relief that we remained in WAIS. We were lucky that we had some great supporters to back our case.

On top of this we also had to prepare cases for the survival of the Orioles and later Fever to remain in the national competition. These were always huge documents but prepared with gusto and lots of passion and we hoped with a bit of West Australian flair.

Attending national delegate meetings - Glen and I were delegates for Netball WA at national meetings. These meetings were always held prior to national championships so we were able to stay and cheer WA on. The meetings covered great issues such as pregnancy and the player, the CBT series, reviews of our operations etc. The camaraderie with the States was great, the competitions intense, the shopping excellent and the meals and cocktails we shared with everyone made the trips memorable experiences. I think we must have done every restaurant in Launceston one year and did not have a bad meal morning noon or night. We took everyone to the vanilla slice bakery on the way out to the stadium and doubled the takings for the shop in one week!

Glen would often be invited by Netball Australia to **attend functions as a past national player**. Here she would catch up with many of the players who had been in Aussie teams and the reunions were always fantastic. Like the local network this group is also very close.

Perhaps one of the most memorable times was our bid to Netball Australia for the right to bid to IFNA to host the **World Championships in Perth**. We had to prepare extensive documents and we

were up against Queensland and Victoria. Hours and hours of work went into preparing the fabulous documents and together with Events Corp we headed to Melbourne to present our bid.

In Melbourne the Events Corp team made us rehearse for hours - they were nicely pushy, and bossy and would only accept a thoroughly professional and slick presentation. They were beside themselves because Glenys and I would lose it in the first sentence and crack up laughing - me because I could not get the sentence correct and Glen because she could not point to the right place on the power point presentation. Glen would not speak only point!! In the end we won the bid, the Events Corp boys were thrilled and even very proud of us. The only downside was that the bid did not get presented at the International Congress and we then had to attend a very angry government meeting to explain ourselves. Talk about a let- down!

Another milestone - small but important - Getting our first sets of money from Treasury for the State Training Centre. After three feasibility studies, four Sports Ministers we were elated when we finally could bank on \$5 million dollars from Treasury. It was a start and an acknowledgment that the biggest female sport needed and deserved support. I can remember us wanting to skip out of the Ministers office! We headed straight out for a champagne to celebrate.

Perth Orioles Manager

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As Perth Orioles Manager Glenys was responsible for their budget, operations, competition administration, was bus driver and then the role of Team manager at matches. Our competition results were not stunning but we were building and learning how to compete in a national competition from Perth and with few resources. Just a few memories come to mind of this period:

- Glenys always hosted the new inter-state players with both Glenys and Ric helping them settle in to Perth upon arrival. We had some interesting characters and often they were reluctant to leave the Gill household - some stayed for some time!
- Glen's face - confronted with the same fireman in the same hotel after setting off the fire alarm two seasons in a row in Brisbane. Glen's face was mortified when she opened the door. I think it was Jess Shynn cooking toast in the shower the second time. We used to have breakfasts in the rooms to save money, leave plastic swimming pools in every city for ice baths, pinch ice from the bars for the baths and use every strategy we could think of to save money on each trip. Our budget never extended to the extras!!
- Sam Andrews bringing her team to the team bus wearing pink feather halos and in their Orioles team uniform. Gaye had allowed them to celebrate before our flight as we had just won our first match and the girls managed to crash a Hens Night, have a marvellous time and arrive very happy! On this very same trip Glen nearly fell over when a restaurant's Menu Board was circulating on the baggage carousel - one of our players was on teaching prac the next week and had decided to grab a board whilst in Brisbane because it would save time!
- The diplomatic and confidential manner with which Glenys managed her teams and the various issues that arose. She was an expert at keeping these issues confidential, off the netball gossip circuit and out of the newspapers. She protected her players and coaches fiercely.

Perth Lions Netball Region

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- Glenys was involved with the Region over the past three years.
- Glen selected on Cadet, Academy and State Netball League panels. She was independent and very knowledgeable having seen many players develop from juniors to seniors over the years at PNA and was able to apply both her playing knowledge and her knowledge from Orioles on what characteristics were required in an elite athlete.
- Many times Glenys would comment on an athlete and say “watch this player - she will be very good” and almost every time she was correct.
- Glenys was elected to the Perth Lions Netball Region Board in 2010 and attended as many events that she was able to. We wanted her to enjoy the region, keep close to her and to cherish every time she came.
- For her significant contributions to the Region Glenys was awarded Life Membership in 2011.

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