

Eulogy – 08/05/2020



Most of you knew my mum when she was out and about, so I'd like to speak about Mum at home.

I moved over to stay with my mum around March 15th, to help her through this lock down period.

It was lovely to have had these past couple of months with her full time. I'd of course been staying with her on and off for several years, probably more and more frequently over time. The past year I've probably spent more than half my time with her.

Mum had routines. Morning tea was taken sitting on the back porch. She'd grab a shopping bag, put the compost in there, a banana, a biscuit, newspaper or a novel, and grab a cup of tea. Bag and walking stick in one hand, tea in the other she'd make her way to the back porch and sit in the sun. She'd pull up her trousers a bit to get some sun on her legs, and sit in the sun, have her banana and tea, and then share the biscuit with the dog. She loved to just sit and look at her garden, every plant and flower something she had planted.

Her garden was her great pride. It's one of the things that made it her home.

She'd then head to the compost bin with her banana peel and compost from the kitchen. Then walk around the back of the trees and throw balls for Ricky. There's always about 7 tennis balls around the back yard so mum could pick one up, throw it, and get to the next while Ricky chased the first. If Ricky was accurate in returning the balls to her, he could pretty much keep her stuck in the one spot throwing ball after ball with barely a step taken.

Of course, she wasn't always up to it. Last year she had a bit of a cold and was sitting in bed feeling a bit miserable, talking on the phone with me. We chatted for a while and then mum said, "well I better go, I've got three tennis balls so far."

"What do you mean?" I asked

"While we've been talking Ricky keeps going out to the garden and fetching a tennis ball, brings it back and sets it on the bed beside me then looks at me hopefully. He's just returned with the third tennis ball, so I think he's trying to give a subtle hint that it's time for a cup of tea in the garden"

Dogs were a big part of her life for the last 20 something years. Whenever she was out with you, there was a dog waiting at home to joyfully welcome her.

Years ago, I was working in the US and received a rather brief cryptic email. It said something like

"The back seats of your car are wet and muddy; I'm trying to dry them. Goldie fell in the lake"

"Luv Mum"

I'm thinking Huh? I'm missing something.

It turns out mum had taken my car for a run to keep its battery alive. She'd taken Sandy and Goldie to Albert Park Lake, so I think it must have been the Million Paws Walk. Albert park lake has these hard-vertical stone edges, and Goldie had gone right to the edge excitedly as there was some ducks floating just out from the edge. And the silly goofball fell in. So, mum of course had to lie down on the ground, reach an arm under him and scoop him out.

It's interesting now to think of that as it was of course before her knee replacements, so she was perfectly comfortable to hop in my low-slung Toyota Celica, which was manual, and take it for a drive.

Mum was determined. That's one of the words I've heard many times in the last week. You might wonder how mum managed a dog, especially one who is about 50% bigger than we had expected, using a walker.

It's easy, since she's been using the walker, she hasn't really walked him around the streets much, instead she's taken Ricky to the off-leash dog park. There, mum would push her walker around the football oval, with Ricky off lead running around playing with the other dogs. Mum has lots of friends up there. Many times, I've taken Ricky there myself and people have looked at Ricky and me and asked, "is that Ricky?" "Ooooooh you must be Margaret's son, how's your mum?, she's so lovely"

Mum loved her home, and her beautiful garden, and her games with the dog. She had looked occasionally over the years, rather half-heartedly at retirement villages. She always had a series of reasons why it seemed like a bad idea and it would be best to stay in her own home a few more years. then a few more. then a few more.

Honestly, I think mum simply never wanted to leave her home. It was hers, her garden, her flowers, her fruit trees, her walls filled with paintings, her piano covered in family photographs.

I did my best over the years to support that goal, to help her.

And in the end, she achieved that goal.

She never had to leave her beautiful home.

Alastair Edgington