

Beth was born in Brisbane on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 1931. Her mother was Doris (née Gray) and her father was Simpson (Sim) Crump. Doris and Sim lived in Biggenden, south west of Bundaberg, where Sim had a garage. Beth's life nearly ended there when she fell into a tub of boiling water. The neighbour, a nurse married to the local doctor, heard the commotion and rushed to her rescue. Beth had scars from that accident for the rest of her life.

Beth started primary school in 1936 at Surat, west of Toowoomba. Her father now had a business there that included the garage, cinema and undertaker.

In 1937 the family moved to Power Street in Norman Park. Beth attended the Norman Park State School, meeting her lifelong friend Helen Toft (whose married name would be Helen Gargett).

Beth was surrounded by her mother's family when she lived in Norman Park. Auntie Nell and Auntie Evelyn each lived just a few doors away. Aunty Anne, Uncle Alec and Uncle Bill all lived in the family home in the neighbouring suburb of Buranda, with Auntie Mary living across the road with her family. In this period Beth's younger brother Simpson (Sam) was born. Her father joined the air force and was away from home for long periods during the Second World War.

Beth went to Brisbane Girls Grammar School – with her best friend Helen – leaving at junior to attend business college. It was at this time that she met Nan Henderson (whose married name would be Nan Blair). Nan would be another lifelong friend. Beth, Helen and Nan have continued to be close friends until today.

Beth went to work for the Queensland National Bank when it was in liquidation and in process of being amalgamated with the National Australia Bank. (She would complain that she didn't get a bonus that year because her position was with the company being liquidated.) Beth attended the Norman Park Presbyterian Church, which had a large, lively youth fellowship.

At Easter 1950 Beth went to the Gold Coast with friends. It was there that she met Neil Dutney for the first time. Neil's sister, Margaret, had been invited to a party with Beth's friends and asked Neil to go with her. At the party Nan

introduced Neil to Beth – she knew Neil through regularly catching the same tram to work. Beth was “courted by Neil persistently for nine months” (his own words). Neil took her to every production of Gilbert and Sullivan and every Cloudland Ball that season. In addition he found any opportunity he could to keep Beth’s attention on him instead of any rival, real or imagined. They were engaged in November 1950.

Beth’s mother was cautious about her suitor. The first thing Doris wanted to know was whether “Neil” was a Catholic name – that would never do. She was very reassured to learn that he’d gone to the Church of England Grammar School. He also inadvertently won some favour by regularly buying chocolate covered almonds for Beth. He learned later that Beth took these home and gave them to her mother. Talk of an engagement was a further challenge. Neil asked Beth’s father for her hand in marriage, and he agreed, on the basis that it would be a long engagement. Their ideas of what constituted a long engagement were rather different.

In April 1951 Neil moved to Charleville to join the practice of John Stephenson, becoming a partner soon afterwards. During this time apart, Beth and Neil wrote to each other daily.

Beth’s mother was worried about Beth going to Charleville. What would she do? Beth suggested that she could get a job. Beth’s mother said “You’re not giving up work to carry bricks”. She also insisted that before they were married Neil would have to buy a house. Neil did manage this but, as he says, “It was the oldest, smallest, cheapest house in Charleville.”

Beth married Neil in April 1952 in the chapel at Churchie. They honeymooned in the Northern Rivers district of NSW and arrived in Charleville in May 1952 to begin married life. The house had few conveniences. Even at that time Charleville had sewerage and so they had an indoor toilet. But that’s where it ended. There was no cold running water – only hot smelly bore water. They only had DC electricity, which meant that electrical appliances couldn’t be used. The wood fired stove was old with a large crack in the oven door. Beth had arrived in Charleville with no cooking or domestic skills at all. But she learned quickly. Janette Fox, the wife of a local doctor, took Beth under her wing and helped her navigate and eventually flourish in this strange new

world. In that first year Beth and Neil had visits from Helen and from Neil's sister Lorraine.

Beth had her first child, Mark, in October 1953. At that time they didn't own a car. Neil remembers Beth pushing the pram with difficulty along the sandy footpaths of Charleville with her beloved dog Snifter bounding ahead of the pram. By this time Beth's parents had moved to Chinchilla, North West of Toowoomba. Her mother came to Charleville before the birth and stayed for a few weeks afterwards to help her with Mark.

Peter was born in June 1955. They bought their first car while Beth was heavily pregnant and she learned to drive on the flat, empty roads of Charleville where there was no real need for hill starts or reverse parallel parking. This wasn't a problem until she needed to drive in Brisbane... where it *was* a problem. But, as always, what she didn't know she learned and Beth would become a deft driver and precision parker of the Valiant station wagons she loved so much.

Andrew was born in July 1958, John in May 1961, and Libby in June 1963 – at which time she had five children under the age of ten. When we were reflecting on this challenge during the weekend, Heather pointed out that it also meant she lived with *adolescent* children for about fifteen years – enough to test the patience, endurance and sanity of just about anyone.

Charleville was formative for Beth and her family. They were very involved in the Presbyterian Church there. Beth and Neil taught Sunday School. Neil became an elder. Beth was recruited by the minister's wife, Mrs O J Brandon to start a Young Women's Fellowship. It was in Charleville that she became the skilful, creative, adventurous cook that she was, and learned to design and hold in her mind the complex logistical arrangements of seven people so that everything the family needed to happen just happened – and happened well. And all the while she was fully engaged in the community and the network of families that made up her family's world.

To escape the extreme heat in the summer, the family would go to the coast for six weeks holiday each year – at Caloundra, Redcliffe or the Gold Coast. A reminder that for all its advantages, living in a place like Charleville was often just hard – heat, dust storms, drought, isolation, lack of services.

1963 was a difficult year for Beth. While she was pregnant she received word that her mother had been diagnosed with Leukaemia. She would recall one evening at that time when her father was staying with them in Charleville and she was serving dinner – feeding her father, her husband, her four sons, who were eating and eating and growing bigger and bigger, and her mother had died. She was the only woman in her immediate family and she was pregnant again. She wept. Small wonder that she was overjoyed when she delivered a baby girl. Beth loved all her children, but Libby was a special gift in her life.

Neil moved from Charleville to Brisbane in November 1965 to start work as a partner in Canon & Peterson. Beth and the children followed after Beth had done all the packing and made the arrangements for the move east. Initially they moved into a rented house on Moggill Road, Taringa, moving to the house at Burns Road, Toowong in May 1966. Beth and Neil would live there until 1985, when they moved into their newly-built house on Ellerslie Crescent Taringa.

Beth had a wide variety of friends from all walks of life in Charleville and her energy, hospitality, competence and sense of fun made her a well-known, much loved member of the community. In Brisbane she continued to make friends in all parts of her busy, varied life. In the early years in Brisbane her gift for frugality was important. At one point she learned that it was much more economical to buy eggs in bulk from the grower in Moggill. Soon after she discovered that it was cheaper still to buy the *cracked* eggs. Her friendship with Don Greer “the egg man” became such that he started to deliver eggs for Beth, to save her the long drive and allowing her to supply eggs for several of her friends. Don was a friend of the family for decades. It was he who suggested that she could go back to high school to complete her senior certificate in the evenings. Beth did just that in 1969 successfully finishing senior at night school without any of the concessions which would later be available for mature students.

It was around this time that she and Neil had the idea that Beth might do Law at Queensland University. She would have liked to do Social Work, but it was only available full time. Law was attractive because, if something happened to Neil, Beth could do articles and support the family as a solicitor. In the end she

started Law part time in 1972, giving Mark a year to enjoy University without his mother on the campus. She graduated ten years later. Beth's daughters-in-law have spoken of the inspiration she had been to them as young women; seeing the way she took on challenges and achieved the goals she set when other people would have considered that the pattern of their lives had been settled and set.

But by the time she graduated the idea of practicing Law had been replaced by a new vocation as an "active grandmother". Beth's first grandchild, Luke, had been born in 1981 to Mark and Ricki in Bundaberg. But in 1983 Peter and Bronwyn had Paul, in Brisbane, giving Beth the opportunity to be very involved. Being a grandmother was a joy to Beth and she put a lot of thought and effort into it. She had a gift for it and she was a gift to the children and their parents. After Luke and Paul, there was Anna, Sam, Bill, Frazer, Annabelle, Jack and Joseph – and, eventually, eight great-grandchildren.

That grandmother's sense of what the parents of small children might need found expression in one of her outstanding contributions to the Toowong Uniting Church.

The family had attended Toowong Presbyterian Church since their arrival in Brisbane in 1965, and continued after the Uniting Church began. Beth was very involved in a variety of roles and also represented the Congregation in the Presbytery and the Synod, accepting several responsible roles over the years. She was a valued leader in the Uniting Church.

In 1989 the Toowong Congregation established Jahjumbeen – an occasional child care centre which provided a critical service especially for stay-at-home parents. Beth was the chairperson of the management committee from the time it opened until 2006, when Wesley Mission Queensland took over responsibility for the service. It was the brain child of Rev Richard Diffin, but he had enlisted Beth's support from the beginning. She chaired the management committee, was deeply involved supporting the manager, provided practical assistance with fund raising, grant applications, building plans, landscaping and all the small but critical things that aren't really anyone's job. In the early days she was also a volunteer child care worker at the centre. In Jahjumbeen, Beth's

passion and skill as an “active grandmother” extended beyond her family in service to the wider community.

That service to the wider community found other expressions too. As a volunteer Beth taught English as a Foreign Language, mentored young migrant mothers, and delivered meals-on-wheels; not to mention all the contributions she made as a parent when her children were at Taringa Primary School, Brisbane Boys College, St Peters and Brisbane Girls Grammar.

In 1974 Beth and Neil left the children in charge of themselves and their home for the first time – traveling to Adelaide for a Legal Convention. It marked a watershed in their life: the children had begun to leave home – Mark in 1973, Peter and Andrew in 1977, John in 1981, and Libby in 1988. So in 1974, it was possible for Beth and Neil to go away by themselves for the first time. Mark had moved out. Libby could stay with the Kohlers (family friends). Peter, Andrew and John could look after themselves at Burns Road. Technically they were old enough now, but especially their wonderful new next-door neighbours, Jennifer and Bevan, could keep an eye out for smoke or whatever. They would still have someone looking out for them. Jennifer and Bevan remain dear friends of Beth and Neil until today.

This began more than thirty years in which travel was a particular pleasure for Beth and Neil. They travelled all over Australia and the world by bus, plane, train and ship, visiting every continent except Antarctica.

In recent years, as Beth’s memory of the detail of many of these trips has receded she has enjoyed hearing stories and seeing photographs from their adventures. “How wonderful. I *love* hearing about my life!”, she would say.

When Peter died suddenly on this day in 2009, Beth and Neil were devastated. Neil said that he felt that Beth’s decline began then. At the very least, he said, “We didn’t feel like going on any more trips after that.”

In the years that followed Beth, who had always been the one everyone depended on, became increasingly dependent on others – especially Neil, supported by Libby and her family, Mark and Karen, Bronwyn, and Jennifer and Bevan. While her short term memory largely disappeared, Beth still loved a

conversation, had opinions and insights on most subjects and was interested in whatever was going on in her family and the world. She still took real pleasure in the things she'd always loved – a flower, birdsong, a sunny day, the view from Ellerslie Crescent. Her last years were often difficult from a medical point of view, but they were beautiful too – because Neil and those who supported him made sure they were.

Beth died on Thursday morning – peacefully, at home, with Neil.