

Archibald Norman “Norm” McDonald Lockhart (OKG47)

Norm was born Archibald Norman McDonald Lockhart on 19 July 1929, to Arch and Isobel Lockhart. His younger brother Charles came along in 1931 and they spent their first years at “Bugaldi”, Biniguy in NSW before the untimely death of their father at the young age of 28, in 1932.

Isobel moved, with her children, back to live with her parents in Pallamallawa for a time – Agnes and James Hutton owned and operated the general store in Pallamallawa, and Agnes was a nurse and midwife for the area for many years. When the boys needed schooling, the little family moved to a home in Frome Street, Moree a few years later.

Norm attended Moree Public School and enjoyed a close relationship with his cousins Don, Helen, Margaret, and Flora McLaughlin.

Norm went away to board at Knox Grammar in Wahroonga, Sydney for his secondary schooling. He enjoyed these years at boarding school and spoke fondly of his experience there. He formed a number of lifelong friendships and honed his skills in woodwork and cricket in particular - Norm was a senior prefect and captain of the 2nd XI cricket team.

Upon leaving school in 1948 Norm returned to Moree and started jackarooing for the Gall family at Tycannah East, Moree while continuing to play cricket in local competition and enjoying the usual pursuits of young country life. He eventually moved back to “Bugaldi” in the 1950s, where he farmed in partnership with brother Charlie until the property was sold in 2004.

Norm had known the Cruickshank family for some years & romance blossomed with Shirley, the 3rd daughter of Allan and Jean Cruickshank of “Poppinguy”, Moree. Norman and Shirley married in April 1961 in St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Moree. Norman junior was born in 1962, followed by Helen in 1965 & Wendy in 1967, and a busy life continued with farming, stock work & shearing, and involvement in the school & sport activities of 3 young children. Norm was well ahead of the times and was a keen hands-on father, always happy to assist with bathing and changing babies, school working bees, sports days, school P and C and the like. As the children became teenagers, Norms’ legendary patience was in evidence as he saw them through driving lessons, maths homework and waiting for hours in the car at country dances - often ferrying his own teenagers and a variety of others, home again in the small hours.

Being on a rural property meant being at the mercy of the weather and many times Norm would have to walk his children out to the main road over a flooded creek, holding hands as he safely steered them across a railway line above swirling flood waters, in order for them to attend school.

He was resourceful too, and with his Scots heritage, would never waste anything or buy something he could build for himself - and so started the adventures with "Bewdy Norm", a Norm Lockhart built and designed camper trailer complete with canvas sewn by Shirley on her trusted Singer sewing machine! A number of happy camping trips at Copeton Dam with family and friends ensued.

Norm had a lifelong interest in learning, with a real passion for history and family history, photography, and keen interest in politics and sport. Always one to dig around in the best available encyclopaedia or website until he found exactly the information he wanted, he was a great source of knowledge on many topics. He kept up to date with computer skills and research for the Moree Family History Society, in particular with sister-in-law Elli Cruickshank - they were what some might call "obsessed" with not only their own family histories, but also everyone else's! He was a life member of the Gwydir Family History Society, and President for a number of years. His contribution to the Society was recognised in a Mayoral Community Service Award in 2001. He and Shirley were also both honoured with awards for years of service to Moree Meals on Wheels.

In 1990 Norm and Shirley enjoyed a long awaited trip to the UK and Europe, exploring many places of interest and experiencing all that family history first-hand. He was very proud of his Scottish ancestry and loved having the opportunity to travel there. His family tree is clearly traced back to the 1200's, and Norm felt a great affinity to Scotland and Scottish ways.

In 1997 he and Shirley were invited to be present at the Centenary celebrations of the small town of Lockhart in southern NSW, originally named in honour of his Great Grandfather, C G N Lockhart who had held the role of Commissioner for Crown Lands in the Murrumbidgee River area in the 1850s. It was a trip they enjoyed immensely.

Along the years, Norm became a very proud and loving Papa to 10 grandchildren – Skye, Allan & Anthony Tisdell; Phoebe, Victoria, Will and Laura Lockhart; and Robbie, Elizabeth and Claire Sutton; and 3 great grandchildren – Sophia Fuentes, and Riley and Isabelle Thomas. For both Norm & Shirley it was a role they cherished, and again with his patient and calm nature, he formed beautiful relationships with each of those children, taking a genuine interest in their lives and achievements. Testament to their deep affection for him was during his 90th birthday celebrations, as we observed each of them quietly take a seat beside him during the afternoon to chat and celebrate his milestone age.

Norm and Shirley moved to Toowoomba in 2004 for their retirement. Sadly Shirley was already experiencing the effects of dementia in her late 60s, and Norm lovingly cared for her at home for as long as was possible, reluctantly moving her into care in 2007. He mourned deeply at this stage and missed her greatly, continuing to visit her daily until her passing in August 2008. He continued to live in their home in Middle Ridge until 2021, enjoying friendships and neighbourhood “walks” which invariably involved more “talk” than “walk”.

Norm moved into Yukana Private care just a few weeks before his 92nd birthday. While the past two years have been frustrating and increasingly difficult as his health and mind failed, most of Norm’s life was lived with good humour, kindness and a practical sense of fairness.

He was overwhelmingly a wonderful husband and a present and loving father. He has provided a beautiful example to his children and grand-children and will be much missed.

Norm was a solid country man who loved his family most, his cattle, dogs, horses and birds. Since his passing, we have heard time and again what a “good man” he was, and that is so true.

Norms’ family would like to make a few special mentions. Firstly thank you to Don Crane, a lifelong mate who continued to visit and assist Dad right up to the end; Brian and Lyn Jordan who were wonderful neighbours in Middle Ridge; and lastly, of the beautiful care he received from the staff at Yukana. We are so very grateful for the respect and affection he was shown there.