

Maree Elizabeth Faulkner is a loving mother of three children, devoted Nana of ten grandchildren and a special 'great nan' to ten little people. AND Maree is an avid and loyal supporter of (Footscray) the Western Bulldogs Football Club.

Maree is also a reluctant recipient of Dementia.

Maree's own family began some sixty years ago, dementia developed 5 years ago and her love and passion for 'the doggies' began almost a lifetime of 85 years ago.

Maree's love of the Footscray Football Club began after the death of her father, when her mother and five siblings moved from Narrandera to Footscray to live with her aunt who owned a local hotel. Maree's three older brothers became great friends with the local players whose oval was just down the road. Handy! Maree and her two teenage sisters also became great friends, and subsequent followers and admirers of the team. It became an all in family affair of support and footy was entrenched into every winter weekend.

Wedding day for Maree just happened to be the 1954 Preliminary Final and Footscray, who had fallen short at their attempt the year before, were playing! Any wedding day jitters soon gave way to footy jitters and many an ear piece was tucked away. A double celebration for Maree as the doggies were heading to their first ever Grand Final. One week later, very poor radio reception driving the highway home from an Adelaide honeymoon did not dampen a frustrating wait to hear of a 'glorious' result.

Over the years family and domestic life settled, but footy passion did not. No one else's mother seemed as crazy for footy as our mum. And her team wasn't even that good! Maree worked hard to create a family footy legacy filled with her own passion but unfortunately, not a child or a grandchild took the doggies on.

The mood and seat at Sunday Mass was determined by the result of 'the game.' Happy high fives, thumbs up and big smiles verses gentle back pats, commiserations and whispered 'next time' gave away the day's result. However! A win over Collingwood would see Maree saunter down the front and sidle up smiling to her dear friend, and one-eyed Pies supporter, Paddy. And there she sat her cheeky self for the service.

Fast forward to a recent attempt by the now Western Bulldogs. The fiercely independent Maree has been placed in permanent care for a most difficult condition. Maree's memory and clarity now cloudy BUT her footy passion was spot on.

With all our energy and enthusiasm to cheer on Maree, the Preliminary Final 2016 became our saddest night, with the realisation that some enormous power could take away the inner spark of our footy mum. We set her up with a beer and chips, TV switched on, colours blazing, ball bounced. But nothing could switch on her footy spark. Heartbroken, with deep tears we left Maree as she said, "I'm tired" and climbed into bed. We kissed her goodnight. But it was not a good night, a good night was watching the footy. It felt like it was a goodbye ...

Later, game over, still tearful we called to check with the staff to see if maybe.... hopefully.... Maree might understand that her beloved doggies had made the Grand Final.

Understand they said excitedly! Maree was dancing with her walker and singing loudly their song .....Sons of the west .....

Never more was there bigger tears, big happy tears, as we sang and danced with her.

The footy spark was relit, and it burned brightly throughout the week, and never more brightly through a momentous Grand Final day. The doggies battled the swans, as did Nana Faulk and the

challenge of dementia. The Western Bulldogs played with huge hearts, determination and unrelenting effort. The powerful essence that is Maree, with her huge heart, determination and unrelenting effort, it seemed could overcome the consuming power of her personal opposition. Maree sat with us 3 kids, frequently looking over to us saying, "I can't believe you are all here barracking for the doggies....I can't believe it." Screaming and tears and hugs all round as her 'Sons of the West' kicked away in the dying moments .....a footy dream comes true.

And just for a day, at that moment when the siren sounded, we got to cherish our beautiful, footy crazy Nana Faulk in her true light, away from Dementia and forgetfulness.....a moment we will never forget

Great job mum, nan and great nan.

That special day we knew and Nan knew .....

