

An inspiration to us all

Sheila is an inspiration to us all. Born in 1916, the same year as my mum, Olive, also born in Western Australia smack bang in the middle of World War I.

Shortly after meeting Ross in 1973 at The University of Sydney Music Department, I was told about Ross's good friends, Martin and Ann and The Wesley-Smith Family. Sheila and Harry were talked about with reverence and respect, the proud building blocks of a strong, talented and united family, a kind of idealized perfect couple, model citizens of Adelaide's establishment who produced four cheeky, slightly rebellious and very clever boys. They could afford to be a bit non-conformist because they always had a firm, unconditionally loving and consistent base to come home to, Sheila and Harry.

I have a special memory of Sheila at Darwin Airport, very late at night, waiting patiently for a delayed flight back to Sydney where she would be picked up by granddaughter, Olivia. Although tiny and frail in appearance, when I asked if there was anything I could get her, a cup of tea, perhaps, Sheila, beautifully composed, attired in a dreamy, cornflower blue suit, assured me she was just fine and I believed she was. I realized this was one strong and resilient lady. I can see those same qualities in her beautiful granddaughters, Ollie and Alice.

Sheila, you are the model mum I aspire to be.

Helen Edwards, December 28 2009