Tribute from husband to wife

Susan was a remarkable woman who always held her head high and gave endlessly to those around her.

Born in Cowra NSW in 1949, Susan’s father George was an army officer, and her mother Marie, a nurse.

Susan had an interesting upbringing – born into a family with a long history of military service. Much of her early childhood was spent moving around with her family from one posting to another, and she saw much of Australia as a young girl.

It was only by chance that first I met Susan a couple of weeks before they were due to be posted to Canberra. The moment I set eyes on her, I knew she was the one for me. She was the loveliest woman I had ever seen and reminded me of Greta Garbo from one of the old movies – her poise, her grace and her beauty.

Our courtship was difficult as we had to overcome distance, but I was determined to make her my wife. Susan and I came from different backgrounds: I was brought up in the city and had never ventured out into the country, while Susan had grown up with a military background, and had travelled to many places by the time she was 18. But that didn't worry us – we complimented each other perfectly and got on like a house of fire.

After getting permission from her father, I proposed, she said yes (eventually) – and I was the happiest man alive. I remember how beautiful she looked walking down the isle at our Catholic church. Her big brown eyes and her cheeks flushed with excitement, her father beside her looking as proud as punch.

It was only later that I found Susan shared my love of the old black and whites and when we were first married, spent many evenings watching and reciting lines from movies such as Casablanca and Camille, much to my delight.

Susan followed in her mother’s footsteps and became a nurse. It was a calling that she said she always had as a little girl, influenced by both her mother’s vocation, and her father’s and grandfather’s stories of war time and the Great Depression. Her want to help and care for others was the very essence of the Susan I knew.

When we had Jenny, Susan was thrilled – we felt blessed. She had longed to have a child of her own, but it had taken longer that we had hoped. Jenny was the apple of her eye, and the two formed a strong bond. Susan was tough but fair and when Susan got older, the two of them formed a special friendship that never faltered over the years. In her last years, her pride was her four-year-old grandson, Roger.

When Susan fell ill, we were all devastated. She was always fit and strong, and on the ball. She had so much to live for and so much love to give. She never liked any fuss being made of her, and would chastise us if we ¬ as she would like to say – “flapped” around her too much. She was so used to caring for others that she couldn't be doing with any fuss for her.

Susan, my beautiful, sweet, darling wife, may you be at peace, and god bless you.