

Eulogy for Michelle Fish

Delivered by her brother, Paul Bottomley on 19 Jan 2021

Michelle Fish was born at Queen Alexandra Hospital in Battery Point at 6.30am on 11 January 1969.

We lived at 2 Grosvenor Street, Sandy Bay. Uncle Alan and Aunty Yvonne lived a few houses up the road. Michelle was always a sweet, happy child who loved playing with her cousins. She had a pet Guinea Pig named Basil whom she carted about in the tray of her 3-wheel bike.

She did well at school and attended Albuera Street Primary where she completed Grade 4. We then moved to Cheverton Parade and Michelle finished her primary school years at Waimea Heights Primary. We moved into our new home in Cheverton Parade over the Xmas school holidays and Michelle was given a cat named Teeny who lived for 18 years. She attended high school at Tarooma. During her school years she made life-long friends and looked forward to the school reunion every few years. Many of those friends are here today.

During Michelle's teenage years our family was very busy, always working, lots off trips to Bruny planting potatoes, enjoying time with Grandma Jo, eating her scones, sliding down her polished wooden hallway, swimming at Bull Bay, carting hay. Also, many trips to Huonville catching up with family.

Michelle and Grandma Jo were very close. They had many wonderful memories. One beautiful story was not long before Grandma passed, she shared her most "Famous and absolutely loved", fruit cake recipe and "special techniques".

Our family was always involved with things that went fast on the bitumen, water or dirt. Dad bought a ski boat and after mum almost ran over him on pick-up, he decided both kids had to learn to drive a boat and to ski. 'Shell' picked up skiing first go. She then proceeded to drop one ski and went another 2 miles. When it was time to turn around, she fell. The second time out of water was on one ski and back to get the first one!

Dad bought Michelle a YZ-60 motorbike which she rode at our shack at Murdunna. When Michelle wasn't motorbike riding, she was skiing. As a family we went to Murdunna frequently. On one of these trips Michelle commented. "Look at those sheep. They are all rowed up like they are on parade." The "sheep" were actually hay bales..... The next Monday,

mum booked her into an optometrist for glasses. Later in life this was corrected with laser surgery.

Michelle and I began our racing careers with Kart Racing at the three Tasmanian tracks – Orielton, Archerville in the North and Highclere in the North West. We both loved it and developed a need for speed. We were successful in local events and State Championships. We both ran Formula Vs and each held the lap records here (at Baskerville) and at Symmons Plains.

Michelle began work after school at age 14 doing administration work for “Design Works”, a small business on the wharf in town.

She did work experience at St Helen’s Hospital as a nurse but after a week of bedpans and sick bowls, she knew it wasn’t for her.

On leaving school she joined the Department of Public Administration. This stood her in good stead when she came to join me as Office Manager at Professional Plumbing. Shell worked long hours, often there on a Saturday, only stopping for her weekly appointment at “Cadge”, constantly changing her hair styles and always had beautiful fingernails. She has made life-long friendships with the girls from the salon.

Michelle was always active and a keen member of the Glenorchy Health and Fitness, often doing many classes a day, sometimes participating in charity events, always putting in a big effort, never one to take it easy.

In February 1991 she married Shaun and moved into their home at Chigwell, on the hill above Moorilla, where they still are today. Michelle brought to the marital home many things, one of which was her cat Teeny. However, just before they were married, they bought “Egg” (a Blue Heeler) into their family. Now, long story short, Shell and Shaun realised very quickly that the two animals had to be separated. One morning someone forgot and this resulted in significant couch, curtain, glass coffee table and crockery damage!! The cat lived another five years, then Egg was one happy dog.

They chose not to have children. However, between them they have 11 nieces, nephews and god-children, whom they love dearly, following their school and sporting achievements, birthdays and other important milestones.

Michelle was often called upon to babysit her friends’ and family’s children. She had a suitcase which she kept stocked with glitter, glue, scissors, paper, pencils, card games, dress-up outfits, etc. They loved to see what Aunty Shell would pull out from the case.

Michelle and Shaun had a wonderful relationship. They were married almost 30 years and in Shaun's words – and to my knowledge -they only had one barney. Together they shared a love of motorsport, football (as avid Richmond supporters, they even had their own "Punt Road" in their backyard), their dogs, Friday night bubbles and Bruny Island. Later in life Michelle obtained her motorbike licence and both made plans of touring Australia together. They enjoyed their alone-time, but loved their together-time. They have a huge group of friends through their interests, availability and of course a strong connection and love for their family.

After one bout of ill health Michelle retired from Professional Plumbing and became even more actively involved in motorsport. Through her illness she became involved with the McGrath Foundation. From Aunty Yvonne's influence she attended The Smith Family events and became the Hobart VIEW Club's Publicity Officer.

Michelle and Shaun retired at the same time and spent much time with mum and dad at the Isle of Capri, various Formula 1 events in Australia, including Singapore, where Michelle was so very happy. She paraded and waved the Aussie flag high for her man Riccardo and even kissed the track. She spent six months working at Surfers Paradise Rent-a-Car, enjoying the interaction with the clients and work colleagues, while living at the Isle of Capri. She was a member of the Shark's Club in Surfers not because she loved their sport but because she loved their gym. She was one of the only girls at their gym and their spin bikes were fantastic.

Her diagnosis with breast cancer was a devastating blow and between treatments she continued to support her various interests, often by Zoom. She was supported on this exhausting journey by Shaun, family and her many friends. She refused to return to hospital until she had seen them all one more time.

Recently their home at times looked like a florist's shop. Her fridge and freezer were full to bursting with prepared meals and desserts. I would like to thank all those who contributed with cooking, cards, texts and support.

A brave, courageous lady, who I'm proud to say was my sister. She fought right until the end.

To use her words "Tough as a \$2 steak."