

The Reflections Continue....

We continue our selection of interviews with long standing members of our community. This month our reflection focuses on Marlene & Terry Dutton. Remember, if you think you know of someone we should chat with and who may share their story with us please contact Deb at the Shire. You can email ea@dalwallinu.wa.gov.au with your suggestions and details. Our aim is to capture the history from our residents while they can still share it.



Marlene Dutton is well known in Dalwallinu. She was the backbone of Pioneer House for 29 years, caring for local residents when they needed it most. Here is her story.

Marlene was born in Subiaco and lived in Bullsbrook where her parents were orchardists. Her father worked at the airport as a leading hand on airstrips and the family ran the orchard at the same time. Marlene grew up as one of 12 children, with 6 brothers and 5 sisters. Not all of them were home at the same time.

She was educated in Bullsbrook. The family lived 8 miles out of town so they had to catch the bus to school. If you missed the bus, you had to walk.

After leaving school Marlene trained as a nurse in Geraldton. When she qualified she moved up north for many years. Marlene spent 7 years in Kununurra and 2 years in Broome before returning to live in Perth.

During her time up north she would travel to remote indigenous communities to assist in the provision of health and childcare clinics to educate the young mothers.

Nursing was her career and she was a nurse or administrator for the most of her working life, apart from a short stint as a painter.

Marlene was visiting one of her sisters who lived in Dalwallinu when she met Terry Dutton. At the time she was a single mum raising her 2 children on her own.

Terry was born in England and his parents were "10 pound Poms" who moved to Australia when he was 3 years old. The family settled in Penrith, Sydney before moving to Shepparton, Victoria. Terry's father was a Shire worker and his mother was a homemaker. He grew up with 1 sister and 2 brothers.

When Terry left school he joined the Navy for 5 years. He later became a builder and painter. Terry's brother David was also a builder and painter and was working in Dalwallinu which is where Terry joined him as his business was busy.

Marlene was visiting one of her sisters in Dalwallinu and this is when she met Terry. She moved here with her 2 children Craig and Sheree and started a new life with



Terry. She was a painter in their business. At the time Terry had the contract with the Department of Education. Marlene fondly recalls that Terry loved Dalwallinu and she struggled to get him to leave even for holidays. Although they did manage to travel a bit before he sadly passed away.

Together they have 4 children, 6 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren with one on the way. Sadly her son Craig passed away in 1999. With daughter Sheree still in Dalwallinu there are 4 generations of females now living in their home.



Marlene and Terry became immersed in the Dalwallinu community. Terry with the Bowling club and the Football club where he was life members of both and he played cricket in earlier years.

Place of wheat and wattle....

Marlene became involved with Aged Care after working for Terry for a few years painting. She recalls a friend saw two jobs come up at the hospital. Marlene laughingly recalled that they thought it was a good way to get out of the heat. They both got the jobs and rest is history with Marlene going on to work at Pioneer House for almost 30 years.

Pioneer House began operating in 1990. It was officially opened in 1992 by the Governor of Western Australia Major General Philip Michael Jeffery, AC, CVO, MC. Governor Jeffery later went on to become the Governor General of Australia.



Marlene with the Governor of WA Major General Philip Michael Jeffery, AC, CVO, MC

Initially when Marlene was employed the Shire managed Pioneer House. After 3 years the government took over the running of it. Pioneer House has 4 self-contained units which can house up to 8 residents. Marlene worked every weekend and her job was certainly varied. She took on the gardens at Pioneer House (all done in her own time) and they were

so lovely people would use the gardens to get married or have their wedding photos taken there.

She would arrange Christmas celebrations and buy presents herself for the residents. She would even dress up as Santa. If residents would be alone at Christmas she took them home to her place to spend Christmas with her family.



Marlene arranged activities on a regular basis for the residents. This could include arts and crafts, (which she bought materials herself) BBQ's, bingo every Saturday morning where locals were welcomed along. She arranged outings and recalled one trip out for a bush picnic. They took a commode with them and parked it under a tree so all amenities were taken care of.

She regularly arranged morning teas so the Doctor could attend and do bulk vaccinations. Everything revolved around her work at Pioneer House and she received recognition for her dedication in 2015 when she was awarded the Australia Day Active Citizenship Award.

When I asked her what she loves about living in Dalwallinu she responded immediately with

the community and the friendly people that make living here so enjoyable. Terry felt the same as he loved this town and never wanted to leave.

When asked about what she missed in town she said it was a full-time bank and a hairdresser and if she could change anything or bring something new to town she said it would be a butcher and more family friendly pool hours.

It is always interesting to get the answer to the last question about the one thing you grew up with that most young people today wouldn't understand or remember today. Marlene remembers having to wipe her bottom with newspaper because toilet tissues didn't exist. Also in the same vein as this having the night cart man come around to empty your toilet. And finally she remembers growing up on the orchard and having to crank Mum and Dad's car with a big winder to start it. They did this by sliding the crank-handle into a hole in the front of the car and winding it. Definitely a bit different to pushing a button on the dashboard.



Thank you Marlene for sharing your story with us.