

Story of Gwendoline Harris (nee Born 1915



Gwen, as she was known, was the fourth of six children in the family of Richard Charles (Jock) & Emily Leach.

She was Born in Woodville, NZ on the 4th July 1915 where she grew up on her parents' farm. The farm, still there today, is placed at the bottom of the Rail Overpass known as the "Ramp" (on the left driving south) two miles south of Woodville, just before the Manawatu Gorge. Their land went from the bottom of the Ramp where the House is situated to the river down the back of the property, they also leased land directly across the road plus more on the Woodville side of the Ramp, which was known as Bolton's farm.

Gwen Played Net Ball (was known then as basket ball) and at one time got a broken nose. She left school at 13 and went to Palmerston North where she worked for the PDC in Millinery For 10 shillings per WEEK.

Gwens Parents were great dancers & organised the regular dances in Woodville where she met her Husband to be Ronald Harris. They were married in 1938 and first lived in a new state unit in Main street Woodville.

Their first child was Trevor, Born 3rd Sept 1939, the day the Second World War was declared. Gwen & Ron then Purchased their own home at 28 Ross Street Woodville and in 1944 had twin sons Rex & Charles.

These were hard times with most foods rationed, but Gwen managed by Taking to Sewing, what was to be her life long Passion, and took on contract work at home for extra money. After the War she worked for her Brother in Law at his Men's and Drapers Shop in Woodville.

Gwen was also in the Local Drama Club.

She was also a great organiser of family get togethers which became known as the Leach Organization.

In early 1954 Ron , who worked for NZ Rail his whole life, transferred to Auckland and the family lived at 10 Rainville road in New Market.

Late 1955 they moved to Palmerston North, where they Purchased a home at 24 Lyndhurst Street, Gwen became involved in the Ladies Modelling Club, where she took up Fashion modelling, along with making clothes and hats.

Ron retired around 1970 and they purchased a Flat at 3 Ruamahunga Crescent

Gwen & Ron were in the Manawatu Caravan Club where she was an active member.

Gwen was a volunteer for meals on wheels in Palmerston North and Later in Napier.

In 1996 they shifted to Napier and purchased a new Unit in a Retirement Village at 20/190 Avondale Road where she was a keen gardener and took up swimming in the sea. Along with her greatest Passion (after sewing) "Retail Therapy" (that is Shopping!)

Gwen had many trips over seas including Los Angles, Singapore, Honolulu, Sydney & Adelaide.

At aged 80 she had a large party with all her friends and relations and at 86 Passed away after suffering with ill health.

Gwen can be remembered by her Humour, Kindness, Inspiration & Skills along with being a

Loving Mother, Grandmother (of Five) and Great Grandmother (of Five).