

In Memoriam

Charles Geoffrey Dibdin 1930-2014

Geoff Dibdin, son of devout Christians Ruby and William, was born 22 January 1930 and grew up in Brighton-le-Sands, NSW.

Geoff became a Christian youth fellowship leader, where he met his future wife Dawn Duncan.

Working for Qantas, in 1952 he resigned to train for the ministry.

But he had heard about Bahá'í and its teachings of the oneness of religion and the oneness of the human race, from Dawn whose mother was a Bahá'í.

Rather than commit his parents to the considerable expense of theological training, with the possibility of forfeiting their money if he subsequently withdrew, Geoff returned to Qantas to a two year posting in Papua New Guinea.

In PNG Geoff read "Portals to Freedom," in which a Christian minister, describes his encounters with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It had a profound effect.

He believed that to be truly faithful to Christ he should try and investigate truth independently, prayerfully, without prejudice.

Geoff's lack of prejudice became a characteristic of his life. In May 1954, he became the first person to join the Bahá'í Faith in Papua New Guinea!

Unbeknownst to each other, in Sydney Dawn also joined the Faith in May 1954!

Returning to Sydney he was relieved to find that he and Dawn were still "an item". They married in 1956, moving to Parkes, NSW in 1959.

The townsfolk were a little suspicious of the newcomers whose religion had an unusual name and who didn't drink alcohol. Dad's boss took him to the local pub and when Dad ordered a lemon squash, his boss whispered to others "AA," to explain why he wasn't drinking. He got more respect from the barman who now thought Dad was an alcoholic!

Geoff became an office-bearer in the Senior Citizens Association and helped found a new branch of the UN Association

"In the early years," his son Colin remembers: "we had no car or television. Accountancy was not the path to great material wealth, so Mum taught music to help balance the household budget.

"Together Mum and Dad gave us children everything we needed, including a spiritual education."



For ten years the Dibdins wrote and recorded a weekly program for radio 2PK. This helped introduce concepts of 'world peace' and 'unity in diversity' to a remote and insular pre-internet locality.

At home they would have 'firesides' – building friendships through informal conversations with interested people and seekers and in time a small but vibrant Bahá'í community developed.

In 1971, the family moved to Griffith, where Geoff became a partner at Holmes, Clare and Isles Chartered Accountants.

The Dibdins quickly became close to some pure-hearted Indigenous people living on the outskirts of town.

Geoff felt a deep attachment to Indigenous people everywhere. He was proud to be accepted as a friend and co-worker.

As an officer of the Aboriginal Advancement Organisation he was instrumental in starting up a football team, and providing practical help liaising with Government agencies.

Geoff told the story of a meeting of the Aboriginal Advancement Organisation where the chairperson, Mick Moynahan, said: "We're all black-fellers here," then paused, looked at Dad and added: "You're close enough!"

"Let me tell you something which is hardly a secret. Dad loved to talk! Our home had an open door for everyone: visitors, strangers, tradespeople, friends and relatives – with laughter, a cup of tea and stimulating conversation.

And our indigenous friends were particularly welcomed," Colin remembers.

Once again, people became attracted by the Dibdin family's genuine love for people. Many were inspired by the teachings of the

Faith, and some formed the nucleus of a spiritual community in the town.

An exciting and unexpected new phase of Geoff's life commenced in 1989 when they moved to Western Australia. For over a decade they served alongside daughter Marjorie and son-in-law Peter in community-building activities in Carnarvon, Onslow and Karratha.

In Carnarvon, a dynamic Bahá'í community developed, where the members cared deeply for each other, were actively involved in service activities and the community gradually expanded across the Gascoyne and Pilbara.

"Geoff was immensely happy to find deep connections developing between the Bahá'í community and the Aboriginal communities – links which have endured until now, some 20 years later," Dawn said.

While in Carnarvon, Geoff offered his book-keeping and auditing services to a number of organisations that could not afford the usual fees. He was also a member of FOCUS – Friends of Citizens Under Stress - a multi-faith organisation.

In 1999 they bought their current home in Mt Barker, SA, where daughter Linda, husband Zia and grand daughter Angela also lived.

His ailments were endured patiently. He had a great sense of humour. When He was getting ready to leave this earthly existence, and was looking forward to the journey ahead, he was told that friends were praying for his health. His comment? "Oh no. I might get better!"

Two years ago, Geoff thought he was dying so the family gathered to say their goodbyes – it was a time of much love and laughter.

A few months later, he was still alive and he joked that his application for the Next World had been rejected!

"The Universal House of Justice regretted to learn...of the passing of your father, Charles Geoffrey Dibdin. His many decades of stalwart service to the Cause of God, which were characterized by self-effacement and loving encouragement of others, will be long remembered. Your dear mother, Dawn...and the other members of your family may be assured of the prayers of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of his soul throughout the divine realms and for the solace of your hearts at this time of loss."

From the National Spiritual Assembly: "Geoff was known as a deeply principled man evidenced by the important role he performed for the National Assembly for several years as its auditor. His self-sacrificial support of the outstanding service his children and grandchildren continue to offer the Cause in Australia provides a shining example for Bahá'í parents everywhere. His humility and innate gentleness and cheerfulness will be long remembered, and we are certain the dedicated efforts undertaken by his family to ease the challenges of the latter years of his life were a source of great comfort to him."

-Colin Dibdin

In loving remembrance of the following souls who have also winged their flight to the Abhá Kingdom



In Memoriam

Mr Graham Adams, Playford, SA
 Mrs Shahnaz Aghdacyyekta, Blacktown, NSW
 Mrs Marion Attwood, Whitsunday Region, Qld
 Mr Charles Barclay, Rockhampton Region, Qld
 Mr Khalil Dehghani, Kingston, Vic
 Mrs Afandi Erfanian-Nozar, Manningham, Vic
 Mrs Daphne Escott, Mornington Shire, Qld
 Mr Melville Escott, Mornington Shire, Qld
 Mr Roohollah Eshraq-Khavari, Mandurah, WA
 Mr Enayatullah Eskandarian, Perth, WA
 Mr Ahmad Farah-Bakht, Ku-Ring-Gai, NSW
 Mrs Parichehr Forohari, Whittlesea, Vic
 Mr Benjamin Gabori, Mornington Shire, Qld
 Mr Eric Gavenor, Mornington Shire, Qld
 Mr Errol Gavenor, Mornington Shire, Qld
 Mrs Elizabeth Jack, Mornington Shire, Qld
 Mr Hilary Lanley, Mornington Shire, Qld
 Miss Christine Lorraine, Mornington Shire, Qld
 Mr Sheidollah Misagh, Parramatta, NSW
 Mr Ezzatollah Mostaghimi, Walkerville, SA
 Mrs Gloria Pearce, Cassowary Coastal Region, Qld
 Mrs Paridokht Rostami, Hume, Vic
 Mrs Wilma Roughsey, Mornington Shire, Qld
 Mrs Ghodsieh Shahbazi, Blacktown, NSW
 Mr Mahmood Said Shahzadeh, Port Adelaide, SA
 Mrs Fatemeh Nesa Khanom Taef, Ryde, NSW
 Mr Soheil Taheri, Toodyay, WA
 Mr Jonathan Toby, Mornington Shire, Qld
 Mr Ivan Wilson, Mornington Shire, Qld



The editor notes that the extraordinary number of passings in the Mornington Shire community is due to the fact that this area does not have a Local Assembly to make timely notifications of when these friends had passed away. The Secretariat is thankful to the Local Assembly of Cairns for conducting investigations at the time of Unit Convention and determining that these souls have passed on to the 'Abhá Kingdom.

Betty Jackson 1919-2014



Betty had always been looking for the return of Christ. When she was a child she had a continuing question: "Jesus said He would come again. Why isn't He here now?"

And when Muriel Handley gave her cousin Betty two little pamphlets, a prayer book and a little book: "Message of Bahá'u'lláh," it took her fifteen years to commit her life to Bahá'u'lláh!

"I was young, and it was war years and I was getting married," she used to say.

But on becoming a Bahá'í in 1955, Betty was always deeply involved in the administration of the Faith.

She immediately served on the Melbourne Local Spiritual Assembly as treasurer then as secretary the next year. Then she served on the Regional Teaching Committee of Victoria until 1960.

Pioneering

Betty and her son Mike pioneered to Newcastle in 1961 to help form their Local Spiritual Assembly, where she was secretary till 1967,

She then pioneered to Lake Macquarie to help form their Local Spiritual Assembly, where she was the secretary, when she pioneered to Fiji in 1970.

Betty became Treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly of Fiji in 1971 and secretary in 1973.

She travelled extensively throughout Fiji and was a Member of the Public Trust during that time.

When she got back, she was asked to pioneer to Newcastle.

Afterwards she went to the Sunshine Coast where she was very involved in the Assembly there and served as secretary on the Australian Overseas Pioneering Committee for years.

Mudgee

When Betty went to Mudgee in 1986 to be secretary to the Continental Board of Counsellors, she served on the Local Assembly until 2012.

She was involved in every activity: children's camps, youth camps, Feasts and Holy Days, multicultural events, study weekends, teaching and care of the children, Bahá'í ads in the Mudgee Guardian, birthday cards for each member of our community – especially the children, enhancing the Feasts for children. As well as study talks, selection of prayers and cooking for events.

Betty was an avid knitter and crocheted knee rugs and cushion covers, and edged handtowels and facewashers for presents for us during Intercalary Days.

Betty was passionately involved in the Mudgee Historical Society and held several executive roles over the years.

She was for years involved in the Kanandah residents' representative body.

She was a participant in U3A courses, particularly Bell Ringing & Persian Prophets of the C19th.

These last several years Betty loved when David Bailey visited her weekly. They used to discuss the readings of the previous seven days.

Au revior! O Noble Spirit!

"The Universal House of Justice was saddened to learn from one of your members of the passing of Betty Jackson, devoted handmaiden of the Cause of God. Her many decades of stalwart service to the Faith, including as a homefront and an international pioneer and as an assistant in the Office of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia, are recalled with gratitude. Kindly convey the heartfelt sympathy of the House of Justice to her loved ones, and assure them of its supplications at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of her soul in the Abha Kingdom."

-Department of the Secretariat