

❖ ELLEN GERTRUDE DE CHASTEL ❖

BACKGROUND

Ellen was born in Biggenden on 23 September 1932 to Leonard and Gertrude Norman (nee Chambers) who were farmers in the Monto district in Central Queensland. Ellen was the middle child of nine children and her siblings always remained an important part of her life.

After attending a small local state school in Mulgildie and showing academic aptitude, Ellen was sent to boarding school at Ipswich Girls Grammar School. Again, she excelled and was accepted into the Kelvin Grove Teachers College in Brisbane. Her first posting as a teacher was to a small one-teacher school and then to Gayndah where she met a young bank officer - Norman de Chastel. With shared "Norman" names, their meeting in such a small town was fated.

Norm and Ellen married in Monto on 24 January 1959 and shortly thereafter, moved to Innisfail as the first of many transfers associated with Norm's banking career. Children soon followed with Liz and Brett becoming part of the de Chastel family. Ellen and Norm worked throughout Queensland and NSW with stints in Proserpine, Brisbane, Rockhampton, Norfolk Island, Mareeba, Orange and Tamworth.

Throughout that time, Ellen continued her love of lifelong learning by both teaching and acquiring new skills. She had a lengthy period providing education support to people living in remote communities through the Distance Education Program and also returned to University to study literature. Ellen and Norm also travelled the world visiting places before they became mainstream tourist destinations, including visits to China and Papua New Guinea.

LIFE IN BUDERIM

After retirement, Ellen and Norm initially moved to Hervey Bay where they spent a few years immersing themselves in local community groups such as the local Bridge club. However, in 1998, they moved to Royal Drive in Buderim and more recently Edenlea. In Buderim, they found their true home and settled into community life.

Ellen joined a wide range of community groups and became a very active volunteer, including with the Buderim Historical Society, Buderim Uniting Church, Buderim Bridge Club, Book Club, Save the Children Foundation, Meals on Wheels, BWMCA and others. She was still a willing contributor to community organisations, even when she turned 90, and brought her energy, commitment and organisational skills to make a difference.

Ellen had a fierce determination to work for the betterment of the Buderim community and to support a range of organisations. She was a highly competitive Bridge player, consummate poet and polished public speaker who inspired others.

In their later life, Ellen and Norm became active philanthropists in the Buderim community. They joined the Buderim Foundation in 2005. They became regular donors, giving quietly behind the scenes to support the Foundation. However, in 2022, they agreed to "go public" with their donations in an effort to inspire others to do the same. They also donated privately to other philanthropic organisations including the Thompson Institute at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

Ellen passed away peacefully in February 2024 with her family by her side, at the age of 91. Her beloved Norm, husband of 65 years, continues her legacy. The Buderim community is richer for her contribution over many years.



Donor: Family and a collective of friends and admirers