

Croisella Anne McKenzie  
Address – Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> November

Gary and Jackson, it is with great sadness that we join with you today to remember Croisella who has been such a valued member of our community and who of course was so much more to you - a much loved partner and mother and of course to everyone else here for whom Croisella was a much loved friend and family member.

We thank you for sharing with us the privilege of knowing Croisella and being the recipients of her generosity.

There is something strangely appropriate that in this funeral hour there is an eclipse of the sun occurring as we say goodbye to this truly wonderful human being. I am sure that in your lives you will feel as we do that the sun will not be as bright again, now that the light that is Croisella has left your daily lives.

And yet, I cannot help but think that Croisella would have us think today more of what we gained from knowing her than what we have lost in her sad and untimely passing.

Gary and Jackson, we join with you today in a sense of solidarity and support as you and we say goodbye to your Croisella who touched all of our lives for good.

Croisella joined our swimming community in 2001 when Jackson was just a toddler and she brought him to the Waterhole Swim School for swim lessons. And as so often happens, Jackson improved and transferred from learn-to-swim and became a member of the Waterhole competitive club, and that of course meant that so did Croisella. You see, when you schedule a child, you almost always schedule a mother!

From the very start Croisella, in the great tradition of New Zealand sport, became a willing volunteer. Our records confirm that Croisella became a time-keeper almost as soon as Jackson joined the Waterhole Club.

Soon, and with her natural affinity for systems and IT, Croisella joined what we know as the AOD team. This is a vital and key function for the smooth functioning of the sport at all levels and Croisella became a vital link in this chain. For the past 7 years she has taken an ever more important leadership role as the team from Waterhole provided service not just for club, but at all of the Auckland Swimming Championship programmes as well as National championship programmes. Not content here, she also served as a volunteer officer of the Waterhole Club in the capacity of Club Secretary.

Her role as a part of the AOD operating room team is not one that just anybody can fill - it requires a special disposition and Croisella was perfect. On many occasions I can vividly recall the feelings of comfort in looking across the pool at West Wave and knowing that Croisella and her team were in charge. This team that she led has a special ethos - they worked together well and the friendship they shared was obvious. When others would panic, this team would smile and would effortlessly go about their work. We learned not to panic because Croisella and her team were in charge and panic was not something they ever did!

I recall on many occasions coming into this little nerve centre of calm where everything ran with such effortless ease and seeing these good people enjoying their picnic "spread" and each other's company, all the while when others outside were under tension and stress.

A few of us had been aware of Croisella's fight with cancer but most certainly not because she complained because that was not her nature. We hoped with her that her optimism and strength would prevail and that her great adversary would be beaten.

And then when the medical profession said there was no more that they could do Croisella unselfishly continued to come out, carrying with her an optimism that her foe would eventually be bested. It just simply never seemed to be her nature to feel sorry for herself - her optimism and sunny disposition filled us all with the greatest of hope that all would be well in the end.

At times we were aware of her discomfort and pain - never because she would complain, but just because we were aware, and yet she would continue to willingly serve.

Our world I am sure was just a small vignette of a larger life, but it was one she shared with us as she watched Jackson grow and develop. She has been a special part of our community and this year her service was recognised as she became the recipient of an ASA Service Award. Even then, few knew of her struggles but this award was not made out of some misplaced sense of compassion but in genuine gratitude and recognition of a valued contribution over extended years. Thank you and thank you again.

Gary and Jackson - there is nothing we can say that will diminish the sense of loss you are feeling, but we stand with you in solidarity today and mourn your loss of Croisella, a special person. Time does not entirely heal or replace the irreplaceable but on behalf of our community may we say - we remember and hope that in the years ahead there will be a continuing comfort to you in the knowledge that your partner and mother will be fondly remembered.

As a concluding thought may I express in the words of *A. Price Hughes & Mary Lee Hall*, a sentiment and invitation to turn again to life, because they seem to represent how I imagine Croisella would feel were she to be with us today:

*If I should die and leave you here awhile,  
be not like others, sore undone, who keep  
long vigils by the silent dust, and weep.  
For my sake, turn again to life and smile,  
nerving thy heart and trembling hand to do  
something to comfort weaker hearts than thine.  
Complete those dear unfinished tasks of mine,  
and I perchance may therein comfort you.*

Thank you and goodbye Croisella. We will remember you.