



**Neville Robert Nicolai
'Dids'**

23 January 1943 – 18 January 2021

Neville was born 78 years ago today (Sat 23rd Jan 2021 - the day of his funeral), at Bishops Court in Norfolk Island to Fleurette Buffett and Vincent Stephenson. He was later adopted by Vic Nicolai.

As an infant, Neville lived in New Hebrides with Fleurette, Vic, Barry and Sandra until it was time to go to school when they returned to Norfolk Island. He spent many years at Steeles Point with Ma Nobby before stowing away in the back of Fleurette & Vic's buggy on a visit to Willy-Boy and Matti Quintal out at Station where he stayed and was brought up by Willy-Boy and Matti as their own.

After leaving school, Dids and Culla moved to New Zealand to join Pedro for a few years and between the 3 of them they enjoyed the change of pace, living to the fullest, and many happy stories still bring a laugh to this day.

Dids married Shirley Nairn "Biddy" in NZ in 1963 and soon after daughter Lavinia "Robin" and son Darren "Skip" were born. They managed a dairy farm in Dargaville until 1968 when they returned home again.

Dids worked for many years at Martin's Agencies driving the fuel trucks and supporting the tanker operations at Ball Bay. Later he and Bid partnered in several small business ventures including carpet cleaning and floor polishing for which he was highly regarded and will be remembered by many for his meticulous cleaning of the NI Airport Terminal building for many years.

In 1994 Dids became a grandad to Emilee and then Nathan. He shone like a star with love and joy with the arrival of both his grandchildren who he genuinely cared for his entire life. Dumine wuthing dem bin do he wouldn't have dem ketchen a florg – he would jes tull lubee – du growl – dem nowwa meanet – en ef dem cly, he gwen cly too.

(continued overleaf)



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Neville Robert Nicolai - continued

Dids was an exceptional gardener who took great pride in maintaining lawns and golfing greens in pristine condition. He and Biddy converted the Watermill Valley Golf Club grounds into award winning gardens that hosted weddings and official receptions and featured in many Australian magazines. He grew beautiful cut flowers and an abundance of fruit and vegetables he treasured sharing and anyone who visited never left empty handed.

Later in life he decided upon a change of pace again, and he and Bid set off to the mines in Moura, QLD where he was quickly contracted for skills in industrial hygiene. He thrived in the remote communities making many solid friendships where he was respected and loved for his wicked sense of humour and sharp wit. A seasoned storyteller he would keep them enthralled but never knowing whether to believe him or not.

When the Queensland heat got too much for him they returned home again and he gladly declared he was ready to slow down in retire which he did and enjoyed a slower pace pottering in the garden, fishing off a stone, and catching up with whomever crossed his path on any given day. He loved nothing more than to tease anyone he met with his cussard – and was very comfortable introducing himself quite seriously as Sir Neville. As a host to Progressive Dinner guests he would capture visitors attention with his endearing story of his great fame and fortune.

He was a beautifully groomed man all his life; loved his country music, lotto, the races and the Bulldogs although he seemed to curse them more in recent years!

He had an exceptional memory and knowledge of Norfolk's history and even in his final weeks in hospital he talked with brother Pedro and recounted connections in many island families. A proud Norfolk Islander he was keenly aware of whose home on the island.

Dids was from a big family of sisters and brothers including Jackie, Irene, Pete, Culla, Sandra, Barry, Bevan and Andrea from which he became Uncle Dids to 2 generations of nieces and nephews.

He was by Biddy's side for 57 years and never far apart – when he could see her you soon knew where he was. "Where's you Bid".

He loved all his family and we all knew it.

In his later years he became more private and chose the simple ways and no-fuss. And in true Dids style he would say "Now all yore life start – I guess" and that was that.

Our Heartfelt Thanks

Dids was diagnosed with advanced stage cancer in May 2020 in Sydney. We are so grateful for the love and care shown to us by Dizzy McCoy and Dale Hall at that time.

Dids fought a valiant fight, remaining positive and confident in the professional support he received from the NI Hospital medical team especially Dr Mann; James and Lew the Ambulance men; and the amazing Nursing Staff. Thank you to all who visited Dids in

hospital and at home and kept him company as his condition got the better of him.

For the difficult process of laying Dids to rest we extend sincere thanks to the volunteer Gravediggers, Shane Quintal, Gavin Snell, Tardy Evans, Sid Adams, Lew Quintal, Dene Snell, David Graham, David Buffett, Mike King, Roy Nobbs, Josh Christian, Robin Butterfield, Rachel Nebeaur, Toni Wilson, Simone James, Milton Bradley, Trent Christian, Liz McCoy and Michelle McCoy.

To Jenny Gow – our rock through it all – how do we ever repay your untiring love and kindness.

To Mirra - for keeping up with Dids insatiable sweet tooth, and everything else.

Thank you to family who travelled home; Irene, Sandra & Donald, Sarita, Keane, Joshua, Nerissa, Jaydon, Em & Nath.

Thank you to family and friends for your visits, messages, cards, flowers and food – overwhelming kindness and support.

And, last but not least, thank you for understanding Dids wish for a no-fuss good-bye. As frightened of his inevitable passing as he was, Dids was clear about what he did and didn't want as he was laid to rest, and so it is we honoured a good man with a lovely and quiet send off.

Dids will be dearly missed, but we are happy knowing he has returned to family in Heaven.

Bid, Robin & Darren Nicolai

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